

English Language Teaching for National Development in Rivers State Nigeria

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Abstract

Education is a special discipline that is basically connected with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environment. Education is generally geared towards national development. This research therefore considered English language teaching as an integral part of education that leads to national development. The aim of this research is to identify language teaching in secondary schools as a pointer towards national development. A descriptive survey research was used with 20 item questionnaires titled English Language Teaching for National Development (ELTND). This was done through quantitative data collection. There were 300 respondents who were secondary school language teachers. The analysis was done through mean and standard deviation on 4 point rating scale. Findings demonstrated that language teaching is key for the overall national development.

Keywords: Education, Language Teaching, National Development.

Introduction

Education is considered as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. Education is organized to guide learners in learning a culture, molding the learners' behavior and leading learners to occupy their responsibilities in the society. Education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction especially at a school or university. Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. The wealth of knowledge acquired by an individual or a group of persons after studying particular subject matters or experiencing life lessons that provide an understanding of what has been studied.

Anukam (1999) defines education as the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develop the abilities, attitudes and other form of behaviors which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. Education is the action or process of educating or being educated. It is a stage of being educated which results to knowledge and development. John (2017) explores the meaning of education and suggests that it is a process of inviting truth and possibility. It is a wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life.

Language

Language is a system of communication, either spoken or written consisting of the use of sounds, words or gestures and/or symbols in a structured and conventional way (Oruwari 2017). Language is not an abstract construction of the learned, or of dictionary makers, but is something arising out of work, needs, ties, joys, effects, tastes, of long generations of humanity and its bases, broad and low, close to the group (Azikiwe, 2007). All these definitions implies that language has form, structure, rules as code and has the functional rules for communication. Language is a strong medium that empowers effective communication even in the educational processes. Language is a system of conventional spoken, manual, or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture express themselves. The function of language includes communication which is the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression and emotional release (Henry and David, 2010). The language under consideration in this study is English language as a second language in Nigeria. English language is an official language used as a language of commerce, administration, instruction etc.

Language Teaching

Language teaching is not a simple process. A language teacher must have scientific approach to teach a language. Language is the essential research resource for language professionals in providing a rich and expert overview of research in the field of second-language teaching

and learning. The second language in Nigeria is English language. It offers critical survey articles of recent research on specific topics. (Oruwari, 2017), Nwigwe & Izuagba (2012) observe that the methodology adopted by the English language teacher may hinder or promote learning. It further notes that an English language teacher needs to have knowledge of a variety of teaching methods. He can select form in the teaching/learning process. Ezeude (2007) notes that language teaching method is the overall plan for the orderly presentation of language materials, no part of which contradicts and all of which is based upon the selected method. Oruwari (2017) expresses that language teaching methods refers to classroom techniques and practices that are used in teaching of a second language.

National Development

The term national development is very important and comprehensive. It includes all aspect of the life of an individual and the nation. It is a process reconstruction and development in various dimensions of the nation and development of the individual. It includes full growth and expansion of the nation industries, agriculture, education, social, religious and cultural institutions. National development implies development of a nation as a whole. It can be best defined as the all-round and balanced development of different aspects and facets of the nation through political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and material. Bawa (2018) defines national development as the total effect of all citizen forces and addition to the stock of industrial and human resources, knowledge in skill. United Nations Decade Report (2014) has defined national development as growth plus change. Change in turn is social and cultural as well as economic and qualitative. The development of the nation covers such areas as;

(a) development through a planned national economy (b) increase in agricultural production through application of modern technical know-how (c) harnessing industrial production (d) development of human resources (e) application of science and technology in production sector (f) provision of mass education and (g) provision of various facilities to meet the needs and aspirations of disadvantaged, deprived and poorest of the poor segments of population.

Theoretical Framework

Language learning theories have been the subject of heated debate for centuries. The language theories guide a teacher to select and follow an approach to the teaching of any new language. The language teacher, not being a theoretician will always rely on the linguistics, psycho-linguists and socio-linguists' research. These theories practically direct and help the teacher to create ways and methods in the teaching of foreign language in the classroom (Brilliant Thinker, 2018).

This study draws from the modern psychological medium to language based on behaviourist and cognitive theories of language. The behaviourists consider language learning as a process of conditioning and the expected goal in learning is achieved by a series of stimulus and responses. The behaviourists note that learning takes place because of the relationship between stimulus and the learners' responses to it. As a result of the conditioning, the learner will be able to give the expected response and then it can be said that he has learned. Linguists were influenced by behaviourism in the 1930s and 40s and as a result, publication of teaching materials based on behaviourist theory were in circulation and highly encouraged.

On the other hand, the cognitive theorists believe that each learner has a cognitive structure into which any new learning is absorbed. "Mentalistic" is another name for cognitive theory because all cognitive interpretation of language learning depends on the neuropsychological base of thought. Cognitive theorists see language learning as a "meaningful process". They validate experiential language learning since the learner will understand the new input and connect it with previous inputs or experiences. David (1984) considers learning especially experiential learning as a lifelong process. Experiential learning is a part of personal growth and development. Experiential learning is based on maxim, which learning a new language is learners' prerogative and responsibility. Experiential language learning enhances learners' ability of self-direction. The two theories are centred on the growth and development of the language learner which later leads to the national growth and development. The purpose of the study is to find out how English language teaching can lead to general development. Specifically, the study seeks to highlight the contribution of English language teaching

to individual development and determine how language teaching leads to the development.

Statement of the Problem

National development concerns with the growth and development of the individual and the nation. The individual grows through the educational process. The effect of the individual growth results to the national development. How can the growth and development of the individual be achieved through education without English language teaching? How can the growth and development of the individual be obtained without involving English language teaching in one stage or the other of the individual's educational process?

