

# PHILOSOPHY, LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION IN AFRICA



**Osita Nnajofofor  
Maduka Enyimba  
Igwedibia, Eugenia Adaoma**

# **PHILOSOPHY, LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION IN AFRICA**

**Osita Nnaji**

*Department of Philosophy  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka*

**Maduka Enyimba**

*Department of Philosophy  
University of Calabar, Nigeria*

&

**Igwedibia, Eugenia Adaoma**

*Department of English and Literal Studies  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka*

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Eugenia Adaoma, 2024

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+2348063966031/+2348030937732

enyimbamauka@gmail.com/ositannajiofor@gmail.com

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## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to all our students, past and present

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We return all glory to God who made it possible for this book to see the light of the day. We thank the publishers for their magnanimity and benevolence in the publication of this book.

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## FOREWORD

One of the greatest desires, aims and purposes of humans is to employ their cognitive power to dominate, domesticate and add value to their lives, environment and society. This can be actualized through education. But education can only perform these functions meaningfully when the right language of instruction is employed, and a sound philosophy grounds it. This points to the relationship between philosophy, language and education, and their relevance to each other in the cognitive, psycho motive and overall development of a learner. This complementary, interrelatedness of philosophy, language and education has implications for the nature and content of education curriculum, and the mind of the African learner or child. The challenge of the use of English language and the neglect of indigenous African languages in education of the African child is also a topical issue that must not be ignored. These are some of the many contemporary issues raised and discussed by the authors in this illuminating book titled *Philosophy, Language and Education in Africa*.

This book written by the trio of Drs Osita Nnajiolor, Maduka Enyimba & Igwedibia, Eugenia Adaoma is a work of incisive research and inventive genius. It is also a book of the times as it meets the contemporary challenges facing the country's educational system. The book captures and encapsulates the major issues that are latent in the discourse in contemporary educational system in a country like Nigeria, and a continent like Africa. The true beauty of this book is the wealth of materials interwoven in a coherent whole which makes it a ready resource material in philosophy, language and education. I commend the worthy intellectual efforts of these ebullient scholars for providing us with another intellectual diet. I recommend this book for all lovers of knowledge.

**Professor Ephraim Ahamefula Ikegbu**

*Department of Philosophy*

*University of Calabar, Calabar*

## PREFACE

The book *Philosophy, Language and Education in Africa* is a product of a consistent and detailed intellectual excursion by ebullient academics whose intellectual savvy and doggedness traversed all sections of philosophy. The authors are concerned with the need to expose the society with topical and existential issues in the society relating to the interrelatedness of the phenomena of language, philosophy and education in Nigeria as a nation, and in Africa as a continent. This book is a harvest of their academic sojourn.

As the title implies, it is a very critical and reflective text meant to be seen on the shelves of every conscious being that is keen to know the challenges and prospects of philosophy, language and education in the development of an individual African and the continent of Africa in contemporary time. The thematic findings of this book cuts across issues and topics on curriculum development, indigenous language, language of education, philosophical foundation of education, indoctrination in education, etc, and their influences on the African and their world.

The simplicity and conversational nature of the language used in writing the book makes it an important and rich research material for all categories of persons as knowledge acquisition is for everyone. This book is relevant for different categories of persons such as educationists, policy makers, language scholars/experts, philosophers of education, and philosophers of language, educational administrators, curriculum designers, and students of these adjunct disciplines.

**Osita/Maduka Igwedibia, 2024**

# *Chapter 1*

## **THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION AND THE LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In contemporary philosophy, analysis has come to be seen as the major concern of philosophy such that philosophers of this period are involved in the clarification of concepts and language in order to determine the sense of their usage and function in a given context or discourse. Philosophical problems are therefore seen as linguistic problems such that to solve such problems is to engage in some sort of analysis or clarification of concepts. Following this, this chapter demonstrates how philosophy lays a foundation for the education enterprise, as well as the nature of the language of education. It does this by first, clarifying the concepts of education, philosophy, philosophy of education, and language of education thereby establishing a relationship between philosophy, education and language. This analysis further unveils the fundamental role of language in education. The chapter contends that whereas education involves basically the transmission of societal values and norms from one generation to the other for the overall development of the individual and the society at large, philosophy charts the ontological, ideological and existential course which the educational system ought to follow in order to achieve its ideals. Moreover, it is argued that as a vehicle or medium of communication and transmission of both philosophical and educational ideals, language must be carefully and purposefully chosen if the right forms of education and philosophy that is useful for the African child must be achieved in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **1.2 What is Education?**

Education is a commonly used term which has various meanings for different people. Yet it is a very important concept to the society. It has been loosely or simply defined as knowledge, enlightenment or wisdom. This definition tends to make education a synonym of science and this is not very correct. Hence, it is grossly inadequate. For Egunjobi and others, education is the process of transmitting societal lore, values and desirable attitudes from one generation to another in order to socialize individuals so as to equip them with the desired mode of behavior that is in conformity with the way of life of the society in which they live (2006, 1). What this definition suggests is that education aims at inculcating in individuals some forms of knowledge, abilities, skills or behaviours that enable them function in their immediate environment and to contribute meaningfully to the society at large.

Education involves a desirable change in human behavior. B. O Ukeje agrees that education occurs whenever any influence produces a change in the physical and mental behavior of a person (1966, 20). What is significant about these definitions is that it points at a positive change in human behavior as a mark of good education. In this sense, the definition of education as a process that changes the learner becomes very informative here. This definition entails that to learn is to change. For most scholars, education is a bunch of deceitful ideas or processes which is used to delude the people to become stooges, servants and slaves to the ruling class. For this set of scholars, education then becomes a political weapon in the hands of the ruling power to foster their will on the masses by means of distortion and misrepresentation. Kelvin Harris (1978) is one scholar who toes this line of thought.

According to him, education is among other things, a process that, in certain political circumstances, transmits as knowledge structured distorted misrepresentations of the world. For him, “to find those particular political circumstances one needs not necessarily seek out totalitarianism or turn to horror regimes such as Nazism, one can look much closer to home – for in any capitalist liberal democracy, education functions to transmit to each new generation a structural misrepresentation of reality (Harris 1978). On his part J A Akinpelu is very critical of these various conceptions of education. He describes some of them as narrow, unduly restricted and therefore, inadequate. Hence, like Harris he avers that education is much more than the activities that that takes place within the four walls of a school (1981, 174).

However, if education is understood from the perspective of A. S Hornby, then it would involve the process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills (1988, 169). This definition of education suggests two major constituents namely, teaching and learning. In other words, teaching and learning are essential part of the educational process, which is geared towards the impartation of knowledge and the development of certain skills in the learner, which he originally, did not possess (Enyimba 2015). This means that there has been a change in the learner’s overall being or personality.

The implication of the above is that a person is said to have acquired education if in addition to developing some skills, he/she has acquired new experiences, which must have caused some forms of changes in his/her behavior. This explains why degrees are awarded in the universities and other tertiary institutions in ‘character and learning’. That is to say that the ‘behaviour and experiences’ of such a person is considered of

utmost importance before a degree is awarded to him as an educated person.

In fact, the definition given by Egunjobi and others seems to serve our purpose here. According to them, education is the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage in order to foster continuously the well being of mankind and guarantee its survival against the unpredictable, a times hostile and destructive elements and forces of man and nature (2006, 2). A. S Orji corroborates this definition when he asserts that it is not only as many people think of as what goes on within the four walls of a school, education would be the sum total of all the experience whether formal or informal, which a man comes across in his journey of life. It is the continuous development of the physical, mental and spiritual potentialities of man to enable him live efficiently and effectively not only for his own benefit but also for that of the society in which he finds himself (Orji 2002, 3).

The point that needs to be noted here is that education does not refer only to the activities which take place in the four walls of a school but also outside of it. Hence, education can be both formal and informal. In as much as there is a learning process in which certain changes have taken place in which certain changes have taken place in the behaviours and experiences of the learner. Orji observes that this change can be overt or covert, explicit or implicit, intellectual or physical. In whatever form this change takes place it is irrelevant, but if one is educated there must be a form of change in that person's life.

If education is understood from the above perspective then one will begin to see education as essentially learning, and learning as an essential aspect of education. Hence, education is a

learning process which involves the acquisition of new skills with the aim to ensuring positive changes in the behavior of the learner. The question that should occupy one's mind at this juncture is how does education and learning impart on one's experiences and behavior? Is the impact positive, negative, permanent or temporary? To answer these questions, the meaning of behaviour and experience must be contextually defined.

Behaviour is simply a person's character. It also refers to the particular way in which a person does things (Hornby 1988, 56). Again, the way a person reacts to others in different situations also involves his/her character or behavior. In such a sense behaviour and character becomes synonymous. Experience on the other hand, refers to the knowledge and skills that one has gained or acquired through doing something for a period of time. It also involves the things that have happened to someone that influence the way he/she thinks or behaves. Following these definitions, one can rightly say that a person's experience can influence what a person has learned or that the type of education he/she has acquired, whether formal or informal influences and affects his behaviour or experiences. This effect or influence is expected to be positive, desirable and permanent for it to pass as education.

### **1.3 What is Philosophy?**

Usually, in a discourse of this nature, defining philosophy or any concept for that matter would amount to making a catalogue of as many definitions as has been given by different thinkers and philosophers. This is not wrong in itself. Only that it has the merit of assisting the writer to pin down the particular conception which aids him/her in presenting his/her argument in perspective. Thus, philosophy has been defined as a "process of asking questions about the world, about man's place in the

world, and about all aspects of human activity and experience” (Sharma and Hyland, 1991, 1). In other words, there has been attempt from antiquity by philosophers to critically examine the phenomenon of human existence, and to construct some systematic, coherent and consistent picture of all that we know and think.

Philosophy refers to the quest for knowledge about the ultimate causes of things. This is why etymologically; it is known as the ‘love of wisdom’, having been drawn from the Greek words; ‘philien’ and ‘sophia’, which means ‘love’ and ‘wisdom’ respectively. Philosophy has been defined as that search for knowledge or wisdom by means of reflective thinking about man and the universe in which he lives. Philosophy here becomes essentially a reflective activity on the problems and experiences of man and the search for possible solutions to human predicaments. Philosophy is an attribute of the mind which is informed by one’s cultural and existential setting. Philosophy is thus, “culture bound as every philosophy and in effect every philosopher is a product of his socio-cultural environment or setting” (Enyimba 2004, 29).

As Theodore and Lewis (1999) rightly pointed out, philosophical questions can be divided into three broad categories; (a) those that deal with the nature of reality (b) those that deal with the nature of knowledge, and (c) those that deal with the nature of value. These categories correspond to the three major branches of philosophy; metaphysics (the study of the nature of reality) and axiology (the study of nature of value). Following this position, the importance of philosophy to education (teaching and learning) and the relationship between them cannot be overemphasized. For Joseph Omoregbe, philosophy is essentially a reflective activity in search of answer to fundamental questions that arise in the mind when

one reflects on human experiences or actions. Following this definition, we employ the term philosophy in this work to mean the study of the principles underlying the actions and behaviours of men. In other words, philosophy asks the question why? Why does one take a particular course of action and not another? Etc. The answer to such questions forms the foundation of any given act.

