

# LANGUAGE EDUCATION REHABILITATION AND RELIANCE

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## **Abstract**

Language identify a man and it is a vehicle through, which a society is unified to enhance both economic, social and political development. That is why any nation that aspires for greatness must strive towards rehabilitating her indigenous languages like other nations of the world to reduce dependence on others. Language Education is the only tool for unlocking doors of communication, therefore, adequate attention must be given to the rehabilitation of the basic language skills and other factors which include manpower, instructional materials/aids redesigning curriculum and government support and funding. The abovementioned issues will enhance Language Education rehabilitation and promote reliance.

## **Introduction**

Language Education forms the bedrock in building a self - reliant society. No individual, society or nation can boast of being independent without the proper rehabilitation of an effective communicative channel through language. At this point, it becomes necessary to look at what language is. Language constitutes a major tool for human communication. Mead (1965) observed "Language in its significant sense is that vocal gesture, which tend to arouse in the individual the attitude, which it arouses in others, and it is perfecting of the self by gesture, which mediate the social activities that gives rise to the process of taking role of others". This assertion corroborate with the views of other linguists. Malinowski (1939) views Language as stores of meaning, helps to cope with problem of communication over time. Aiding recall and obviating to some extent a need for reformulation. As such they are a cultural asset.

The survival of structure and organisation of any educational system must employ a means of dialogue or communication. This means of communication then is nothing but language. Since language has been identified as a necessary tool which no individual, group of individuals or nation can do without for educational, economic, political survival, all hands must be on deck to ensure that language education is rehabilitated for growth and reliance.

## **The Issue of Language Education**

Language Education is much the same way that one would talk of Physics Education, Science Education and Economics Education. Language Education entails scientific study of language in all its ramifications. It affects every area of human endeavour because language provides the only medium of communication among people, it is what gives man his cultural identity and bearing.

The Institute of Education, University of Ibadan Associate Certificate in Education series on Language Arts Methods defines language education as: "Training users of language in the skills and helping them to develop these skills to the fullest in order to carry out the act of oral and written communication effectively."

It therefore becomes important or necessary for the rehabilitation of the four basic language skills, manpower, instructional materials, time adjustment in the curriculum and government support/funding in the three major languages Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba as taught in our schools to promote self-reliance.

Language Education comprises of language of a child's immediate, environment and the three major languages in Nigeria as stipulated in the National Policy of Education first

published in (1981), revised in 1998 (Third Edition).

The Federal Government for the first time laid it down as a policy for the whole country that:

- a.) In primary school, which lasts six years, each child must study two languages namely
  - i.) His mother tongue (if available for study) or an indigenous language for wider communication in his environment,
  - ii.) English Language:
- b.) In junior secondary school (JSS) is of three years' duration, the child must study three languages.
  - i.) His mother - tongue (if available for study) or an indigenous language of wider communication in his environment,
  - ii.) English Language, and
  - iii.) Just any one of the three major indigenous language in the country, namely Ilausa, Igbo and Yoruba the language chosen is distinct from the child's mother - tongue;
- c.) In senior secondary school (SSS), which also lasts three years, the child must study two languages,
  - i.) An indigenous Language and
  - ii.) English Language

These policies automatically were incorporated in the various school curricula all over the nation. It was supposed to be the medium of instruction because it is seen as a vehicle for a people's culture and a means of maintaining and indefinitely preserving identity together" with our rich indigenous languages.

In laying credence to the importance of indigenous language as a medium of instruction in an educational system, Sharama (1978) in an article on the teacher of Hindi notes: "No foreign language can take the place of the native language without serious detriment to the mental development of the child"

The Chinese, the Japanese, the Germans, the Russians and the Spanish, to mention just a few use their indigenous languages to educate their young ones. This is made possible due to the fact that the language has long been rehabilitated to promote education and sustain self-reliance in all areas of human endeavour.

### **The Concept of Rehabilitation and Reliance**

Rehabilitation has to do with positive adjustment to make a situation more suitable or in the case of language to make it acceptable, understood, and useful for development. This means that no educational system ever remains static as societal ambition and expectations keeping changing.

However, the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English sees Rehabilitation as a "means to improve on an area so that it returns to the good condition it was in before". On the other hand, reliance is the anchor on which any individual or society is built and the greatest yardstick for determining how truly independent any one can be.

The concept of reliance therefore involves achieving an appreciable, measure of political, economic and cultural independence and autonomy of decision-making and management. It entails the ability to stand firmly on oneself without relying unduly on others. Therefore the content of our indigenous languages as being taught in schools should undergo some level of rehabilitation in the area of the four basic language skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) and other factors earlier mentioned. Communication process will break down if emphasis is not laid on the improvement of these factors and such individual will rely on others for support.

