

The Relevance of ICT in the Teaching of Mother Tongue

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Abstract

We are in the days of increasing technology. New ideas systems and ways of doing things emerge every day. The usefulness of information and communication technology as a facilitator or effective teaching of indigenous language or mother tongue cordially be over-emphasized. Scientific thinking and learning requires an adequate command of languages for the effective use and understanding of concepts. Hence this summation is making relevant suggestions and recommendations that will enhance optimum of modern instructional technology in the teaching of mother tongues in Nigeria.

Keywords: Relevance, ICT, Teaching, mother tongue.

Introduction

The place of mother tongues in learning can never be under estimated. Learning in the mother tongue is very important in the early years of pupils' learning. Mother tongue is the very first language the child comes in contact with, in early years.

Language (mother tongue) is so important that it leads to all round development of the child. It is not only useful in accelerating learning but in all areas of one's life. It is a vehicle with which the learner can carry out the functions of life effectively.

Mother tongue is so important that the Federal Government has realized its roles by including it in the National Policy on Education (NPE). According to the policy, a child must learn at least one other Nigerian language apart from his or her mother tongue. In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child be encourage to learn language other than his own mother tongue.

Researches have shown that a child learns faster when taught in his/her mother tongue rather than a foreign language (Chumbow, 1998 & Bamgbose, 1992). Experiments in Philippines, Mexico and Nigeria have proved this to be true. 'In Nigeria the Ife project showed clearly that children taught in Yoruba while learning as a second language perform very well. They presented themselves in English, which they learned as a second language and they were significantly better than those children who learned directly in English (Chumbow, 1998).

Thus, as far as education is concerned, empirical arguments favour the need for our children to start their education in their mother tongue and move up with the language as far as possible in the developmental process because psychologically, we will be maximizing the intellectual potentials of the child.

In addition to appreciating the importance or information communication technology in the educational process, computer literacy is uplifted in almost all Nigeria educational institutions to serve as a means of enhancing or promoting education in the country.

Information

Means discovery about knowledge while information technology is the study or use of electronic equipment e.g. computers for storing, analyzing and distributing information of the kinds including words, numbers and pictures.

According to Asimiyu (1999) Educational Technology can be seen as the application revolution that led to the production and use of quite a range of electronic information it carries. 'In other perspective is a systematic way of designing, carrying out and evaluating the total process of learning according to specific objectivity based on research for more effectivity based on research for more effective instruction'.

Mother Tongue is the first language of a child.

Relevance of Information and Communication Technology to the Teaching of Indigenous/Mother Tongue

Language teaching is highly necessary as a tool for the emerging technologies. The present technology with all that is associated with is from the Western world and since

everything is coded in its (western world) language we need to teach indigenous languages to be able to interpret technology in our mother tongue (Yoruba). This is important for a certain number of reasons, some of which are as follows: instructional manuals attached to some of the modern equipment that are written in the language of the manufacturers and only those who understand this language can successfully operate or manipulate them.

There are in fact seven synthetic forms of English in these manuals. Showing carelessness a disregard for safety of life and property. What is more disturbing is that attempt is made to communicate whereas many of these companies employ experts and professionals to write manuals for them for similar products going to other countries. This is very necessary especially in Nigerian language that are still undergoing structural and grammatical development.

The marginalization of Nigerian language is highly visible in air travel where there is no local language content in airline information and safety packages. Airline flying into Nigeria address Nigerians in foreign languages, Nigerians airports are not friendly to local people; although at least 54% of travelers are bound to fall statistically within the bracket of those who can neither read nor write, nor understand English or other European languages. If safety is communicated in a language one understands, they won't risk their lives.

First, he must help the students to find meaning and gain experience in indigenous language by developing an appreciation for the indigenous language. Then he must help his students to relate to life and finally to understand the rudiments of the language.

In more specific terms, the first thing an indigenous language teacher should bear in mind when teaching is that the subject is a personification of life. It is not that often –dreaded subject which is thought to be remote from the reality of life, it is relevant to everyday life. Hence, it should be animated, contextualized and therefore made exciting to students. There is no room for the theory of 'arts for arts' sake' in the subject once the teacher is ready to put life in the subject and draw analogies between it and life's everyday events a good start has been made and the students will be highly motivated to read the passages.

Making use of technology in teaching mother tongue/indigenous languages will arouse the students' interest as it does expand the possible modalities of teaching. It also aids some measure of reality to learning and measures the view of reasoning of the learners. The teacher while making use of the new technology will be provided with more reflective materials for instruction improvement. In fact, the teaching will not be subjected to difficulty in record keeping and evaluation.

The relationship between information communication technology and language is symbiotic. Both mutually reinforce each other. Language is the medium through which the collective knowledge of every culture is stored and transmitted. On the other hand, in order to protect the unique elements of various indigenous knowledge systems, the supporting language of the cultures that developed these knowledge systems must be made available to information technology in all forms and at all levels. This is particularly important because human civilization is fast tending toward the knowledge age in which human interaction will be heavily mediated by information technology in all forms and at all levels. This is particularly important because human civilization is fast tending towards the knowledge age in which human interaction will be heavily mediated by information technologies. As we

proceed into the knowledge era, it becomes imperative that African languages be made relevant to developments in information technology by the development of Human Language Technology for these languages.

Application of ICT to the Teaching of Mother Tongue/Indigenous Language

In this era of continuous changes, language teaching is highly necessary and helps in the moral upbringing of both the students and the teachers themselves since teachers are the first role models for students and later students meet and interact with the way teachers help shape their future. Any misuse of words either by error or omission or commission is believed to be the right use of such words proper training in the use of language could save the teacher from the use of language could save the teacher from the wrong use of phrases or words that have more than one meaning.

The relevance and effectiveness of information and communication technology to the teaching of three components or indigenous languages are language, literature and culture.

Video conference and interaction radio are chosen for their characteristics. These characteristics suit teaching and learning of mother tongue/indigenous languages literature.

Interactive radio is a technology that makes one way communication of teaching and learning interactive. It is this interaction that makes interactive radio suitable for teaching and learning indigenous language literature.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Having gone through all the above; it is obvious that indigenous language teaching (mother tongue) occupied a central place in the life of a nation especially in its educational sector in this jet age. The advantages which cannot be exhaustively discussed here include moulding the society, directing and developing it.

Relevance of information and communication technology to the teaching of indigenous languages (mother tongue) cannot be over-emphasized. Teachers of indigenous language at all levels of our educational system should endeavor to use information communication technology in teaching indigenous languages to students. This will make the subject attractive, appealing and interesting to the learners. Nigeria as a nation should give ICT a priority so that every individual is motivated towards the technology. The government should provide both materials and manpower aid computer training.

More so, we recommend the adoption of voice based technology which integrate well with our historical path of morality as a strategy for information documentation and transmission. We need to invest in research and development in Nigeria languages in order to eliminate the illiteracy barrier. Such a center will not only facilitate research but also engage in advocacy. The center will initiate the addition of local content to ICT, engage in modernization of Nigeria languages through the development and dissemination of terminologies.

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