#### **1.4 What is Philosophy of Education?**

As J.A Akinpelu rightly pointed out, the term philosophy of education is commonly used to refer to an inquiry into the fundamental nature of the field of education. For him, “the term places education in the centre and philosophy becomes the tool with which to examine the subject-matter which is education” (1981, 1). Philosophy of education is the process of analysis and reflection and the product of that reflection in relation to education and educational objectives. The difference between education and philosophy is very thin. Education borrows some tools and techniques from other disciplines such as philosophy. Thus, philosophy can be applied to education by utilizing the methods, tools, and techniques of philosophy in investigating problems relative to formal and informal education. Both philosophy and education are concerned with solving problems of living, dealing with what is good or bad, desirable and undesirable, and finding out truth and knowledge in any situation without which an appropriate and effective solution cannot be found.

It is this way of looking at education and philosophy that Akinpelu describes as having “great prospects for improving education because it is a method of raising questions for philosophy from the inside of education and finding solutions to educational problems in the process of doing philosophy” (1981, 7-6). Most educational philosophers have argued that

education should indeed raise problems for philosophy to tackle, but the philosophic effort must stop with what it is capable of doing well, namely, elucidating or clarifying concepts, ideas and problems without getting into shady area of constructing the whole educational system. What this position amounts to is that philosophy should refrain from prescribing the course that education ought to take, by limiting its task to a descriptive analysis of educational situations.

On the contrary, we think that the proper function of philosophy in the realm of education is not only to clarify, elucidate and analyze educational situations, problems or ideas, but mainly to chart a course which educational activities must follow and experiences must follow, thereby serving as its foundation. John Dewey was paving a way for philosophy to serve as the foundation of education when he attempted to integrate philosophy with education thus, removing the dichotomy between them (1916). Similarly, according to Akinpelu, “education and philosophy are the obverse and reverse of the same coin; they are both the same thing, only looked at from different angles. Philosophy of education is not an external application of ready-made ideas to a system of practice having a radically different origin and purpose. The most penetrating definition of philosophy which can be given, then, is that “it is the theory of education in its most general phase (1981, 13). In line with this, Bagunde, Olude and Idahosa aver that the philosopher who is interested in education should be in a position to provide a thorough and hard look at the educational system to analyze it and after deep reflection, to produce an alternative system (2006, 1).

Again, the relevance and the relationship of philosophy to education will be better appreciated when we understand that epistemology which deals with the nature, sources and limits of

human knowledge is a core aspect of philosophy, and education deals with the transmission of knowledge. Education, according to Kelvin Harris, “is essentially concerned with the transmission of knowledge, its central concern is that the pupil upon leaving, will know certain things that he did not know on arrival” (1979, 128). Following this, since the business of education is the impartation of knowledge, the teacher or the educationist needs to be clear over what knowledge is and how it is related or different from beliefs and opinions. This will help determine what type of knowledge to expect from the students. Again, as education is concerned with knowledge, impartation, the methods of teaching will be greatly improved on once it is understood that there are different sources of knowledge. Furthermore, since no type of knowledge is perfect and a combination of several types improves our grasps of what knowledge is, the teachers may apply or employ more than one method of teaching where possible. Besides, in the area of curriculum design and development, the decisions involved as to the purpose of learning, sources of subject-matter, characteristics of learning, the nature of teaching/learning process, etc, are founded on certain philosophical principles and ideas. Salawu, Ojerinde and others (2006, 11) recognize this when they asserted that these decisions are based upon fundamental beliefs that arise from a philosophy of education. This made philosophy to be considered and recognized as one of the major foundation areas in curriculum.

The point being made here is that topics in education raise important philosophical issues. For instance, Plato in his *Republic* was concerned with educating people in such a way that a just society would emerge. This he hoped to achieve by improving the individual’s intellect, character, skills and abilities for the better. Other philosophers like Jean J Rousseau theorized on the importance of nature education. The issues

raised by these scholars were aimed at helping man to gain a different view of reality through their influences on the educational policies of the society of their time. From the foregoing, one can begin to gain an insight into the nexus between philosophy and education. However, to further accentuate the points being made, we examine the foundational role of which philosophy play for education.

### **1.5 Philosophy as a Foundation of Education**

Considering what we have defined philosophy to be, there seem to be no action or activity which has no philosophy or reason behind its operation, existence or practice. The same is the case with the act of teaching and learning which constitute what is called education. Thus, according to Honderich, as a foundation for education, philosophical understanding is applied to the illumination of issues on education (Honderich, 1995, 216). What is meant here is that philosophy when applied to teaching and learning undertakes the task of clarifying the aims, content, methods and distribution of education appropriate to contemporary society. It is this sense of philosophy as a foundation of education that J. A Akinpelu was referring to when he quotes George Newsome as saying that “philosophy might also be applied to education by utilizing the methods, tools and techniques of philosophy in investigating problems of formal schooling” (1981, 6). Thus, a person’s or nation’s philosophical disposition on several issues can and do influence their educational processes and systems.

Similarly, Akinpelu opines that some metaphysical (philosophical) theories do influence our teaching methods in the classroom and one of the tasks of philosophy of education is to explore such theories and expose whatever is still valid in them. In this way, the teacher is made aware of the assumptions behind his activities and no longer teaches in ignorance. John

Dewey as quoted by Sharma and Hyland et al shows the centrality of philosophy to educational study. According to him, if we are willing to conceive education as a process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education (1991, 8).

The point to be noted is that the connection between philosophy and the process of teaching and learning have been in evidence from earliest times and philosophers have traditionally focused their critical attention to all aspects of the educational process. Indeed, philosophy forms one of the foundation disciplines in curriculum design and development. This is why R. Ndifon (2004) stresses that for any educational curriculum to be useful; it must be autochthonous, in that it must have a true reflection of the nation's philosophy of life (Ndifon 2004, 109). This is because it is through the curriculum that every philosophy of education finds its fulfillment and actualization. Okafor tends to support the above view when in an attempt to examine the relationship of philosophy to the area of curriculum and instruction, quotes Thomas Hipkins as saying that:

Philosophy has entered into every important decision that has been made about curriculum and teaching in the past and will continue to be the basis of every important decision in future. There is rarely a moment in a school day when a teacher is not confronted with occasions where philosophy is a vital part of action, an inventory of solutions... (Okafor, 1981, 19).

What is important to note in the above assertion is that, whether today's education is to help solve today's problems and to assist the young African to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes

and value that will enable them to be responsible and effective citizens in the world tomorrow, will depend by and large, on the educator's and society's approach to curriculum. The content of the curriculum and the nature of its implementation will depend on such philosophical perception as the nature of man and society and the issues related to human values and human destiny.

G. U Umoren, attempts to show the philosophy behind the study of (environmental) education. According to her, the philosophy behind environmental education is to unravel the justification or need for teaching the people and learning about the environment (Umoren 1998, 96). Why do we need to study about the environment? This forms the foundation for the teaching and learning of environmental education, education, and the resolution of such problems requires philosophical analysis and treatment (1998, 89). Quoting Kneller, Humphrey and Charles aver that philosophy (of education) as a foundational discipline is an attempt at working out a systematic framework of concepts and values which will assist in the selection and fragment of educational goals and policies. But these goals, they continue:

Can be considered realistically only to the extent that they are related to other more general questions such as, the nature of the reality to which we belong, the meaning of life and of himself, of the society he lives in and of the political responsibilities he must assume (2005, 48).

Okoh's remark is also significant here. According to him, as a foundational discipline, philosophy of education takes the theoretical findings of philosophy and translates them into some kind of practical proceed of teaching and learning

(education). In fact, the interconnection of education with philosophy cannot be undermined. Philosophy lays a foundation for the discipline of education and analyses, elucidates and clarifies problems, ideas and concepts in education, their efforts at presenting mankind with knowledge of reality. We have demonstrated how philosophy serves as a means of solving educational problems by adopting a method which involves gathering all that have been said in the discipline of education and through the process of analysis arrives at a genuine differentiation, categorization and justification of education. This kind of attitude or approach leads philosophy to a holistic and clear account of education. The next section will consider the relationship between language and education.

## **1.6 Education, Language of Education and their Interrelation**

What is language? What is the role of language in education? Is there a relationship between language of instruction and the type of values or ideas transmitted or communicated in the education process? What is the language of education? These questions are not some of the very easy ones to answer. In a country like Nigeria, a continent like African, such questions are not just very important, but have deep implications for the development and shaping of the mind of the African child as a learner. The question of the place of language in education is becomes a form of moral question when we begin to ask, what type of language should be used as a tool of transmission of educational ideals? Should the language of instruction in schools and classrooms in (Nigeria) Africa be a colonial language or an indigenous language? Whatever our response we might wish to give, a moral dilemma presents itself to us.

For example, if we opt for a colonial language as a language of instruction, we are faced with re-colonization of the minds of the African learner. A kind of colonial mentality is being propagated, and the African indigenous languages continue to be neglected and prejudiced. And if we opt for an indigenous African language, we are faced with the problem of which one out of the numerous African languages will be more universally acceptable even by the Africans themselves. Besides, how many of the teachers or instructors of education have mastery of their own indigenous language? Many of them are victims of 'linguistic colonialism'. Moreover, scholars who frown at any suggestion at using African language in communicating intellectual and scholarly matters would raise alarm, usually, against the fact that in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, one should be moving along with developments in the modern world by reasoning along even linguistically with universally spoken language for easy communication and dissemination of ideas across the globe, instead of a backward look at mundane languages that are spoken and understood by just a few. There is a whole lot of debate of this issue. But for the want of space and to avoid the risk of veering off the focus of this book, we will not go into this debate here. What we will be doing in a moment is to conceptualize the notion of language as briefly as possible, and demonstrate its relationship with education, and show how this might be of benefit to the African learner.

Language is has been construed as a human non-instinctual act that is learnt. Although the disposition to learn language may be a product of instinct, it has its semantic, syntactic, phonetic, morphemic and semiotic dimensions (Ozumba 2004, 18). Language must be seen as a means of communication of ideas and thoughts from one person or group of persons to the other and from one generation to the other. Our use of language becomes meaningful when we follow laid down rules of

structure or syntax. The nature of language is such that it is composed of words, which are later put in form of sentences that express some forms of thought and ideas. Language is constitutive of a collection of vocabularies that make up the lexical content of a given language.

One of the major problems of language that has been identified in the literature is the limited availability of vocabulary and unlimited availability of sentences (Ozumba 2004). This means that one word can have several meanings depending on context, use, intention, and the stipulation of the person using the word. This has given rise to the some problems such as ambiguity, opacity, indeterminacy and fallacies which characterize our use of words. The point is that for words to have meaning (semantics), they must follow rules (syntax), pronounced correctly (phonetics) and must have definite sense and reference. This is so both for indigenous and foreign languages. Language and education provides a forum for the discussion of issues and interactions between language, literacy, and learning and how they come to bear on thought and practice in education, and their implications on for educational policy, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation in education. A clear understanding of the interconnection existing between education and education will help to expose how these influence theory and practice by leading to improved outcomes for the learners. This interconnection and its bearing on learning outcomes, further raise concern for the use of mother tongue and second language as medium of instruction. While it might seem ideal in this era of decolonization in the academia to suggest that a return to the use of indigenous language or mother tongue in classroom instruction and learning would be more beneficial to the African child for instance, focus should rather be on identifying which language children learn best in. Barbara Trudell (2018, 13) in a report submitted to the British

Council on Language and Education in Nigeria, argued that research has shown that within and outside African context, children learn best in a language they understand and speak fluently. Learning in such a language environment carries significant cognitive, socio-emotional and cultural benefits. One of the challenges that this approach to language in, and of education poses for a linguistically complex environment like Nigeria is that it creates confusion on which particular language should be adopted among the multifarious languages in the country and continent at large.

