

The Globalization, Problems and Prospects of Teaching and Learning Yoruba as a Second Language (L₂) in Colleges of Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

Yoruba language is one of the popular languages being spoken in Africa and beyond. The owners of the language are the children of Oduduwa who hail from Mecca before settling down at Ile-ife in Osun State Nigeria because of sacrilege. This study therefore examines the globalization, problems and prospects of teaching and learning Yoruba as a Second Language (L₂) in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. It focuses the global perspectives of teaching and learning the language, and the importance of learning it all over the world.

Keywords: Language, Teaching, Learning, Knowledge, Unity

1. Introduction

The teaching and learning of Yoruba as a second language in Nigeria and as a foreign language in Britain, United State of America (USA), Germany and many other countries all over Europe and the world has extended the frontiers of knowledge in the teaching and learning of Yoruba language. Many people in Nigeria and in the above named countries all over the world are interested in knowing the spoken form of Yoruba, its literature, and its culture.

The Federal Government in Nigeria's policy on the teaching and learning of Yoruba L₂, in Colleges of Education is to see that people in Nigeria live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic, and sovereign nationals founded on the principles of freedom, equality, and justice with other ethnic groups.

Government also, in the National Policy on Education (NPE), stresses the importance of Language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesions and presenting cultures. Therefore, every child in Nigeria shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity it is expedient that every child shall be required to learn ONE of the THREE Major Nigerian Languages; Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (NPE 1998:8). This view of every child being required to learn one of Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba is a laudable policy statement by the government in its efforts to see that, these languages are taught and learnt as second languages in Nigeria (NL₂).

This paper examines the global approach to the teaching and learning of Yoruba as a second language (L₂) in College of Education as well as the problems and prospect of the teaching of this language as L₂ in Nigeria.

2. The National Policy on the Teaching and Learning of Yoruba as a Second Language (L₂) in Nigeria.

In order to implement the Language Policy of the teaching and the learning of Yoruba as a second language (L₂), the Federal Government of Nigeria made it mandatory that, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba should be taught in all the Federal Government Colleges also called Unity Schools. States were also mandated to implement the NL₂ Policy. The Federal Government with the establishment of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in 1989 directed the NCCE to mandate all Colleges of Education in Nigeria to start the teaching and learning of Yoruba as a second language.

3. Globalization and Growth in the Teaching and the Learning of Yoruba as a Second Language in Colleges of Education in Nigeria

All the Federal Government Colleges and Federal Colleges of Education and some States Secondary Schools, and some of their Colleges of Education employ teachers to teach Yoruba L₂ in their Junior Secondary Schools. The National Board of Educational Measurement (NBEM), now, the National Examination Council (NECO), examines candidates in Yoruba L₂ for Junior Secondary Schools Certificates Examination (JSSCE). Graduates from the College of Education are employed to teach Yoruba as a second language in our Secondary Schools.

Globalization and the growth and the spread in the teaching and learning of Yoruba as L₂ in our Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) and the College of Education in Nigeria helps in creating a sort of consciousness that will help in creating awareness and in strengthening the desired national unity in Nigeria. Many Yoruba First Language (L₁) teachers are recruited to teach Yoruba L₂ in the Federal Government Colleges, State Secondary School, Federal

Colleges of Education, and States Colleges of Education in non-Yoruba Speaking States in Nigeria in Europe, Britain, and United State of America among others. These teachers mix freely with the indigenes of the States where they are posted or employed.

According to Arohunmolase (2000), cited by Elugbe (1990), Linguistic diversity is one of the better-known attributes in Nigeria. Ethnic divisions are also based on linguistic lines, which to say that, the existence of many languages in Nigeria means the existence of many basically distinct ethnic nationalities trying to form a nation.

The global growth, spread, and the development of the teaching and the learning of Yoruba as a Foreign Language in the United States of America (USA), Great Britain, Ireland, South America (Brazil and other places), Germany and all over Europe among others, has helped in no small measure in encouraging many people to study Yoruba L₂ in College of Education in Nigeria. These people know that, there is employment opportunities open to them after their graduation, in countries all over the world. Globalization, a recent occurrence that affects the economic, social, political and cultural changes all over the world has also affected the teaching and learning of Yoruba L₂ in our College of Education in Nigeria. Yoruba L₂ teachers with the development of modern information and communication technology (ICT) in the world and the links among societies, and how they work together as parts of an interrelated world system can improve their knowledge of Yoruba L₂ in the Web-sites in the Internet by browsing.

4. Prospects of the Teaching and Learning of Yoruba L₂

According to Eligbe (1990), the problem of multilingualism in the developing nations such as Nigeria, and in the independent nations has been tackled by scholars such as Fishman and the others (1968). Arohunmolase (1998), is of the opinion that, we can use the linguistic, historical, and the cultural evidences in Nigerian languages for our desired national development and unity. If pupils/students in our primary/secondary schools, Colleges of Education, and Universities are appropriately taught Yoruba as a second language (L₂) they would know all the things that unite Yoruba language with other Nigerian languages, socially, culturally, linguistically and historically. It will also enable Yoruba and other language scholars to be able to exploit the ancestral ties among Nigerians languages so as to show Nigerians that they have a common history.

