

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE: EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Communication is a means by which human being relates with one another irrespective of distance, race or colour. Through communication and language, new things, ideas and experiences are learnt and shared. These two factors help people to know each other and place. This study has its focus on communication and language as effective tools for cultural development. The study attempted to state the importance of communication and language as well as employing people to hold firm to their cultures especially those ones that are good and to emphasize their richness. It also tried to define some concepts and stated or x-rayed the relationship between communication and language as tools for cultural development. The work was concluded with some reasonable recommendations based on positive argument.

Keywords: Communication, language, effective tool, cultural development

INTRODUCTION

Communication and language are two different concepts that are very important for cultural development. They are un-seperatable in as much as culture is concerned. Through communication, man is able to reach places and as he goes, he learns the culture of the place. At the same time, he interacts with people in the different languages they speak. He is able to learn and shared new experiences through the use of language. Communication and Language have been in existence from creation of the world, though through their various developmental and evolutionary stage, for instance, the evolution of signs and symbols like the Egyptian hieroglyphics into written communication of today. The language God used was understood by these things and for them to appear means that something was communicated. Both communication and language changes with time. In the olden days, people travel by foot, on donkeys, camels and horses, etc. which takes a lot of time and days for one to achieve his aim of traveling or movement from one place to the other.

These days, there are faster means of communication which includes, by car, train, ship, aeroplane, etc. The same change occurs in language. We have the old and the new orthography invented by some scholars and

lexicographers which was as a result of change that occurred in our daily life. Such changes are seen in some languages like Igbo language. Most of the things we practice as our culture today differs from what they use to be in the past although some of them have been modified but very many of them are corrupted. We can see this from our mode of dressing, etc. The same thing is applicable with English language where we had the old English word like 'Thy' but the new English word is 'your'. For better understanding of the topic, this paper has attempted to define some of the concepts in the write-up.

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English (2002) defines communication as a message or a letter, as the various methods of sending information between people and places especially official systems such as post system, radio, telephone, cell phone, text messages computer, internet services and non-verbal communication, etc. and through the use of information and communication technology (ICT). These are ways through which people form relationship with each other and understand each other's feelings. A way of moving from one place and another." According to Encyclopedia (Britannica, 1992), communication is the means of human interaction through which cultural characters-whether customs, rules, roles, rituals, laws or other patterns are created and shared". Without communication media, it would be impossible to preserve and pass down cultural patterns from one generation to another. That means that culture is created, shaped, transmitted and learnt through communication. Communication is a means of transferring, traveling and moving of goods and services from one place to another as well as sending messages from one place to another. There are two means of communication - the old means and the modern means of communication.

The old means of communication includes: use of signs, symbols, signals, white clay on the walls, traditional palm frond and sounds such as the use of town crier, etc., while the modern means of communication includes radio, television, faxes, Internet, podcast, text message, phones, computer, wireless sets etc. The modern means of communication include; Telephone and mobile phone or cell phones, text messages, computer, etc. Sophisticated modern communication system such as telecommunication systems radio services newspapers and periodicals have been evolved to replace the old ones. With the invention of telephones, cables, radio, television and the Internet, news could be easily transmitted especially in emergency situations when saving of time is essential.

Communication devices: Communication has been with people for as long as they existed. It takes place on one to one basis, group to group, one to group, group to one etc. The means of communication like other societal amenities are many and dynamic. Communication devices are of two types.

THE TRADITIONAL AND MODERN COMMUNICATION DEVICES

The Traditional Devices include:

- a Gongs:- usually to summon people.
- b Gunshots:- to alert people to prepare for an event
- c Drum beats, usually to indicate a festival or existence of an important event.
- d Town criers:- people move around to convey message usually from the rules or make announcements to the community.

Modern Communication Devices include:

- (a) Radio and television which are now used to convey information on a large scale
- (b) Telephone
- (c) Wireless hand sets
- (d) Newspapers and magazine
- (e) Internet (I CT)

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Social enhances social interaction. It promotes peace stability and understanding, Economics improves the livelihood activities of the people like trading etc. Politically, it bridges gap between the leaders and followers. It enables the rulers to contact the masses and vice versa. Generally, it facilitates the development of the society. Information communication technology is the most modern and comprehensive means of communication. It is electronic and can serve multiple purposes. It is in form of internet and e-mail. The ICT has some advantages over other communication devices such as browsing anti-society sites on the Internet. It is very efficient, saves time, convenient, carries or convey large volume of information and entertainment. In spite of its advantages the ICT has the following disadvantages. Having access to other people document stored in the internet. Committing crimes like 419, fraud, browsing immoral sites like phonograph.

Having access to foreign culture which may not be suitable to our aspirations (MDGS project 2010) (with it, people cannot learn from call other).

Language is considered to be a system of communication with other people using sounds, symbols and words in expressing a meaning, idea or through. Lado (1964) sees language as a unit and pattern of sounds of cultural meaning which constitutes the system of communication and as a chief instrument of communication by which words are put together. This means that language assists in the dissemination of other aspects of culture.