As a result, in order to adopt the best language policy for supporting and enhancing student learning that will provide real quality education to Nigerian (African) children, and provide them with the right knowledge and skills they need for economic well-being and lifelong learning, colonial language (English) became handy. While this may have the benefits of integrating the learning child into the mainstream of modern society and development, it however, separates the child intellectually, emotionally, socially from his/her cultural values, norms, and ideals that indigenous language/mother tongue carries. This is the greatest challenge the language of education or instruction in education presents to educational policy makers, administrators, teachers and stakeholders in the Nigeria (African) educational sector. We must not ignore this with a wave of hand. Research and conferences must continue in this direction despite the double-edged nature of the debate around the subject.

Our concern on this chapter as stated earlier is to draw attention to this challenge and the necessity to look into ways of overcoming it for sake of the Nigerian (African) child in the age of modernization and declining of traditional and cultural values. One way we are doing this in this present chapter is to

reemphasize the intrinsic relationship between education and language. Education which constitutes learning is a complex process of discovery, collaboration and inquiry facilitated by language. Language being a social and humanly contrived route to the representation, exploration, and communication of meaning, is also a defining feature of culture, personal identity, and the formation of interpersonal relationships. It is composed of interrelated and rule governing symbolic systems that enable our understanding of social situations, extension of experiences and reflection on thought and action. Language enables one to contribute societal activities. Hence, as a primary basis of all communication and the primary instrument of thought, language is fundamental and indispensable tool in the theory and practice of education. It is therefore, a tool that must carefully be selected if it must perform its expected function.

To further make sense of the nexus between language and education and its role in the child's learning and development, it is important to note that the learning of language is an active and gradual process that begins at birth and continues throughout an individual's lifetime. As children begin to learn language, they use it to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, establish relationships with family and friends and attempt to make meaning of their world. In school environment, children may come to school speaking more than one language, or learn another language in school. It is recommended that effort should be geared towards maintaining, respecting and building on the child's first language (which in most cases is the mother tongue), as it is believed that experience in one language will enhance the learning of other language and by extension enhance learning and achievement of educational objectives. The responsibility of learning with and through one language other (no matter which) becomes necessarily that of every stakeholder in the

education system, namely, learners (students/pupil/children), parents, teachers, community, educational administrators and government.

The point being made so far is that there is a strong relationship between education and language in the learning process of a child, and in the theory and practice of education. Education relies heavily on language to convey information and knowledge, and language is an important tool of learning. Language also plays a role in shaping our understanding of the world and our cultural identity. In addition, the ability to read and write in a language is an important part of literacy, which is a key component of education. One of the aspects of the relationship between education and language that is quite important for the learner is the role of mother tongue (indigenous language) in education. Mother tongue education refers to the use of a learner's first language or indigenous language as the medium of instruction in the school. Research has shown that such approach to education can have a positive impact on the child's learning as it allows him/her to build on their existing knowledge and skills, and can help to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

This chapter by showing that philosophy, language and education are deeply interrelated introduces the rest of the essays that make up this book. Philosophy can be seen as the foundation of education, as it seeks to understand the nature of knowledge and truth. Language is the tool through which philosophical ideas are communicated and explored. In education, language is used to convey information and ideas, as well as to develop critical thinking and communication skills. Furthermore, education can also be seen as a tool for shaping and transforming language, as it can introduce new concepts

and ways of thinking. Education in relationship with philosophy and language brings about social change, and it emphasizes the role of language in this process. In this sense, language is not simply a neutral tool, but rather it is used to maintain or challenge power structure. This has implication for critical pedagogy. Language is therefore, not only a medium of education, but also an important element of social transformation.

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## Chapter 2

### THE QUEST FOR 'ITIWA SLEETI' AND THE NEGLECT OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

#### 2.1 Introduction

Coming home during festivities like Christmas used to be a memorable one in its entire ramifications. Many activities use to spice up these events which range from the nostalgic event of seeing one's kit and kin after many months and sometimes years of absence. There used to be this feeling of communion and brotherhood among communities and families in the exchange of love and pleasantries. Another remarkable observation is the superior show off of some linguistic skills in English language from children of those who live in the metropolitan cities to impress the villagers and to intimidate their village contemporaries. These village children consciously revere and longed to be like them one day as a result of their linguistic prowess. Most times, these village children were sternly warned by the parents of their metropolitan counterparts not to dare speak indigenous languages to their children lest they be corrupted by the language.

Those who dread these linguistic intimidations are not limited to the children but grown-ups also. This is because of their inability to match their linguistic proficiencies with these city kids. A friend's mum had her own fair share of this harassment from her grandchildren which warranted her to vow, '*ɔwa m ɔzo, agam etiwa sleeti makana bekee bu agbara*' which loosely means *in my next world, I must be an educated fellow because English is a magical language.*

This ‘magical’ attribution to English language and some other western languages is the colonial legacy that is yet to be decolonized from the minds of many Africans even after many years of political independence. African indigenous languages, with all the promises they hold for Africa and African child have been neglected and most of them have gone into extinction because of lack of use by Africans.

The educational system in Africa that should be the custodian of African indigenous languages rights and privileges has not fared well in protecting the rights of an African child. This is why many concerned African educationists have observed that the African child’s major learning problem is a linguistic problem (Paul Obanya, 1980: 88). This is because Instruction is given in a language that is not normally used in his/her immediate environment, a language which neither the learner nor the teacher understands and uses well enough. African languages are given little validity in our educational system. As a result, the knowledge that children have of these languages is ignored. That is why it is urgent that African languages should be given greater attention in terms of being used as media of instruction. The urgency is necessary because the loss of any language by a people is the loss of their root and the loss of their identity and culture:

.... Language and ethnicity are deeply intertwined. While the language a child speaks at home is often a crucial element of personal identity and group attachment, language can be a potent source of disadvantage at school because in many countries children are taught and take tests in languages they do not speak at home. Their parents may also lack literacy skills or familiarity with official languages used in school (Unesco 2014, 198).

The lack of literacy skills and familiarity with these official languages is one of the major reasons that spur most African parents to go out of their way to make sure their children acquire them even at the expense of their indigenous languages. It is against this background that this paper inquiries into the rationale behind the excessive quest by parents for this inordinate acquisition of foreign languages for their children to the point of denigrating their own indigenous languages.

In the first section of this paper, I will consider the concept, nature and some inherent challenges of African indigenous. In the second section, I will show that the genesis of these challenges emanates from the mindless partitioning of Africa by the western powers without considering Africa's language peculiarities and diversities. I will also anchor on the linguistic rights and UN declarations to prove how germane it is to use African indigenous languages and attempt to prove how these rights will help in the promotion of African indigenous languages. In section three, I will consider African indigenous language as the language of communication especially the language used to instruct the African child. I contend that there is a huge disconnect in communicating realities to African child because the languages used for instruction are not understood by the African child. In the final section, I will give a clarification on the concept *itiwa sleeti* and expose some of the reasons for the inordinate quest by African parents to acquire knowledge and be instructed in foreign languages instead of their familiar African languages.

## **2.2 African Indigenous Languages, Linguistic Rights and the Challenge of Communication.**

It is trite to begin this section by defining what we really mean by indigenous language so that it can direct our focus in this paper. When we refer to indigenous language, our scope is Africa especially sub-Saharan African languages. Indigenous language can be construed to mean a language spoken or belonging or connected with a particular place or area which one is talking about or with the place where one lives (Adedeji A, 2015). Here, Adedeji draws his own definition of indigenous language from a residential perspective. A slight departure from above sees Daura in (Oyemike Benson et al, 2017) adding longevity of residence to his definition. According to him, “Indigenous languages are the tribal, native or local language spoken. The language would be from a linguistically distinct community that has been settled in the area for many generations” (Jibir-Daura, 2014). Finally, Adeniyi and Bello (2016) drew specificity of location to their own definition when they observe that “Indigenous language refers to the various native languages spoken in Nigeria, These are languages that are aboriginal to the people”. One point of emphasis from these definitions is the fact that indigenous language is the language which is not alien to people’s culture or background and this language has the capacity of being passed from one generation to another generation.

In contemporary Africa, it is estimated that Africa has the most complex and varied language situation in the world. Viera Vilhanova (2018) referring to UNESCO records observes that over 2,000 languages, 30 percent of the world’s languages are spoken in Africa. This multiplicity of languages seems to be a feature of everyday life in most African countries and it seems that it will remain the norm for a long time to come. Vilhanova

(2018: 247) narrates the complexity of African indigenous languages thus:

Africa is the most multilingual continent in the world and there are very few countries with more than 90 percent ethnic and linguistic homogeneity of population, where one African language is spoken by the people as a mother tongue, namely Somalia (Somali), Swaziland (Seswati), Botswana (Setswana), Burundi (Kirundi), Lesotho (Sesotho) and Rwanda (Kinyarwanda). In some other countries one African language is spoken by the vast majority of the population as a lingua franca. Kiswahili in Tanzania is a case in point. About a hundred of the languages of Africa are widely used for inter-ethnic communication. Arabic, Somali, Berber, Amharic, Oromo, Kiswahili, Hausa, Bamanan/ Manding, Fulani and Yoruba are spoken by tens of millions of people. If clusters of up to a hundred similar languages are counted together, twelve are spoken by 75 percent, and fifteen by 85 percent of Africans as a first or additional language.

The complexity of languages in Africa seems to have a two edged sword consequences. At one point, it can serve as a weapon of development and on other flip side; it can be exploited as a weapon of conflict and division among Africans. When harnessed properly, it can also be used as a medium of influence to propagate African values in our diverse cultures. An African who can communicate in four and five African indigenous languages can effectively communicate African values like honesty, diligence, brotherliness to any culture he find himself/herself within Africa without being an agent of division there. At the other extreme point of exploiting the

complexity of African indigenous languages as a tool of division and conflict, Vihanova (2018) claims that:

The national boundaries of African countries drawn arbitrarily by the colonial powers at conferences in Europe during the time of the imperial partition of the African continent paid little regard to the historical, cultural and linguistic affinity of the Africans thus creating extremely mixed populations and a very complex and varied language situation. A wide range of distinct ethnic groups became assembled in European protectorates and colonies while other ethnic groups found themselves divided by newly established artificial borders and were separated into two or more territories administered by different colonial powers (2018, 247).

The above submission shows that the language situation before the invasion of the west was seamless and more unified but the partitioning of Africa by Europeans changed a lot in the language dynamism and complexities of Africa. The mindless partitioning was done not with the interest of Africans but solely for the European countries interest. The consequences of this linguistic imperialism are mixed population and the variations of language situation currently witnessed in Africa today. This is also why Iyalla Amadi avers that “it should be mentioned that many African languages remained oral languages for very long. This situation was compounded by colonial masters who, not content with colonizing the continent, also colonized the languages found in it” (2015:733).

The above mindless division and partitioning of African languages led Ayo Bamgbose to group African indigenous

languages into major, minority and endangered languages (2011, 2). The major languages are spoken by large numbers of speakers and are almost invariably associated with higher status and perhaps political and economic power. Some of the languages in this category are Swahili, Hausa, Yoruba, Zulu, etc. However, whatever status may be ascribed to major languages, they still rank lower than imported official languages.