The FRN (2004) emphasizes the importance of Nigerian language in the education of a child as means of preserving the culture of a people, and for national unity. This is a laudable policy of Nigerian Government. The Federal Government's idea of the language of the immediate community (LIC), in the NPE, is seen by us as a second language (L₂) to all those whose first language (L₁) or mother-tongue is not Yoruba and this policy is also in our view helping in the teaching and learning of Yoruba as a second language in the States like Lagos, where we have the bilingual Egun (Ogu) speakers in Badadary, Ogun, where we have non-Yoruba speakers in Yewa Divison of the State, Ondo, where we have the Izon speakers in Ese-Odo Local Government Council, Uro-Ahan speakers in Akoko North-West Local Government ukaan speakers, (Ligau, Lisieu, Ikakun) in Akoko North East Local Government. These named speakers learn Yoruba as a language and they are all bilinguals. These people speak their languages and Yoruba as second a language. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has developed Curricula named the Minimum Standards for Colleges of Education, for the teaching of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as a second language. The Nigerian Educational Research, and Development Council (NERDC), has developed curricula on Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba as a second languages for the JSS to replace the former one that had so many problems. The Federal Government established the National Institute for Nigerian Language, Aba, Abia State in order to help in the production of Nigerian language L₂ teachers. Students who studied Yoruba as a second language are expected to go to the National Institute for Nigerian languages (NINLAN), Aba, Abia State, for their Degree Courses in Yoruba as a second language.

5. The Envisaged Problems

The FRN (2004) states that, Government's major purpose for the Pre-Primary Education is to develop the orthographies for many more Nigerian languages and to produce text-books in Nigerian languages. For the Primary Education, Government will see to it that, the medium of instruction in the Primary School is initially the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community (LIC), and for the secondary Education, at the JSS level, the NPE provides that, in selecting TWO Nigerian languages, students should study the language of their own area in addition to any of the three main Nigerian languages, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, subject to the availability of teachers (FRN, 1981) (Our emphasis).

The FRN (1998:18) emphasizes the teaching and the learning of one Nigerian language other than that of the environment or the immediate community as L₂ at the JSS level. As we have shown above in this paper, Yoruba L₂ is not taught and learnt at the Pre-Primary and the Primary levels of Education in Nigeria. Yoruba L₂ is not also a

subject taught at the Senior Secondary School (SSS) level of Education. The idea of not teaching Yoruba as a second language at the SSS level of education show that the Colleges of Education admit people who are not taught Yoruba as a second language at the SSS level of education. As has been rightly observed by Arohunmolase (2000), Yoruba L₂ should be taught and learnt from the Primary level of Education, which is the bed-rock of education in Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria also states that, students at the JSS level should study any of Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, subject to the availability of teachers. The clause, "Subject to the availability of teachers", is non-committal as regards the full implementation of the teaching and learning of Yoruba L₂ at the JSS level of Education and at the SSS level to our College of Education (FRN, 2004). It is observed that, most of the Yoruba L₂ teachers in the JSS classes and in the Colleges of Education are all trained as Yoruba L₁ teachers. Very few teachers who are trained Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Yoruba L₁, teaches Yoruba L₂ at the JSS level of education in Nigeria. The problems of even Yoruba, L₁ producing adequate number of teachers to teach Yoruba, at L₁ is one of the problem for even Yoruba L₁ producing adequate number of teachers to teach Yoruba, as L₁ is one of the problems for non implementation of the language provision of the NPE by the Federal Government.

Junaidu and Ihebuzor (1993) point to the fact that, the problem of the supply of teachers in Nigeria languages represents one of the greatest problem facing the Curriculum development efforts in Nigeria. The introduction of Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba), as L₂ at the JSS level and the College of Education worsened the compounded problem of the supply of trained teachers. It is a matter of great regret that, adequate plans were not made for the supply of teachers before the Federal Government decided to implement the Nigerian languages policy in the Colleges of Education. The NPE has no policy statement on the teaching and learning of Yoruba as a second language in College Education. The Federal Government should redesign the NPE to include the teaching and learning of Yoruba as a second language in our College of Education.

The National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAND), Aba, Abia State, Nigeria, established by the Federal Government to train teachers of Nigerian Language as L₂ (NL₂) since 1993 has not up till now admitted any candidate. The conventional Universities in Nigeria are not producing NL₂ teachers. All the enumerated views will hinder the effective teaching and learning of Yoruba as a second language in our Colleges of Education. There are no adequate textbooks for the teaching and the learning of Yoruba L₂ in our JSS classes and in the College of Education.

6. Conclusion

It is observed that the development and the spread all over the world of the teaching and learning of Yoruba as a Foreign Language has also helped in the development and in the teaching and learning of Yoruba L₂ in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The Federal Government in our view should introduce the teaching and learning of Yoruba L₂ from the Primary level of Education to the University level. All subjects taught in our Secondary Schools (JSSI-III, SSSI-III), Colleges of Education, and the Universities are introduced from the Primary School, which is the bedrock of Nigerian Education. The Federal Government should adequately fund the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Sheda, Abuja so that, NERDC can develop Yoruba L₂ Curriculum, produce textbooks on Yoruba L₂. The National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Aba, Abia State, should be mandated and well funded to start Degree Courses in Nigerian language as second languages (N L₂) so as to help in the production of teachers to teach Yoruba as a second language in our College of Education in Nigeria.

United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been helping immensely in the development of Nigerian languages. Apart from the major Nigerian languages, UNESCO is helping in sponsoring researches and the documentation of Endangered Nigerian Languages. This author and four others are being sponsored by UNESCO to research and document the endangered by nearly Extinct Ukaan Group of Languages in Nigeria.

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