



## POOR LANGUAGE SKILLS AS HINDRANCE TO TVET STUDENTS' EMPLOYABILITY

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### Abstract

*Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students lack the language skills needed to meaningfully engage in the 21st century global economy. Many of these students come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, rendering them unable to communicate effectively in the mainstream language. This paper examines the role of language proficiency in TVET students' ability to gain meaningful employment.*

*The study uses a qualitative approach to collect data from students, career advisors, and employers. Through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the research aims to identify students' language proficiency levels and the attitudes of employers and career advisors towards these students.*

*The results of the study highlight the need to improve language proficiency among TVET students. The study reveals that employers are reluctant to hire graduates with poor language skills, while career advisors are ill-equipped to provide adequate career guidance to these students. The findings also suggest that language learning should be integrated and contextualized in the curriculum to increase language proficiency among TVET students.*

*This research contributes to a greater understanding of the role of language proficiency in TVET students' employability and highlights the need to include language learning into the TVET curriculum. This paper calls for more comprehensive language policies and strategies geared towards improving the language skills of TVET students.*

*Keywords: TVET, Employability, Language Learning, Career Guidance, Language Proficiency*

### Background to the Study

Language has been defined by numerous authors and academics and is as old as the universe itself. According to Sapire (1970), it is a method used by humans to transfer ideas and wishes through voluntarily created and accepted symbols. This suggests that a group of individuals chooses a mode of communication that must be embraced by each individual inside the group. The symbols of communication could be spoken or written. According to Azikiwe (1998), there is a connection between language and experience. This relationship might be caused by experience, information gleaned from what being said or knowledge is gained via experience.

Language, according to Anukam (1999), is a methodical way of expressing thoughts or emotions by the use of standardized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks with clear-cut meanings. Language is typically used as a communication tool. Man has a property that sets him apart from other animals; if its users disappear, the quality will wither and die. In a man's life, language plays a significant role. It is a crucial element in the sociocultural and psychological growth of any country. It is essential to the execution of any nation's educational systems.

All learning processes use language as a medium for information transfer, the dissemination of values and attitudes, and the acquisition of skills and abilities. We may learn from famous people like Shakespeare, Isaac Newton, and others through language, claims Umo (2001). It promotes peace on the national and international levels. All modes of learning depend heavily on language. Consequently, a language is necessary for learning to occur.

### Relationship between Applied Linguistics and Language Education

Language education is defined simply by Anukam (1999:23) as the study of language science, which includes a study of the nature and significance of language as a means of communication. Additionally, it entails studying and



comprehending how language is used, the art of language teaching, and the issues that hinder efficient language acquisition. Language teaching is integrated into applied linguistics, which is viewed as a discipline that can solve its own problems and is broadly concerned with language education and societal language issues (MC Donough 2002:11). Different labels for the discipline of language instruction are used to categorize persons. Some refer to it as language education. Here, linguistics is being employed.

The goal of the discipline of language education is to teach language to native speakers of different languages in a variety of contexts, such as inside or outside of that community. For a fixed time resident such as visiting learners, guest workers, students of other subjects, etc., as well as for long-term residents and such a community as various ethnic groupings. Donough (2002:13) summarizes the various topics that applied linguistics and language education discuss in a practical way. Improvements in supervision techniques, training frameworks, and the creation of instructional materials. The concept of method and methodology, approach, methods, etc., as well as teaching techniques "Research on the usage and users of second languages/foreign languages: how do we learn other languages, whether organically, self-taught, through immersion, or taught in the classroom. L1: first language. School language, elementary literacy development, and phonological awareness.

Describe the language itself, including its general features like grammar and dictionaries and its particular features like discourse and grammar analysis, education evaluation policy based on language, and a description of how language functions in the setting the learner is in. Language in multilingual environments, language education policy, language planning in multilingual societies, language and culture, cultural hurdles to understanding, and intercultural communication. The three main learning theories that are typically used are: mentalist, behaviorist, and language acquisition theories.

### **Language Acquisition**

Language acquisition is a term used in applied linguistics or language education to describe how a child learns to use his or her native tongue without being explicitly taught. It is a concept that aids in our understanding of the main methods by which people acquire the ability to speak their mother tongue (L1) or native tongue. By using a language organically for communication, proficiency in that language gradually increases. The concept of language acquisition is expanded beyond children to include adults who naturally pick up a foreign or second language.

### **Behaviorist Theory or Extreme Environment**

According to this belief, a youngster depends on their surroundings. It starts off with the presumption that children are born in pure states, live in their immediate surroundings, draw on linguistic stimuli in those surroundings, and condition themselves to those stimuli. According to behaviorists, language is just a behavior that depends on the emergence of habits involving the following processes:

1. **Imitation:** In which the child tries to imitate the sound of the language around him.
2. **Reinforcement Process:** In which the adults around the child provides different kind of reinforcement by either repeating the sound or utterance.
3. **Repetition Process:** Here, the child constantly repeats the sounds, words, or phrases so that they can be a matter of habit carefully imprinted in the mind.
4. **Conditioning Process:** Here, the child constantly rehearses the sounds, words or phrases. The language behaviors take up the shape of linguistic environment.

### **Mentalist/Nativist/Innateness**

This theory contends that a kid is born with an inborn understanding of the universe and language in its entirety. Language is learned because people have the innate ability to do it as part of their regular physiological processes.



These inborn mechanisms are what Clack (1979) referred to as language acquisition devices (LAD), and they provide children an automatic capacity to learn.