Emenyonu (1997) opines that language is any code employed for giving, receiving, hiding and distorting information. Other scholars according to Okafor (2010) sees language as a means of communicating ideas, specifically human speech, the expression of ideas by voice, sounds, expression of thoughts, articulated by the organs of the mouth and the throat. Since we have seen that

language is a major means of communicating ideas and knowledge, it will be wise to talk on the roles of language as an effective tool for cultural development. Language, as a powerful means of communication has a major role to play a multi-cultural society like Nigeria for peaceful co-existence of the people. Language in actual sense has always been an indispensable tool for national integration. Language differentiates human beings from other animals across all geographical barriers.

ROLE OF LANGUAGE AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION

The vital role which language plays in human life cannot be overemphasised.

- i. Language is the most powerful tool for all terms of learning.
- ii. It is essential for thinking and for abstract reasoning all of which are active ingredients for learning.
- iii. it is a means of imparting knowledge, transfer of culture and belief and the acquisition of skills and competence are essentially the use of language.
- iv. Language is a basic tool without which it would be difficult for people to live together, think, act and share ideas together.
- v. Ideas, knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes, learning, etc can be only be acquired when a language is used.
- vi. Language dominates in everything done in our society by the government, individuals and groups.
- vii. It helps people to develop their own history and sharing of life experiences.
- viii. It helps in the learning of other people's language patterns, rituals, habits and customs, etc.
- ix. It equally plays a vital role in shaping character and behaviour
It is one of the basic identification tools.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: TOOLS AND CULTURE

Tools can be referred to as anything that can be used for perform a work. Tools are instrument for work. It is like a vehicle that conveys goods and services from one place to the other. Tool is a means by which thoughts, feelings, etc can be expressed or passed on from one place to the other. From the above definitions of the concept of tools, one can say that communication and language are inter-related because the two concerns man and all the activities he undertakes within and outside his environment.

Culture can be defined as people's way of life, belief, values, attitudes, religion, etc. Culture is communication as communication is culture. Culture is the sum total of the learned behaviour of the people and are transmitted from generation to generation. It is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group of people from another. Culture refers

to the complex collection of knowledge, folklore, language, rules, rituals, habits, lifestyles, attitudes, beliefs and customs that link and give a common identity to a particular group of people at a specific point in time (<http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles>)

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English (2002), also defined culture as 'way of life especially general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time. Culture comprises the assumptions, values, norms and tangible signs of people in a group or community. The people's ways of thinking and behaviour are a cultural aspect of life and anything to which a country, state town or community or people are known for is referred to as the people cultural identity. All culture shares certain common functions although, each culture is unique in its nature, such functions include:

- i. Linking individuals to one another
- ii. Providing the basic for a common identity.
- iii. Creating a context for interaction and regulation among members.
- iv. Helps to minimize crime rate.
- v. It is a means of understanding other people's tradition and belief.

ASPECTS OF CULTURE

Language, food, mode of dressing and greeting, religion, marriage, etc. are the aspects of culture. These aspects are classified into two: Material and Non-material culture.

The material culture: is born by man in order to satisfy him. They are those visible or concrete things man invents and are seen and observed as culture products of any society. Such material cultures include houses, cars, furniture, bridges, etc. Material culture is always the outgrowth of non-material culture which means that material culture is meaningless without non-material culture. The non-material culture consists of the knowledge, philosophy, morals, motivation, Language attitudes, values etc.

Non-material culture: is shared and transmitted in a society. Non-material culture can be termed intangible element of culture that acquired by members of a society and they are often manifested through the behaviour of the people in the society. That is to say that through material and Non-material culture, ideas, experience, etc are communication to the people.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: DEVELOPMENT

The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1998) defines development as a stage of growth or advancement; new event or circumstances, fully-grown state. In the same phase, Webster's concise English Dictionary (2006) opines that development is growth, a stage of growth 'a new product or inventions.

Relationship between Communication and Language: From the above definitions of communications, Language, tools, culture and development, one will be able to say that communication and language are inter-related in that both affects man and all the activities he undertakes within and outside his

environment. When we talk about relationship, we are discussing on the ways in which communication and language are united or the effect which they have on each other. The relationship between the two is that both of them are means of expressing and sending messages used by human beings. Through communication and language, human relationship can be developed or revived. Both communication and language can be expressed verbally or by signs (non-verbal). They are aspects of culture of the people.

Languages are taught through communication and are used for communicating ideas, etc. they are tools for achieving purpose. They perform the interaction, function of establishing and maintaining social or business relationship. Success in anything or organization depends very largely on effective communication through language.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussions in this paper, no human society can develop without a language. And so, if a country wants to develop to a greater height especially Nigeria, our different cultural heritage must be up held as well as our languages. They are our pride and should be maintained. As a result, it was recommended that awareness should be created for the masses to learn and know their language especially the indigenous languages so that they would know the importance of their language. This will help to enhance the mastering and good use of the different languages in our environment. People should respect other people's culture for a peaceful co-existence of the people.

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