Research Questions

1. What are the contributions of English language teaching to individual development?
2. How does English language teaching lead to the development of a nation?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey type of research design. Three hundred English language teachers from five local government areas in Rivers State, Nigeria were randomly sampled. A sample size of 180 English language teachers was randomly selected from ten secondary schools. Two Secondary Schools were selected from each Local Government: Andoni LGA, Khana LGA, Eleme LGA, Obio-Akpor LGA and Port Harcourt LGA. A designed questionnaire titled English language teaching for national development (ELTND) consisting of two sections was used. Section A, has ten questions that centre on national development and section B has ten questions that concern individual development. The instrument was subjected to both face validity to ensure valid based of the instrument and content validity to adequately cover the scope of the study. The reliability of the instrument of 0.79 was gotten using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The questionnaire was structured along four point scale of very high (VH), High (H), Low (L), Very Low (VL) and weighed 4, 3, 2, 1 point respectively. The generated data was analyzed through the mean and standard deviation on the 4 points rating scale.

Results

Research question 1: What are the contributions of English language teaching to individual development?

Table 1: The Mean and Standard Deviation Rating of the Contributions of English language teaching to individual development

S/N	Items	N	Total	X	Sd	Remarks
1	English Language teaching improves the capacity of national development.	180	527	2.93	1.08	Strongly agreed
2	Proficiency in the national language encourages team work for official development.	180	544	3.02	1.00	Strongly agreed
3	English Language communication is the key to the development of every nation.	180	562	3.12	1.10	Strongly agreed
4	Cross-pollination of national ideas is a function of official language proficiency.	180	542	3.01	1.10	Agreed
5	The role of English language for instructional purpose ensures speedy national growth.	180	515	2.86	1.07	Strongly agreed
6	Industrial unity relies on the proficiency of the English language speakers.	180	461	2.56	0.77	Agreed
7	The unity of a nation is founded on the use of the official language which is English language.	180	542	3.01	1.10	Strongly agreed
8	Administrative activities of any given nation is successful with the utilization of the official language.	180	509	2.83	1.01	Agreed
9	The educational base of a nation which prosper development depends on the language in use.	180	470	2.72	0.80	Agreed
10	The political structure of a nation is dead without English language in use.	180	495	2.85	1.02	Agreed
Grand Mean				2.86	1.00	Strongly agreed

The table 1 data demonstrates that respondents strongly agreed that English language teaching lead to individual development as indicated by the various mean scores with the standard deviations respectively.

Research Question 2: How does English language teaching lead to the development of a nation?

Table 2: The Mean Standard Deviation Rating of the contribution of English language teaching to national development

S/N	Items	N	Total	X	Sd	Remarks
1	English Language teaching improves the capacity of national development.	180	527	2.93	1.08	Strongly agreed
2	Proficiency in the national language encourages team work for official development.	180	544	3.02	1.00	Strongly agreed
3	English Language communication is the key to the development of every nation.	180	562	3.12	1.10	Strongly agreed
4	Cross-pollination of national ideas is a function of official language proficiency.	180	542	3.01	1.10	Agreed
5	The role of English language for instructional purpose ensures speedy national growth.	180	515	2.86	1.07	Strongly agreed
6	Industrial unity relies on the proficiency of the English language speakers.	180	461	2.56	0.77	Agreed
7	The unity of a nation is founded on the use of the official language which is English language.	180	542	3.01	1.10	Strongly agreed
8	Administrative activities of any given nation is successful with the utilization of the officials language.	180	509	2.83	1.01	Agreed
9	The educational base of a nation which prosper development depends on the language in use.	180	4.70	2.72	0.80	Agreed
10	The political structure of a nation is dead without English language in use.	180	4.95	2.85	1.02	Agreed
Grand Mean				2.86	1.00	Strongly agreed

The data in table 2 portray that the development of a nation is dependent on language teaching as indicated by the various mean scores and the standard deviation respectively.

Discussion of Findings

The findings in research question one reveals that language teaching is directed towards the development of the individual. The findings show that language teaching improves the intellectual ability of the learners, intelligence of the learners, and academic commitment of the learners. These findings agree with Piedrahita (2016) who notes that language teaching encourages the language teacher to provide students with the required knowledge and skills, attitude and values. According to her, language teaching assists language teachers become aware of the importance of enhancing students' learning and their life chances. The findings also show that language teaching improves learners' academic performance, learners' growth and development and learners leadership qualities. This is in one accord with Coleman(2011) who notes that the teaching of English Language (Second language) is for employability, international mobility and development, unlocking development opportunities and accessing crucial information of the language learners. The findings also indicate that language teaching encourages national development, proficiency of the national language among the language users, national industrial unity and national education, political and administrative structures. The findings is in line with Ani-Ebere (2004) who recognizes that language is an integral part of a man and that the overall development of a nation is based on language teaching. Every democratic nation requires the use of language teaching for democracy to flourish and to be entrenched.

Conclusion

The personal and national development is what makes a nation. Education is an integral part of every development; language teaching is core in educational process. Education for all is the business for all nations, thus language teaching is for national development. It is hoped that if there is an effective implementation of the policy concerning language

teaching in the various academic levels of learning, there will be an improvement of both individual and national development.

Recommendations

Considering the expected improvement in the individual and national development, the following recommendations are made:

1. School curriculum should be geared towards improving English language teaching in schools.
2. The government, heads of schools, community heads and English language teachers as stake holders should encourage all English language teaching programmes and the English language teachers in all schools.
3. English Language teachers should plan activities that will help them regularly interact with the government on the one hand and the local communities on the other hand.

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