## **Language Learning**

Many academics consider education as a condition and ongoing process that begins at birth. According to one definition, the study of the fundamental ideas, theories, and methods that guide language instruction and learning is the field of language education. In order to reconstruct, one uses psychological theories and concepts in language instruction. teaching and learning of languages. According to Rodgers (1986), language acquisition takes place in a situation where topics are chosen, assessed, and activities are planned to encourage language usage. The practice of lashing in the educational setting also helps students internalize the language's rules. These are the ideas that Rodger (1986) implemented in language learning.

## **Structural View**

According to this perspective, language serves as a structurally connected component for the coding of meaning. The goal of learning a language is to master the system's components, which are typically described in terms of phonological units, grammatical units, and lexical units.

### **i. International View**

Language learning is seen as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relation for the performance of social transactions between individuals. Language learning is a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relation.

### **ii. Functional View**

Language learning is, viewed as a vehicle for expression of functional meaning. It emphasises the semantic and communicative dimension of language learning. The questions that are still posed before us are: what does language teaching involve? What does a language Teachers do in a language class? In trying to respond to the above question, Williams (1990:23) gives answer to it by stating that language teaching syllabus embraces content and activities which refers to certain objectives and identified in terms of development linguistic competence and communication competence: processes are identified in terms of language learning or acquisition. Development other words, language teaching entails development both linguistic and communication competence and the process that is involved in achieving the two competencies s other through learning or acquisition.

## **Problems Facing Language Education in Nigeria**

First and foremost, the government did not view the implementation of language education as being included in the national policy on education. For instance, in Lagos State, pre-primary education is primarily handled by private schools, and the majority of them consider the language of the immediate community to be inferior so they do not include it in their curricula. In order to engage the public in conversation, they prefer to promote foreign languages. They gloat that the government has approved the schools. If the school was approved by the government while not adhering to the national policy on education, this would indicate that the government is actively seeking to undermine the plan that it has created.

## **Inadequate Funding**

**Inadequate Funding:** Language education asks that whatever is necessary to ensure that its aim is realized must be done without production and that it shall be given key emphases in all educational planning and development, which is another issue that language education in this country's educational system faces (NPE 2004). The government's dedication to placing focus on this goal is admirable, but the expected results have not yet materialized despite their



efforts. The decrease of language education has been caused by the current administration. With the growing number of students, the necessary infrastructure, research facilities, instructional aids, and other tools are not keeping up. Who will receive an education is primarily determined by the funding methods used. The blame continues to come from the government and other sources at the elementary school level when it is claimed that the language of the immediate environment is the language of instruction. The government promise on paper to develop the orthography for the chosen three major languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) and produce textbooks on them, but government not been able to carry out this issuance of the policy in 1981.

In recent time, attention has been shifted to computer education, thereby realizing the number of people who are interested in pursuing Nigeria language to computer, thus creating lack language teachers in Nigeria schools and it hardly you can see people go for language education in our society today.

**Falling Standards of Education:** Is at all level and this is due to a combination of factors incidentally the most obvious reason for this belief is the performance of student in all levels in both spoken and written of their language.

Also falling standard of education has been attributed to such factors as un conducive teaching and learning environment lack of or inadequacy of instructional and learning facilities attitude of society, methodological problems, ineffective teaching, inefficient management, and strike action by teachers etc. Otagburuagu and Anyanwu (2002) all this factors affect the teaching and learning of language for as Cheong (1983) put it. "Internal and external constraints placed on the learning of school subject are constant placed on learning of classroom language".

### **Quality and Quantity of Teaching**

The instructor has been described as the most crucial component of traditional educational systems. This is acknowledged by FRN (2004), which claims that "positive education systems can climb above the caliber of their professors. Therefore, one goal of teacher education is to create highly motivated, responsible, and effective teachers at all levels of education.

The teacher has been referred as to most important element and normal education systems FRN (2004) known ledges this when it states that "pro education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. So teacher education aims among other at producing highly motivated conscientious and efficient teachers for all levels of education".

Adeyinka (1992) opined that some of the teachers in the society today "use teaching as a stepping stone, to better grow" this situation has serious effect on the teaching and learning, small the importance of experience to understood.

### **Prospects**

Language is helpful for talking about highly specific topics, such as when comprehending the content of a scientific study paper or getting the minute details of a design specification right. Contact is always casual and, on occasion, more accurate.

Speaking to your team in their native tongue has obvious advantages if you work in project leadership or training. On a more practical level, it is simply excellent to be able to get along with and communicate effectively with all of your coworkers, and this is only possible through learning a second language because things usually move smoothly in that regard.

One who is knowledgeable about language education can talk career in the following areas, the media, the entertainment, information technology, language instructors, linguistic and so on. Your language may also put you in best position to get work abroad, if this appeals to you.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Understanding languages, especially indigenous languages like Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, requires a strong command of a language. Promoting comprehension of the necessity of taking both the subject and the language into account is



one of the main objectives of teaching any language. Language education is crucial to producing or encouraging the development of language for national development because it provides students with the fundamental tools that any object topic utilizes in activities or processes like observing, classifying, and assessment in language. The problem of language education in Nigeria can be resolved, and the standard of our diplomas can be ensured, by the efficient execution of educational programs.

### **Recommendation**

Since it serves as the cornerstone upon which all other educational levels are constructed, a strong foundation for language education should be established in our Technological Schools and students should be encouraged to take an interest in language studies in Nigeria. The evolution of other use's language will continue to lag behind that of other international cultures.

This topic of teacher training and growth notably in the domain of teaching and learning of language has been highlighted but must be underlined again. No nation, they say, can arise beyond the standards of its professors. Better teacher preparation results in better academic performance. The government should be able to meet the demands for language in the educational system and take whatever budgetary measures are necessary to ensure that goals must be achieved without bias.

To carry out the actions involved in language acquisition in the educational system, however, focus must be shifted to the field of facilities and instructional materials.

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