The minority languages according to Bamgbose, lack the advantage of numbers as well as status and power being enjoyed by the major language (2011, 3). Their lower status emanates from the fact that it is uneconomical to cater for them because they require huge investment. Since speakers of minority languages learn another language, it is assumed that not much harm is done if their language is ignored.

Endangered languages are evident when there is no attempt to take principled action to preserve these languages and as a result they are held in low esteem. Following the statistics compiled by Matthias Brenzinger et al (1991) indicate that as of 1991, there were 54 Extinct, 67 Near-Extinct and 49 Dying languages in Africa.

Bamgbose established six major characteristics of an endangered language:

1. Very few speakers remaining, most of them old
2. No longer used for any meaningful purpose in the community
3. Not being transmitted to the younger generation
4. No orthography or written materials in it
5. Language shift has taken place such that the language has been or is being replaced by another language
6. On the verge of extinction

Language endangerment is one of the prevailing consequences of negative perception towards multilingualism and this

phenomenon that has become a prominent issue in sociolinguistic studies. This demonstrates that a people deprived of its language are also deprived of its culture and the fear of this deprivation has led to renewed emphasis in the world at large on preservation of endangered languages. How has African indigenous languages fared in the midst of other acclaimed international languages? There are certain conditions to be met before a language is considered to be an international language.

1. It must have a number of speakers in many nations of the world;
2. It must enjoy a widespread use in many countries;
3. It must have a lot of literature written and diffused in it;
4. It must be amenable to scientific and technological dissemination;
5. It must facilitate international communication worldwide.

### **World's Top 10 Languages (According to Number of Countries where Spoken)**

An example of the world's top 10 languages according to number of countries where they are spoken was shown by Amadi (2016:731) in the diagram below:

<b>Language</b>	<b>Number of speakers</b>
1. English	42
2. French	30
3. Arabic	22
4. Spanish	19
5. Portuguese	7
6. German	6
7. Dutch	4
8. Swahili	3 (with 20 million speakers)
9. Malay	3 (with 19 million speakers)
10. Mandarin Chinese	2 <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Culled from Amadi (2015:731) in the Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 6, No. 4.

A rapid look at the languages in this Table shows that about six or seven of the present top ten languages in the world are linguistic legacies of Africa's former colonial masters (*viz* English, French, Arabic, Portuguese, German, Dutch, and Spanish). Swahili, an authentic African language, made it to number 8, over and above Mandarin Chinese which has a higher number of speakers. This is because Swahili is officially spoken in at least 3 countries of the world, thereby satisfying one of the conditions for internationalization.

Yoruba language though not on the list above can safely be categorized as an international language. This is because Yoruba language belongs to Benue-Congo, a sub-group of the Niger-Congo language family. The vast majority of speakers are found in Nigeria in the Southwestern States of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, and in some parts of Edo, Kogi and Kwara. Speakers are also found in the West Indies, Brazil, Cuba, Sierra Leone, and in some West African countries like Benin and Togo. Recent figures provided by Crystal (2003, 289) put the number of Yoruba speakers at 25 million worldwide. The number 2 criteria above talk about widespread in many nations which it comfortably covers.

Among the list of top 40 first-language speakers provided by Crystal in Amadi (2015), the Hausa language, an African language, features as No. 28 with 24 million speakers, while Yoruba as discussed above, is rated, the 35th position with about 20 million speakers. Swahili features as No. 8 among the list of top world languages. These African indigenous languages when harnessed optimally will ensure maximum participation of the populace in the socio-political and economic development like in businesses, in market

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transactions and in other social events. This is so because indigenous languages are the languages that people use in their day-to-day interactions. It is only after establishing this line of communication and freedom that a populace can be mobilized for engagement in development.

### **2.2.1 African Indigenous Languages and Linguistic Rights**

Linguistic right is the inalienable rights of everyone to choose a preferred language of communication, education, religion, commerce etc. It is natural that when people's linguistic rights are acknowledged, the full participation of minority groups in all national activities such as judicial and administrative proceedings, civil service, examinations, voting and public employment is guaranteed. Linguistic human rights (LHR) are based on the notion that language rights are like human rights which are enshrined in the UN-sanctioned Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This human right to education is only made possible if linguistic human rights are respected. The linguistic human rights in education are emphasized in Section II of the United Nations' 1996 Barcelona Universal Declaration on Linguistic Human Rights (United Nations 1998:27-28):

#### **Article 24**

All language communities have the right to decide to what extent their language is to be present, as a vehicular language and as an object of study, at all levels of education within their territory: preschool, primary, secondary, technical and vocational, university, and adult education.

#### **Article 27**

All language communities are entitled to an education, which will enable their members to acquire knowledge of any languages related to their own cultural tradition, such as literary

or sacred languages, which were formerly languages of the community.

### **Article 29**

1. Everyone is entitled to receive education in the language specific to the territory where s/he resides.
2. This right does not exclude the right to acquire oral and written knowledge of any language, which may be of use to him/her as an instrument of communication with any other language communities.

In principle, Language Human Rights are a powerful means of language empowerment, but this is only the ideal. But in practice, declarations of rights of this sought are not normally matched by action and even some of the expected outcomes are unrealistic or unattainable. Hence, LHR can only be regarded as a limited means of enhancing the status of African languages. (Bamgbose 2011, 12).

It is a welcome development that many African communities both in urban and hinter lands are gaining access to free education especially in the elemental and fundamental stages of their lives. The declaration entitles communities to acquire education in the language related to their culture and territory. The initiators of these declaration should be commended if not for anything, for at least initiating a legacy that is a significant departure from the past. Analyzing the provisions made by the education and linguistic right for all, it is worrisome that the declarations did not consider what the students learn while in school since what matters for growth is not the years that students spend in school but what they learn' (World Bank 2011: 2). Encapsulating this, would have taken care of the problem where so many students, especially in sub- Saharan Africa drop out of school, while many repeat grades and

majority sit year after year hardly learning anything. This simply shows the learning challenge currently witnessed in African continent. The seriousness of the learning challenge is shown by the statistics presented by world bank where “more than 30 percent of Malian youths aged 15–19 years who completed six years of schooling could not read a simple sentence; the same was true of more than 50 per-cent of Kenyan youths” (World Bank 2011: 6–7). The summary of the above provision shows that more schooling has not resulted in more knowledge and skills necessary for job creation in sub Saharan Africa.

Birgit Brock-Utne asked himself a soul-searching question when he read the above World Bank submission thus “In whose language could the youth not read a simple sentence? He goes on to ask “In their own language or a language foreign to them or in a language that they hardly hear around them?” (2014: 6). If African children speak African languages while instruction is given in an exogenous language, how then is it possible to give quality education for all (children) in a language mastered by few?

English represent one of these exogenous languages and it is famed to represent the above irony in Wiseman Magwa’s analysis, according to him “English has not yet reached the masses of the indigenous population thus it remains a minority language in most African countries. Very few rural Africans for example, are able to meaningfully make use of English in their deliberations” Magwa (2015, 3). When we consider other foreign languages like French and Portuguese, Herbert observes that “10% of the people of Francophone countries of Africa speak French and that only 1% or 2% can speak it fluently and can think in it. The situation is even more pronounced in countries such as Angola and Mozambique

where less than one tenth of the national population is able to make use of the national official language (Portuguese) (Herbert, 1992, 8).

Although most African education systems focus on the use of international languages, only between 10 and 15 per cent of the population in most African countries are estimated to be fluent in these languages. Nevertheless, these languages, besides their strong weight in governance, dominate the educational systems. The apparent consequence shows that there is a serious communication gap between the formal education system and its social environment. As such, Brock- Utne warning is timely “there can be no democratic governance if important papers and laws are written in a language citizens do not master well, speeches and political messages given in languages people do not normally speak” (Brock- Utne, 2015:9). This means that to enhance the general quality of education taught to our children while in school, there is an urgent need to look at the language they are learning in. This is because “to improve learning outcomes, therefore, a key focus must be on support to the development and use of the most appropriate language of instruction and literacy from the learner’s perspective” (Mercer 2013a, 8/9).

We can conclude this section by establishing that the most important and least appreciated educational challenge that our government and educational system have failed to tackle is to have African children learn in the language they normally speak and know best.

### **2.2.2 African Indigenous Language and the Challenges of Communication**

The language of instruction is the vehicle through which knowledge is communicated. Indigenous language and

communication are inseparable tools for the development of any nation. This is why Akabogu and Mbah (2013) urged the government to see indigenous languages as veritable and practical means of communication which could easily be harnessed for effective national integration which is a matter of paramount importance for a country still struggling to consolidate its independence.

African indigenous language is the most vibrant means of communicating the identity of the majority of African people and the construction of all language policies accordingly (Ouane&Glanz 2010, 10). By constructing genuine language policies he opines that policy makers should accept African languages as official languages and language for exams. They recommend that one of the processes of investing in education and multilingual education in Africa is the valuing and developing of African languages.

Irrespective of the above gains and potentials, there is still willful denial of indigenous languages to be given a chance to grow and help promote African cultures and national identity, hence the need to urgently redress this anomaly. The continent is seized with the problem of linguistic imperialism which has unfortunately distanced African people from their immediate environments and deliberately disassociated them from the language of interaction in their home and the community.

It is this lack of an adequate linguistic communication system on the national level that has significantly contributed to the economic and technological stagnation and backwardness in most African countries. Magwa (2015) citing Bodomo observes that in Ghana, as much as 51% of the total amount of annual broadcast hours is reserved for English alone, leaving the rest for all the many Ghanaian African languages. Unfortunately,

these same languages are not the languages of national government and the languages of mass communication are hardly the languages of the people. This goes to buttress the fact that Indigenous languages, an important means of communication in African societies are not widely used in the national and our formal educational systems.

When we come down to our educational system, having the foreign language as the language of instruction and communication prevents the students from really grasping the subject matter the teacher wants to convey, from developing their own language and from learning the foreign language. Making larger African languages national languages and using them for communication in our educational system and also using them as language of instruction would hasten the level of comprehension of concepts and terminologies and also contribute in the development of Africa as a continent.

In research conducted in Botswana, Ouane and Glanz (2010) cited in Brock-Utne et al observe a set of science concepts that were taught to an experimental Form I group in Setswana language and to a control group in English language. These students were tested for their understanding of these concepts. The researchers observe that the students taught in Setswana language developed a significantly better understanding of the concepts than the students taught in English language. A similar study with the same results was also carried out in Tanzania. It was observed that secondary school students taught science concepts in Kiswahili did far better than those who had been taught in English (Mwinsheikhe, 2003).

We can deduce from the above submissions that children learn better when they understand what the teacher is saying. But in Africa this seems not to be the case because most class room

instructions are given in foreign languages whereas most African children hardly comprehend these languages. An interview comprising both the lecturers and teachers reveals that learners encounter problems when English is used as the only official medium of instruction in education (Magwa 2015: 10). The interviewer noted with chagrin at Manicaland high school on one of the teachers who boldly submits thus: *“Mkwasha, regandikutaurire!*

*Wanaawatotowadzidzisangemutaurowaamaikutivanzwise. UkashandisaChiRungubesibesiveshewanofoirabvunzo.”* (My son-in-law let me tell you this. We resort to teach using the mother tongue in order for these pupils to understand concepts. If we are to use English throughout, they will all fail their examinations). It is safe to conclude this section by noting that the best way to improve the communication challenge and the learning outcomes in our schools would be to have them communicate in the language they know best and normally speak at home. It is a sad discovery that none of African government or their agencies emphasis on discusses this fundamental and least appreciated educational challenge.