Therefore a nation populated by experts or professionals who cannot communicate with others in their indigenous language cannot be said to be independent. Language Education (indigenous languages) as a discipline, which requires rehabilitation to produce and sustain effective retention and achievement in learners and thereby making them self -

reliant in their various profession. According to Dewey, (1944) the main focus of education is to produce individuals who will not only fit into the society today but also, who can fit into the society tomorrow through growth as they live their lives. In line with this assertion, Fafunwa (1974) "the education we give to a child today must see him through all stages of his life". In effect, recipient of a relevant and adequate education must master himself as well as his environment by making use of everything available for growth. This view can be achieved successfully when a child or learner is taught in his mother tongue or in an indigenous language as adopted by the school authority, since it is the language of his immediate environment. It is a language he breaths in, talks with and lives with, such as individual will perform better in the society. If such languages are allow to grow and consequently rehabilitated it can become the language of science and technology as it is in many countries of the world.

Today, the Swahili, German, Russian languages, which are indigenous languages in their various regions has become the languages of science, literature, computer and technology because they were given an opportunity for growth and rehabilitation, which has necessitated the individual in these regions to become self- reliant because they have acquired the suitable skills and proficiency in their various languages.

Nwosu (1995) maintain that education for self - reliance is not just a process of acquiring skills of literacy but it involves acquisition of suitable skills and competence in line with a vocation or profession. A progressive nation is the one that can produce a good number of professionals in various fields of human existence through a well rehabilitated language.

From our discussion, it is clear that language remains a viable source of communication and development. In this sense they must be an urgent and essential need to rehabilitate the indigenous language for it to achieve its purpose.

Therefore, the steps that must be taken for rehabilitation of the indigenous languages are as follows:

- a.) The four basic language skills
- b.) Manpower
- c.) Instructional Materials
- d.) Improvement in curricula in indigenous languages
- e.) Government support and funding.

#### a.) **Four Basic Language Skills**

It is a known fact that no language can be effectively taught and learnt without emphasis on the basic skills in Language. These skills include speaking, listening, reading and writing. These skills are not only applicable to English Language but to other indigenous languages.

#### **Steps For Rehabilitation of Indigenous Language Skills**

In communicative skills, there are four basic skills as earlier mentioned out of which two are referred to as primary communicative skill. They include:

- i.) Speaking skill (speech or oral skill)
- ii) Listening

skill **Others are:**

- in.) Reading skill
- iv.) Writing skill

These skills require different method or approach in teaching. The method includes direct method, incidental method, eclectic method, play way activity method, drill method etc.

Adequate attention must be given to the rehabilitation of these methods in leaching language skills.

#### **b.) Manpower**

The teaching personnel have a lot of roles to play in the teaching of any indigenous language. At present there are not enough indigenous language teachers to teach the subject.

In order to make indigenous language useful for reliance, effort should be made to train competent and qualified teachers who will be capable of teaching the language curricula to the students and also ready to learn the new aspect within the curricula in such a way that they could effectively implement the language policy to the student.

c.) **Instructional Materials**

Teaching and learning is made meaningful with the aid of instructional materials. For these programmes to be effective teaching aids like tape recorders, films, television sets, recorded cassette must be provided in the indigenous language. These materials will go a long way to break the monotony of chalk/talk situation and create interest in the learner of such indigenous language. These materials will cover the four basic language skills.

In addition, books on these languages should be made available for learners. It was noted in E - 9 country reports that there is a glaring deficiency of instructional/materials for teaching of Nigerian Languages,

**Redesign of Instructional Time In the Curricula As It Relates to Language Education**

The allocation of time for the teaching of indigenous language should be rehabilitated to suit or address the cognitive affective and psychomotor needs of the individual learner right from the primary age. This can be achieved if only enough time is given to the teaching and learning of basic skills in regional language.

According to Glatthorn (1994) "the more time you allocate to a subject, the higher the achievement level". The time allocated must be well utilised. Goodlad (1984) recommends that 30% of the instructional week should be spent on the study of language arts, including reading and approximately 21% on mathematics.

In a synthesis report of E - 9 Country Studies on The Quality of Learning (IT^ESCO) (1998), "it was reported that Nigeria is an example where lack of adequate time and resources for the study of regional language is a serious issue".

If language education is to be rehabilitated for reliance the time allocated to it teaching must be adjusted to give room for personal development, societal growth and progress.

**Government Support and Funding**

The success of Language Education rehabilitation and reliance in the indigenous language depends on the amount of support both Federal and State Government can give to it. It should be seen as a venture designed to break the yoke of dependence on other people.

Teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars and workshops and also remunerated annually.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the following discussion, it is obvious that language education is a major facilitator for building a self-reliant nation.

Ethnic or indigenous language should be rehabilitated, as there are main vehicles for transmitting knowledge in the first three grades. If given opportunity for gradual growth and rehabilitation in factors mentioned such as: the basic language skills, provision and training of manpower, availability of instructional materials, designing of the curricula and government support. The three major indigenous language i.e. Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa will stand the chance of becoming national languages and the individuals both professionals and artisans will develop alongside and become self-reliant such as it is in countries like France and Germany.

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