### **2.3 The Concept of Itiwa Sleeti**

*Itiwa sleeti* in a loose translation means ‘to break the slate’ or ‘breaking slate’. It is a metaphorical concept that was used during colonial period and beyond by Igbo-Africans to denote an unbridled passion to the acquisition of western education. Slate was used during the colonial and post-colonial period as a means of writing from the kindergarten stage to early primary school stages before one graduate to using pencil and paper in African schools. This foundational stage is a destiny defining moment in the life of an African because it suggests whether one will continue with his or her educational development or whether one will discontinue and join the rest of the children in the then traditional life of farming. Those who show some

promise of comprehending the western form of education are usually celebrated with mini chalk board traditionally called a slate which is usually craftily constructed by a renowned village carpenter. The announcement that one is in work schedule of the village carpenter is a feat that is celebrated by all progressive minded villagers because it is seen as an express way of escaping from poverty and from the traditional occupation of farming. It used to be dream come true for every parent because it a clear sign that great fortune awaits the child and the family at large.

The art of *itiwa sleeti* (breaking the slate) simply denotes the time and the academic processes involves in acquiring western education. These involve perseverance, rigor, discipline, financial engagements and other sacrifices in attaining academic success. *Itiwa sleeti* denotes also the time duration involves in attaining academic success. The duration from 'ntaakara' to 'mahadam' (Nursery to University) spans 20-25 years. The systemic formation from Nursery, primary, secondary and University formation is a herculean time indeed. Due to the high cost of acquiring western education and the intellectual rigor involved, many African parents could not face this challenge at that point in time. As a result these parents later took up the remedial challenge of bequeathing their children this perceived asset which they didn't get. Unfortunately, this unbridled pursuit has left many valuable African cultures to be neglected and subjugated on the long run. The disastrous impact of this neglect is felt in the use of African indigenous languages because many of them are currently endangered while some have gone into extinction.

#### **2.4 'Itiwa Sleeti' and the Neglect of African Indigenous Languages**

One of the challenges confronting African languages and the African child in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the deliberate ignorance to

pass these languages to them by the custodians of these languages. By custodians, I mean those who are in position to transmit this knowledge but are reluctant to do so but are rather quick to embrace the foreign languages and use them as language of interaction and instructions. These are the government (who make the policy), parents, teachers, elders, lecturers etc. This has warranted African educationists to declare that “the African child’s major learning problem is a linguistic problem” (Letsie, 2002, 34). This is because for a very long time, African languages have received very little attention in terms of being used as media of instruction. Also these languages are given little validity in most African homes and most especially in our educational system today. Ademowo (2016:40) citing Afolayan decries this ridiculous ignorance thus “in general, the new African elites and postcolonial educational policies were, ignorantly or deliberately, aimed (currently) at making Africans view their languages as inferior and less competent while holding the colonial languages in high esteem. This position has been vigorously challenged; yet the new African ruling elites, today, retained their privilege position by continuing in the tradition of the colonial masters.

Elsewhere, people are positive and proud of their language but the reverse is the case in Africa. What we encounter daily is total disdain and negative attitude to African languages. This is prevalent among the elite class who prefer their children to be instructed and educated in foreign languages. It is not surprising that parents belonging to lower social group tow this line of the elites in decision making for their children. On this parental neglect, Bamgbose remarks “in some countries such as Nigeria, it is amazing to find the large number of English medium private nursery and primary schools offering education to young children. Patronage of such schools comes not only

from well-to-do parents but also from many lowly paid blue-collar workers, who believe that they are making a great sacrifice for their children's future" (2011, 5). In the introduction, I remarked how one grandmother vowed that in her next life, she must acquire western education at all cost. This informs part of the title of this chapter, '*itiwa sleeti*'. She said and I quote "*uwa m ozo, aga m etiwariri sleeti*" [in my next world, I must be educated].

In this section, I enquire into the rationale behind the mad rush and crave for foreign languages over African indigenous language by some African parents in our contemporary times. At this point I collaborate with Achebe's position that the craves for foreign languages by African parents did not begin today. The quest had been there since the colonial times (Achebe 2009, 104). Originally, it was the desire of the colonialists to teach the African child in their mother tongue rather than impose their language on them. Contrary to the narrative, it was "their patriotic parents" who revolted and resisted this move because they prefer their children to be taught in English language. In Achebe's opinion "as early as in the 1920's and 1930's the Scottish missionaries desired to teach kikuyu children in their mother tongue but their peasant parents started revolting and started breaking away because they prefer English instead of their already accustomed vernacular" (Achebe 2009: 104). Achebe also cited the historic and influential Phelps-Stokes commission report in West Africa in 1922 where the report favored the use of the native language over English language as the language of instruction in schools. Also, by 1876 in Calabar some of the traditional African chiefs were not satisfied with the amount of English language taught their children in missionary schools; as a result, they hired private tutors for their children even at their own expense and at a whooping sum (2009, 106). Achebe used the above proofs

to invalidate the fact that the European imperialists forced their languages down the throats of unwilling natives but on the contrary, it was the natives who went out of their way to embrace these foreign languages and personally enforced them on their children.

They enforced the foreign language on their children because they believe that there is an entire world of knowledge, skills, jobs, power and influence, which is totally closed to their children if they only speak an indigenous language. The relegation of African languages from high status to low status resulted in people thriving to learn the colonizer's language to be able to copy western lifestyle and also consume Western products. In a letter by a correspondent to the editor of the *Cape Time*, it reads;

The reason people like me choose English is very simple. How many books are there in Xhosa on physics, mathematics or history of art? What does a Sotho speaker do if they (sic) want to improve themselves and gain knowledge? How many encyclopedias are written in Zulu? What books are there on business skills in Pedi? The answer is obvious to anyone. If you do not have the language skills to access the huge store of information available in English, then you are in a prison. The door out of that prison is knowledge of English (Moodley 2000, 110).

Most parents believe that many puzzles of life can be demystified with the knowledge of the colonial languages because it is an important weapon in the search for employment, class and privileges. It holds the key to one's socio-economic advancement and provides opportunities for good jobs and upward social mobility. Commenting on the

upward social mobility of the colonial language Kayambazinthu avers that “in nearly all the countries, English, the colonial language of ‘high-culture’ and the language of the elite was and is still regarded as the most prestigious language used in parliament, legislature, education, government, science and technology and most academic writings and official correspondences. The colonial language is considered highly because of the historical processes that put it there and uphold it” (Kayambazinthu, 2000, 35).

Most parents see these foreign languages especially English language as a tool of globalization. English and French languages have become languages of world bodies. As such they fiercely argue that these languages dominate international politics and commerce and its privileged role is made strong through world bodies like the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and regional groups such as the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the European Union. The United Nations Organization through its General Assembly stipulates in the resolution of 1st February 1946 that only English and French have the status of working languages; so, all other interventions and texts will be obligatorily interpreted or translated into these two languages. There is therefore a bilingual situation in the UN a world body of which most African states is member countries. These motivations influence the choices of these parents who overtime have admired and envied the lifestyles of these western cultures at the expense of their local languages and cultures. These parents believe that these foreign languages especially English language is an internationally recognized language, which doubles up as the gateway to success. Others argue that since most African countries are mixed society with so many languages being spoken, it is only English which can be neutral

when it comes to selection of the language of instruction in education. They also insist that their children will never study and achieve their professional potential learning in African language. Magba (2015:8) reveals this of a respondent in Masvingo province who vehemently proclaimed, “*Unofungaiwemwanawanguangaitadhokotera kana akadzidziswa Science neChiShona kana ChiNdevere? Hazviiti!*” (Do you think my child will ever be a doctor if he/she learns Science in Shona or Ndebele? It doesn’t work!).

African parents contend that English and by extension other foreign languages are universally economical and have been tested and found viable in time past and in the contemporary era. They vilify African languages as inadequate for education and inapt for the dissemination of scientific information. African languages they say do not have enough vocabulary to express modern scientific concepts hence they rendered themselves unsuitable for use as media of instruction in education. They contend that foreign languages constitute means of communication that provides a wider audience than African languages. They are skeptical also that African languages are often underdeveloped, as far as their modern terminology and concepts is concerned. In Rettova’s words “there are too many; and they mostly lack a written tradition, with only a few exceptions” (Rettova 2016). Since most of the indigenous languages are poorly developed, most African parents sometimes feel embarrassed when a native language is spoken in a very official context. To those who venture to speak African languages in offices, they are always reminded accordingly, “are we now at home? This is to remind the speaker that he/she is in an official setting where it is the English language that should be used.

Aside the efforts of linguistic school of thought, contemporary African philosophers are of the opinion that philosophy can only live up to its pragmatic role in social reconstruction in Africa if she takes cognizance of the importance of indigenous language. The major importance to be considered is the fact that African languages still remain the best medium of education that guarantees the best result in learning. Irrespective of the mad rush for foreign languages and education, Ademowo (2016, 43) is still in the dark on why despite being certificated, many African graduates find it difficult to put their education to the service of transforming our environment through the provision of amenities capable of making life easier. The reason is simple; it is as a result of accumulated neglect in teaching African children the cultural fundamentals in African indigenous languages like African oral tradition, customs, rituals and various skills which constitute what gives identity to people. The cultural heritages in stories, folktales, proverbs, idioms, taboos and poetry teaches valuable ideals such as dignity, hope, sense of duty, hard work, faithfulness, accountability transparency, honor and other human qualities. If charity begins at home, then the restoration of African indigenous languages should begin from home since indigenous languages help the African child to establish both emotional and intellectual closeness with their parents in communicating their feelings.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The point must be made that unless speakers of African indigenous languages take pride in their own languages and show a definite desire to preserve them, no amount of external engineering can ensure any status and viable roles for them. This is why the parents and other stakeholders must be intentional in this rescue mission by prioritizing African indigenous languages to take the lead role as a medium of

instructing the African child and communicating African realities to him/her. Achieving this will require a serious mental decolonization in the minds of Africans especially African parents whose utilitarian quest has blinded their eyes that they could not see the privileges inherent in African languages. Africa as a continent cannot develop without the majority of its people being part of the development. No nation has ever developed with foreign language as its basic language.

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## *Chapter 3*

### **THE NATURE OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The need for the development of a curriculum to guide the activities of a school or any academic endeavour for efficient attainment of its goals and objectives cannot be overemphasized. Education essentially involves the teaching and learning experiences, and to ensure a fruitful and rewarding experience which implies a good education, the curriculum must be adequately formulated or structured to meet or reflect the needs of the society and of the individual learner. It is on the basis of the above observation that this paper will attempt an examination of the roles which a curriculum plays in a teaching and learning condition. That is, such questions as how does the curriculum enable the teacher to do his job with relative proficiency?

What importance does the curriculum hold for the learner in his effort at acquiring knowledge and improving himself? And what does the educational system generally stand to gain with the development of a curriculum?, will form the major concern of this paper. However, to achieve the goal of this paper, an explanation of the concept of curriculum becomes of utmost necessity. Hence, the paper begins with the clarification of the concept of curriculum and proceeds to the analysis of the various roles of the concept in teaching and learning. The point will be made that; a deviation from the curriculum will be detrimental to the educational system, the learner and the teacher. And only by developing a curriculum which is positive oriented focusing on the learner's abilities and interest, can a

proper education be attained through an enhanced teaching and learning.

### **3.2 The Nature of Curriculum Development**

The concept of curriculum is not very easy to define in any particular way. It has been conceived by different people from different perspective. While some believe that its major concern is learning and the learner and all planned and unplanned experiences of the learner, others believe that it is teaching and the teacher. Thus, Fafunwa (1974:58) in a somewhat broad manner defines curriculum as the whole of the educative process that is the total environment in which education takes place. By this, he means the child, the teacher, the subject, the content, and the method, the physical and psychological environment.

Colin (1992:73) seems to agree with the above view when he defines curriculum development as a group of related subjects which fit together according to a predetermined set of criteria to appropriately cover an area of study. He further defines it as a guide which have been explicitly designed and written to assist school communities, teachers, students and parents in their curriculum decision making. What Colin seems to point out here is that curriculum development is holistic and all embracing as it encapsulates all that happens in a study condition both within and outside the school as well as the decisions made in relation to these.

Following the above, curriculum development thus provides a structure for designing subjects and a rationale and policy context for subsequent curriculum development of such subjects as science which will include biology, chemistry, physics, geography etc. When the Latin usage of origin of the word curriculum is understood to mean “runway” or a course

which one runs to reach a goal; Rudduck and Kolly's (1976, 11) definition of curriculum becomes more appreciative. According to them, a curriculum is a name for the organized pattern of the school's educational programme. It is what happens to children in school as a result of what teachers do. It involves all the experiences of children for which the school should accept responsibilities. In what seems to be a disagreement with the above view of curriculum, Knight and Rado (1979, 33) says "it is a term used to refer not only to what is listed as the domain of knowledge and belief from which the formal teaching content of the school is drawn, but also to the social process occurring in the classrooms, corridors and play spaces of the school". But this paper seems to agree with the definition given by Kerr as quoted by Lawton (1975, 6) in which he holds that curriculum is the learning which is planned or guided by the school whether it is carried on in groups or individually inside or outside the school.

This definition of curriculum implies that certain things or activities which go on outside the classroom and even the school environment can pass as part of the overall curriculum once it is guided by the school directly or indirectly. Thus, such activities as homework, excursion etc are integral parts of a curriculum development. This brings in the notion of "received curriculum". By this notion, Brenda and Elizabeth (1995, 3) seem to mean what in fact, pupils actually learn. The idea of a received curriculum is that what we think we are giving the pupils or students is not what they are actually picking up or learning. Hence, Lawton was right when he observed that the curriculum is often taken for granted rather than studied, and discussions of curriculum tend to centre on minor adjustments to traditional time tables rather than fundamental re-thinking of aims and purposes (1991, 1).

The point being made here is that, a well developed or planned curriculum must include not only the time table subjects to be taught or learnt but more importantly a fundamental re-examination of what people or the learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need by way of knowledge, skills and experience. To further appreciate the very nature of the concept of curriculum development, it is pertinent to consider some of its essential features. Following this, Aleyidemo, Oyedegi & Muazu (2006, 3-4) identified five major characteristics namely: The curriculum must be workable and practicable (functionality), it must be clearly and precisely stated in terms of its aims and objectives bearing in mind the societal values and needs, it must be capable of adapting to the needs of the changing learner and the society. That is, it must be *flexible* and able to create avenue for growth and development to attain the predetermined objectives. It must be *relevant* by emphasizing those aspects that will be of benefit to the learner and the society. Most importantly it must be subjected to *evaluation* to ensure that there is progress in the right direction.

In an attempt to delineate the nature of a curriculum, Keith Morrison remarked that a curricular is necessarily politically oriented. By this he avers that the government of the day has a considerable influence over the content and structure of the curriculum. According to him, “School Curriculum is inescapably political and it is this that constitutes both its excitement and its frustration, discussion on its content are not arbitrary, they represent values, purpose and interests, and education is the process of rendering these transparent” (1977:1). What is informative about the above examined features of a curriculum is that, several factors influence learning and the learner and these factors could both be induced by the government, the nature of the curriculum and inform the nature and content of the curriculum in use. These factors are:

content of the curriculum (what is taught), method of executing the curriculum content (how it is taught), authority (with what status it is taught), recurrence (how often it is taught), default (what is not taught) and out of school context shades of opinion on curriculum in order to discover its essential nature. The next section of this chapter will dwell on the roles which curriculum development plays in teaching and learning.

**3.3 How Curriculum Development Impacts on Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Schools:** as an educational experience offered to the learner, curriculum performs the following functions for the entire educational systems:

- 1) It determines the educational direction including the decision of the type of society people want to live and serve in.
- 2) It determines the principles and procedures which will help educators in selecting and arranging instructional programmes.
- 3) It concerns itself with the application of the chosen principles.
- 4) It determines and assesses what changes have been brought about.

In addition to the above, the curriculum performs the role of encouraging teachers to evaluate the total learning experience (environment), this is because teachers need to consider the effectiveness of the taught curriculum and their teaching effectiveness as well as students performances. The curriculum also enables the educational goal, system and/or standard to be reconsidered and sometimes redefined. This is possible as it highlights the changing emphasis and the evolving boundaries of subjects. The enablement with which teachers reconsider their packaging and delivery of subjects, as well as development of new emphasis such as vocational, recreational

and career pathways is drawn from facilities which a curriculum provides.

Again, the availability of a well-planned or developed curriculum enables the student (learner) to gain access to broader education by being able to select from a number of curriculum subjects than a narrow range of traditional subjects. Denis Lawton (1991:3) identifies one purpose or role of a curriculum studies or development to be the clarification of issues and questions of theories, assumptions, values and ideas about good education, curriculum development and studies are designed with the purpose of improving the quality of learning. Colin similarly states that, curriculum development planning or studies will enable the teacher appraise herself to obtain feedback about what they are actually doing compared with what they think they are doing (1992:73).

For Brenda and Elizabeth (1995:3), the right curriculum plays the role of enabling the teacher to properly help and guide the learner to regain some hold on himself and to put his/her best in the subject or the area that interests him most and in which he is good. The teacher is able to do this by identifying the area where the learner is competent in. The curriculum development can also transform the role of the teacher from being just an efficient instructor to being an expert classroom manager and organizer of learning experiences. In order words, a proper curriculum would enable the teacher to be aware or conscious of the question of indoctrination, the impossibility of a value free stance and the need for appropriate methodology and organizations. Indeed, learning and teaching which is in fact part and parcel of education can become more effective in enabling clarity of thought through the instrumentality of the developed curriculum.

Finally, Curtis and Wilma's (1977) identification of three major roles of curriculum in learning and teaching is worth mentioning. According to them, first, the curriculum enables the teacher as a facilitator to set the initial mood or climate of the group or class experience. Second, it enables the teacher to clarify and elicit the purposes of the individuals in the class as well as the more general purposes of the group. And third, it enables him to organize and make available easily the widest possible range of resources for learning.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it has been observed that a curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a forum that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice. Curriculum development includes reference to aims and objectives, syllabus, content, the organization and structuring of the content, teaching and learning styles and evaluation.

Following the above, it is recommended that, because the diversity of the learners pose some challenges for the teacher, the teacher and indeed teaching needs to have considerable flexibility so that the particular problems of each pupils can be properly considered and this can only be done through a properly developed curriculum. As Howard and Audrey (1977:13) observed, teacher control and influence over curriculum matters affect not only the rate at which any changes might take place but also largely determine the nature of curriculum and result in tremendous variations in schools. As a result, this chapter recommends that unless the curriculum and the ways it is approached are allowed to be tailor-made for each individual, schooling can not only be a waste of time but actually damaging in its effects. Curriculum development and

planning must involve putting into operation a theory of some kind which will enable the teacher to convincingly explain why they have adopted a new (modular) curriculum.

In conclusion, it is argued that whether a curriculum is subject-centered, activity-experience-centered, child centered, hidden, core or broad field, it is an aid in teaching and learning, hence, it offers the teacher considerable opportunities to make their work more effective, to release them from some tasks and to provide variety and flexibility.

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## *Chapter 4*

### **HOW “NECESSARY PREOCCUPATIONS” ENHANCE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Education is an indispensable tool for national development and self-realization. It is a critical tool and an instrument for achieving the overall national aims of every nation. This development includes fostering social norms and the development of social and intuitional capacities. As a result, education helps in the development of intellectual and mental capacities of every members of the community. This is why Etieyibo observes that “If education is important for the development of the intellectual mental capacities of individuals, then at least within the formal aspect of education, it is imperative to pay attention to content of what forms the education curriculum, namely, subjects, lessons and topics to be taught and learned” (Etieyibo, 2018, .8). The above named does not exhaust the content of a good curriculum but for the sake of this essay, these ones are of essence to our focus.

Almost all nations acknowledge the potency of education as a foundation to any developmental height. To achieve this, they mapped out aims and aspirations in their national policy on education. This means that the height of any nation is dependent on the value they placed on education, its content and their planners. The celebrated leadership author John Maxwell observes with James Bryant that “public education is a great instrument of social change.... education is a social process, perhaps the most important process in determining the future of our country, it should command a far larger portion of our national income than it does today” (Maxwell 2010).

In Africa, It is sad to note that this major pillar of development is grossly neglected. As a result, Africa cannot exercise full control to this epistemic resource and its abounding heritages. In fact it is alluded that “much of what is taken for education in Africa is in fact not African but rather a reflection of Europe in Africa”(Higgs 2008, 458). The reason for this according to Higgs is that “the norm for educational achievement and success for African children and students is that of western European elitist culture, where the English language is socialized and the internalization of bourgeois European values is seen as the index of progress (2008, 456). As a result, the effect of the intellectual domination is still evidenced in the financial dependence of African universities to their European counterparts. It also extends to the total fidelity by African universities to the use of foreign languages, training, orientations, research results and curriculum materials (Adams, 1975, 57). It is pertinent to note that greater percentages of the content of the curriculum in African universities are contributions of scholars from outside Africa. The uncritical assimilation of western education has instilled a wholesome European mentality within African scholars and their students.

This intellectual hegemony and intellectual dominance will continue if African universities do not rise to work hard for their intellectual independence. I believe that one of the ways that African universities can achieve their authentic intellectual independence is through a foundational and African oriented curriculum. It is despicable and worrisome also that after about two decades of independence from their colonial masters, African Universities are not matured enough to claim intellectual independence and ownership of their educational contents. They are not yet fully acquainted with African problems and challenges that should inspire a formidable

curriculum that is African oriented and problem solving-driven.

The above preliminaries is to set the stage for what this essay is all about, which is an attempt to reduce the continued intellectual dominance by the west through an African inspired and welfare driven curriculum for African universities. The first major step in achieving this is to know what curriculum is all about. The second section is an attempt to expose what should constitute a good curriculum and those saddled with the responsibility of developing a good curriculum. The third section ushers us into the dynamics of curriculum development in African philosophy. Finally, this paper proffers what it terms a 'necessary preoccupation' as one of the ingredients that will enhance the development of curriculum in Africa.

#### **4.2 Curriculum, Content and Planning**

The need for rapid change and the effect of globalization in our society has made it a *sine qua non* to adjust our education system in order to be relevant in our contemporary world. However, it is regrettable that most of the resources and materials used in African schools are just an imitation of western educational models which are unsuitable to African system. It is expedient that African institutions halt mimicking wholesomely the western inspired models and look inwards to develop an original and ethno-based education models. It is foolishness when institutions whose character is majorly ethno-provincial keep masquerading as replica of Oxford and Cambridge without showing the same productivity as the original places they are mimicking.

To end this ugly trend, there is urgent need for a radical re-orientation in our ivory tower on the use of suitable materials that can fit well in our African environment. Adams was

extreme on his call for this re-orientation when he opines that “An African staff working with western ideas is not Africanized. No, for a university to be truly African requires that such an African staff be paid with African funds and also should be working with African materials” (1975, 57). Adam’s prescription is simply a call for Africa’s educational resources to be relevant and be in tandem with African environment but with universal appeal. It is good that before proceeding with our task in this section, to look at the meaning of a curriculum.

#### **4.2.1 Curriculum and its Meaning**

The word curriculum represent in its original Latin sense, a race ground, a run way, or a course which one runs to reach a goal. In education, Rugg (1947) sees curriculum as the life and programme of the school. It is an enterprise in guided living, the stream of dynamic activities that constitute the life of young people and their elders. It is guided living in the sense that the educational activity is planned in a systematic way so that the individual child can learn survival skills for useful living in the society.

For Tyler (1963) curriculum is simply all the learning experiences of students which are planned and directed by the school to attain its educational goals. Tanner and Tanner have criticized this definition by Tyler on the ground that it failed to demonstrate how school learning experiences differ from those which are not under the auspices of the school. Onwuka (1981) sees curriculum as a reflection of what the people feel, believe and do. He opines that a curriculum must be seen as a deliberate, systemic and planned attempt, not only to change the behavior of children and youth, but also to enable them gain social insight and build a better society.

These definitions as good as it seems on the paper are not a reflection of our African ambience. Most of the curriculum in our universities are systematic but are not pro- African and most of them do not arm African students with skills to survive in our contemporary world. Our school administrators simply copy what is obtainable in western nations or America which makes our students a mole of western ideas.

Post-colonial Africa is replete with diverse challenges ranging from the effect of colonialism, slavery, neo- colonialism, poverty, illiteracy, diseases etc. there is therefore an urgent need for a curriculum that is capable of decolonizing Africa's subjugated mind and transform her citizens to emerge from an authentic African ambience. This curriculum should be capable of transforming African fading values to a more authentic African values and less of a western or *oyibooji* as Gloria Chukwu asserts. It is on this similar tone that Chimakonam (2016) asserts "that training Philosophers in universities in Africa with the western curriculum amounts to deploying a misfit tool to a local problem".

#### **4.2.2 Content of a Curriculum**

On the content of a curriculum, it is of utmost importance that a good curriculum must incorporate the prevalent conditions, peculiarities and trends in contemporary society and figure out some workable educational aspects that will better Africa's living conditions. The contemporary curriculum should above all also address some vital social problems in Africa. It is on this premise that Warner et al. (1973) urges that "education for the future is useless unless it prepares learners to meet problems that are new and that neither they nor anyone else has ever encountered before. All professionals in education programme need an image of tomorrow to plan their curriculums" (Walter et al., in Eyibe, 2007) From Walters

propositions it is interesting to deduce that a good curriculum should be futuristic in content and hence prophetic in academic dimensions. It should determine the need of the hour to determine the need of tomorrow. This is why it is a misfit to use 18<sup>th</sup> century curriculum in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. This calls for constant revalidation and an update of our educational curriculum on yearly or decade basis to maintain local relevance and content.

It is this shortage in the futuristic content of our contemporary curriculum that spurred Dedmon (2012, 126) to lament that our system of education was shaped by the needs and structure of the old-fashioned industrial age. She observes that school subjects were chosen in a hierarchy designed to prepare citizens for jobs in an emerging industrial society. The quest for globalization requires an urgent need to discard the industrial system of education and to incorporate in the minds of African students with the tools of analysis, problem solving, constructive questioning, and a facility for teamwork and co-operation, in order to transform the present African battered educational system.

To satisfy 21<sup>st</sup> century education requirements, the content of a curriculum is expected to be elastic, flexible, and expansive as possible. According to Etieyibo:

It is elastic, flexible and expansive when it is capable of incorporating as much possible many diverse cultural norms, values and worldview. Unless of course one is a “cultural imperialist” or “western universalist” namely, subscribes to the view of some superior and dominant culture.<sup>2</sup> This idea of an elastic, flexible and expansive curriculum is what, it seems to me, discussions

about the decolonization, Africanization and transformation of the curriculum is more or less about (Etieyibo 2016, 9).

The above submission reveals the need for a curriculum to be open and assimilate what needs to be assimilated and jettisoned or reform every imperialistic or domineering values and norms. Robinson in (Dedmon, 2012, 151) advised that such (imperialist) system does not need reformation but a revolution. Robinson however observes that the major challenge of this revolution is the courage to question what most of us have taken for granted. What have Africans taken for granted in her educational system? Chimakonam is of the opinion that one of the things that Africa has taken for granted is the content and structure of her curriculum.

The mis-education or improper education of children can arise from poor quality teachers, a poorly structured curriculum, and incorrect deployment of the curriculum, lack of resources or through bad education policies that either did not take the future seriously or miscalculated in the education equation...central to these is the structure of the curriculum. In our context, that curriculum would be that of education (Chimakonam 2016, 513).

Having attempted to demonstrate the importance of a curriculum, it is expedient also to x-ray the personalities saddled with the responsibility of structuring a good curriculum.

### **4.3 Who Should Structure a Curriculum**

In the light of the above, Chimakonam (2016, 514) absolved Philosophy from this task. He pointed out that the task of philosophers is simply to create ideas while the formulation of a curriculum is simply the responsibility of the ancillary sciences. Eyibe has some reservations in leaving this task to ancillary sciences alone because for him, they lack the necessary epistemic paraphernalia in discharging this duty. In Eyibe (2000), “It is becoming increasingly evident that science and technology education studies are so important a subject to be left in the hand of scientists, technologists and engineers alone, who in spite of their hard work, lack forum and central meeting point to discuss pedagogy and compare notes on the advances they might have made in the course of their research and discoveries”. Continuing, Eyibe notes that science should as a matter of fact refrain from isolating her tasks from real world anxiety and troubles. They should no longer feel that they are only constrained in dealing with the immutable laws of Newton but they should also focus on patterns of biological growth, of politics, economics, sociology and psychology.

It is evident from above that any field that plays an exclusive role will find it extremely difficult to structure a credible curriculum. This is where philosophy as the mother of all sciences comes to mind. Philosophy is a discipline that looks towards the future with her tools of innovations, creativity, problem solving, love of learning, constructive and original questioning, a facility for team work and co-operation. Philosophy is that discipline that can unite scholars, professionals and even laymen in curriculum planning because a good curriculum should accommodate and address the problems of the society. To achieve this mandate, the roles of scholars, parents, citizens and educators are necessary for good curriculum planning. It is at this juncture that I submit that

philosophy being an arrow head of all intellectual exercises is more advantaged to make special contributors to curriculum planning.

#### **4.4 Curriculum in African Philosophy**

Over the years there has been a serious enquiry on the existence of philosophy in Africa and also the existence of African philosophy? These two enquiries may be confusing but it is needful to distinguish them for easy comprehension. Philosophy in Africa refers to Africa's participation in the universal enterprise of philosophy while African philosophy presupposes a distinct way of doing philosophy. It differs from western, Eastern, or American philosophy not in kind but in approach. (Segun 2014, 3). The newness of African philosophy has elicited great debate on its existence, nature, content, scope, space and relevance. On the cheerful note, Uduigwomen (2009, 2), observes that the controversy regarding the existence of African philosophy is long dead and buried; and for him, the debate is a matter of mere historical interest.

This newness has led to the probing of the nature and content of African philosophy, that is, the teaching, studies, writings materials and its general practice. Some allude the relative youth of African philosophy to the paucity of the above resources. According to this view, African philosophy is still anticipating their Aristotle and Descartes to provide them with the necessary systems and methods for critical reflections. The clear manifestation of this is the clear denial of proper space for African philosophy in world's institutions of higher learning and regrettably even in Africa's institutions of higher learning. It is observed that almost all African university offer courses in British philosophy, American philosophy and European philosophy with minute of them offering courses in African philosophy. Okeja justifies this claim when he observes that "African universities all have traditional western courses and

just one course titled African philosophy. All levels of thought classified as African philosophy are lumped up in a single course that goes by the name African philosophy” (2012, 666).

There is urgent need to rise up and promote African philosophy to stand shoulder to shoulder with western, American and even eastern philosophy. Segun citing Asouzu advocates that:

The progress and stagnation of African philosophy depends largely on the attitude of Africans themselves who have the primary duty to patronize and promote it. In our institution of higher learning, a conducive atmosphere has to be created for the promotion and patronage of ideas, systems and methods of African philosophers in view of promoting African philosophy. That is to say, the thoughts of regional philosophers should be studied and made available to students and should be brought to compete with each other (Asouzu 2004, 111).

Unfortunately, this call for patronage and promotion of African philosophy in African universities are being frustrated and scuttled even by Africans themselves. African universities still consider it absurd and not worthwhile for African Philosophy to be included in their curriculum. Moore presents this despicable picture even in South African university thus;

Again, in almost all departments of philosophy at South African Universities, African philosophy has unsurprisingly not been considered worthy of inclusion in the philosophy syllabi. The current changing political and social conditions have, however necessitated reluctant recognition of the possibility of the existence of African philosophy as a

legitimate reason<sup>5</sup>. Despite these gains, vestiges of old Eurocentric conceptions still remain and manifest themselves in veiled or disguised denial of African philosophy (Moore 1996, 61).

In the footnote of his writing, Moore observes that “even black universities with the exception of University of Zululand have not considered it wise to attach African philosophy in their curriculum” (Moore 1996, 61). He laments that even the University of South Africa (UNISA) who tried the experimentation ended up opening a separate unit for African philosophy.

In line with Moore, Njoku in Adams, also observes that “whether an African student is reading philosophy, political science, economics, or natural science, he finds it all alike by current methods of teaching: that all the significant ideas appear to have been contributed by people outside his own culture”(1975, 59). Furthermore, Adams categorically states that Africanization cannot be complete as long as the majority of materials and ideas studied in Africa come from outside Africa. Etieyibo lends his voice to aver that the Africanization project is imperative because of the general saying that “charity begins at home”. If “charity begins at home,” then it seems important that the Africanization project ought to begin in philosophy departments in universities in Africa. But we may also say that part of the reason for talking about the Africanisation of the curriculum in universities in Africa is that this is motivated or dictated by pragmatic reasons. For one may think that it is to get universities in Africa to see and appreciate the need, importance, and urgency of Africanizing the philosophy curriculum than it is to get universities elsewhere....to see and appreciate the need, importance and urgency of doing so (2018, 16).

It is this need and urgency of Africanizing philosophy curriculum that inspired Chimakonam to model a transformative and critical framework of an African focused curriculum to tackle the alien, often irrelevant and oppressive education system taught in our universities. Chimakonam (2016) introduced three procedures for Africanizing philosophy curriculum to avoid deploying western misfit tool to our local problems. The outlined models are as follows: the narrative of balance (B model), the narrative of displacement (the D model) and narrative of competition (C model). The narrative of balance (B model) is structured in such a way that an equal number of courses of the same unit are factored in a curriculum, where one is African and another western. The reason for this balance is to attract the gains of western thought and maximizing its advantages to the circumstances of life in Africa.

The narrative of displacement (D model) according to Chimakonam entails introducing a whole set of African philosophy curricula to substitute the already existing curricula in universities in Africa which are dominated by Western philosophy courses. The rationale behind this model is more or less to claim an intellectual territory for African philosophy. The narrative of competition (the C model) is modeled to allow the thriving of two units in the department of Philosophy: the western and African. An assessment mechanism will be put in place to monitor the thriving of these units. Between the two units, any one that is capable and more enterprising can out do the other.

The narrative of displacement and competition has the tendency of producing a philosophy curriculum that contains mechanism for overcoming what Chimakonam (2016)

describes as “logomania” which has the tendency of cloning African students to think like their European tutors. In Chimakonam’s words “in the foremost challenge with this procedure is that African children will emerge from schools not knowing how to think originally, but rather would be groomed to imitate the European forms of thought and life” (2016, 520).

The narrative of balance seeks to incorporate western and African philosophy in one curriculum so as to vacillate between two valued and three valued thought models. The B-model, though attractive but might lead to what Amos Wilson calls “falsification of African consciousness.” It might starve the African child of the needed creativity and originality. Conclusively, Chimakonam chose B-model above the C model and D-model but has some reservations on the capital intensity of the Balance model and the disastrous effect it will create in the system should narrative fail to materialize.

#### **4.5 The Need for “Necessary Preoccupation” in the Development of our Curriculum**

It is on the invitation of Chimakonam to further engage on these models that I propose the engagement of what Jennifer Vest calls “Necessary Discourse” in the development of our curriculum. Vest was critical of the “perverse preoccupations” of the ethno-philosophy, Excavationists and Professional School philosophers who contend that societal development and cultural sophistication are defined in the lens of the acquisition of Western technology and Christianity. These philosophers believe that the European way of thinking is the only way worth discussing and other forms of philosophy like witches are simply not worth bothering with. As part of our decolonial project, the migration by African philosophers from “perverse preoccupation” to “necessary preoccupation”

becomes expedient in order to position African philosophy from her place to her destined space.

Vest (2009, 20) believes that African philosophers have devoted their precious time engaging in “perverse dialogues” by striving endlessly to destroy the myth of savagery perpetuated by the Colonial West which portrayed Africans as 'non-rational. She queried the rational for these perverse engagements thus:

Why should Africans prove they are rational, thoughtful, intellectually sophisticated persons? To whom must they prove this? Why must African philosophy be defined in terms of a reaction to foreign misrepresentations? Why must we as Black people devote our greatest minds to engaging in dialogues designed to prove our humanity? (Vest 2009, 20).

There are many challenges that should occupy African philosophers especially those things which have kept them at the back side of the world. These are the things that should bother African philosophers and not in engaging dialogues that questions their humanity. Vest (2009, p.20) believes strongly that “the project of African philosophy is best served by eschewing such engagement or at the least by being aware of the obfuscating role such dialogues has for African philosophy”.

Vest (2009) contends that concerns of African philosophers should be a necessary preoccupation which debates on African *lebenswelt* and not philosophizing to curry favor from the western audience. Debates on nature of African ontology should be thoroughly and rigorously done not minding how it

fits into existing discourses that are authored by western writers. If there is a widespread belief in witches in many parts of Africa, perhaps a debate on the ontology of witchcraft is necessary, regardless of how it fits into existing discourses of primitive religions authored by Western writers. If there is a widespread belief in intimate ontological relationships between humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects, then perhaps an African metaphysician should explore this idea, regardless of how it might be disparaged by European thinkers who might classify such beliefs as animistic and therefore not worthy of investigation. Perhaps the ideas of important men and women ought to be studied by Sage philosophers whether or not they can be compared to the ideas of Socrates. Perhaps African languages ought to be studied for their epistemological insights regardless of whether similar insights can be found in Anglo-American Analytic investigations of language (Vest 2009, 20).

Vest strongly believes that efforts such as these will lead to a conscious conversation by African philosophers in their field of endeavors. It is these necessary debates that I propose that should form the bulk of the curriculum in African universities, such curriculum should also factor in Africa's communal and social life in a substantive way. Mkabela and Luthuli (1997, 1) had this model in mind when they submit that:

a welfare concern, where the basis of communalism is giving priority to the community and respect for the person. It also involves sharing with and helping persons. Educational discourse (curriculum) within this African frame of reference would help African people function in relation to one another in their communal tradition. Such a functioning would promote a collective effort

directed ultimately at the good of the community (Mkabela and Luthuli 1997, 1).

The necessary preoccupation is demonstrated and validated by service and community oriented curriculum which will instill discipline, creativity, ingenuity and hard work in the mind of African youths. To this end, Higgs (2008) advice is timely, “Education, then, in the indigenous African setting cannot, and indeed, should not, be separated from life itself. It is a natural process by which the child gradually acquires skill, knowledge, and attitudes appropriate to life in his or her community - an education inspired by a spirit of *ubuntu* in the service of the community”.

This necessary preoccupation which is powered by service and community oriented curriculum should also prioritize phenomenological and substantive issues affecting Africans which has retarded her progress. Phenomenological issues are those challenges that currently bedevils Africa in our contemporary times namely: poverty, election malpractices, rigging, marginalization, illiteracy, terrorism, diseases, wars, perverse traditions, gender inequality, bad governance, corruption, racism, erosion, desertification, religious intolerance, injustice, banditry, kidnapping, cybercrimes, ritualism and all manner of insecurities etc. These are some of phenomenological issues plaguing African continent but sadly they are not captured in our curriculum. Instead African universities are preoccupied by subjects that have little or nothing to further the progress of her citizens. What has the study on the commentaries Plato to do in the rescuing of the displaced communities of *Agatu* in Benue state of Nigeria who were displaced by Boko-haram?

The content of the curriculum should also be substantive in that it should focus on building the episteme of African philosophy with phenomenological raw material of thought through a rigorous and critical engagement of individual African philosophers with one another's thought which leads to the creation of original, innovative and rigorous episteme geared toward a synthesis borne out of contestation and protestation in a complementary way using the African mode of thought (Chimakonam 2015, 465). This means that the content of our curriculum should be conversational in approach where rigorous and creative struggle of ideas are entertained by the proponent and opponent so that original and innovative ideas will emerge at the end of the encounter.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

Education is one of the indispensable tools for human development and self-realization. Education helps the development of intellectual and mental capacities of the members of every community. In Africa, this indispensable tool of development is seriously neglected. This neglect ranges from: from poor quality teachers, poorly structured curriculum, and incorrect deployment of the curriculum, lack of resources or through bad education policies. Central to these is the structure of the curriculum. In African philosophy for instance there is clear denial of proper space for African philosophy in Africa's institutions of higher learning. African universities all have traditional western courses and with few courses in African philosophy. This marginalized state necessitated urgency for Africanizing philosophy curriculum to balance the oppressive education system taught in our universities. I have proposed in this essay that only a "necessary preoccupation" will enhance the development of our curriculum in African universities.

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## Chapter 5

### HOW AFRICAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES CAN 'SERVE ACTUAL NEEDS' IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES.

#### 5.1 Introduction

Language usage is of utmost importance for social and economic development of every culture. It is a major vehicle of expressing people's culture and it is equally used to maintain and convey their cultural ties. Language is also acknowledged to be the key driver of meaningful development in any nation. As such, nations are able to develop because language provides an important link between the citizens and their environment. It is this premise that inspires Ayodele to classify language as an indispensable enabler of development.

Language is an important instrument for the development of human beings, as political animals. No meaningful development can take place in a human community without language. As an instrument of communication, language, makes it possible for the people in any environment to interact and co-exist, thus paving way for the continuity of the society. Human beings get equipped for their maximum self-realization and self-development through the use of language.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>O. Ayodele, *Language education: catalyst for promoting social stability, national security and conflict resolution in Nigeria*. Journal of ELT and Poetry, 1(1) 2013, 3

This entails that as a political animal, language is a *sine qua non* for effective decision making and policy executions for continual existence of every society. Every aspect of the society including governance requires language for its efficiency and execution. The necessity of language is captured by Oyemike et al thus “to participate effectively in the democratic process, there must be language in place, to make economic impact language is required, beside air which is a free gift of nature, language is another necessity of life.”<sup>3</sup> This indicates the indispensability of language in the execution and administration of any society.

If language is the necessity of life and a key driver of meaningful development in any nation, then it is unfortunate that there are still existing wide developmental gap between the west and Africa. This is because “Africans are yet to understand the real ingredients needed for development”.<sup>4</sup> This missing ingredient is the non-prioritization of African indigenous languages in the transmission of ideas, despite its proven ability in enhancing cognitive understanding in learning. Africans has prioritized foreign languages and entrenched it in every aspect of her life at the expense of indigenous languages which has hindered Africa’s development for decades.

It is on this backdrop that this paper attempts to find ways that African indigenous languages can be valuable and usable like

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<sup>3</sup>B.Oyemike, L. Anyalebechi, and I. Ariole, 2017, *Promoting Indigenous Language in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges for the Library and Information Professionals, Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal). 1472.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1472>, 2017

<sup>4</sup>J. Adeyemi *Indigenous Languages and the Development Question in Africa International Journal of History and Cultural Studies* (IJHCS), 2016, 42

their mainland foreign counterparts both in influence and widespread use. This essay will help in reducing the age long neglect that African indigenous languages started experiencing since colonial times and it will also help in averting the envisaged extinction of these languages. In the first section of this essay, I shall be looking at some of the predicaments that are currently confronting African indigenous languages and the reasons why they have not measured well with their foreign counterparts. In the second section, I will be doing an analysis on the reasons why foreign languages have some degrees of comparative advantage over African indigenous languages. Lastly, I will be considering some growth processes that African indigenous languages need to engage in order to aid their international spread and diffusion.

## **5.2 African Indigenous Languages and Her Present Predicaments**

African indigenous languages are undergoing series of challenges which are threatening their survival or possible extinction if nothing urgently is done to remedy the situation. Many factors have been adumbrated as some possible causes of these predicaments but as events passes by these challenges remain unaddressed. However, it was the African educationists who first indicated that the “African child learning difficulty is a linguistic problem”<sup>5</sup>(Obanya, 1980: 88). What these educationists meant by linguistic problem stems from the fact that the language of instructions on the African child are carried out in languages which they neither understood nor communicate efficiently in. But instead of encouraging indigenous languages that African child are more conversant

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<sup>5</sup>P. Obanya, Pai. “Research on alternative teaching in Africa,”In Yoloeye, E.A. and Flechsigs (Eds.), [Educational research for development], Bonn: Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung, 1980, 88

with, African government have rather institutionalized foreign language at the expense of African indigenous language. They have continuously ignored the advice that “the use of indigenous language is central to the holistic development of any nation”.<sup>6</sup> The negligence of this timely advice has plunged African continent into an all-round educational, economic and political woe. A country like Japan realized this timely fact and prioritized the development of her indigenous language to accommodate her techno-scientific uniqueness. The breakthrough was massive and impressive that “in less than five decades, Japan which used to be among the third world/underdeveloped countries is now one of the most developed countries in terms of what their knowledge of science and technology offers them.”<sup>7</sup> The story of Japan is a good consolation and beacon of hope for African if they can learn to prioritize indigenous language in their language policies.

In this section, I will consider certain predicaments that are currently bedeviling indigenous languages in Africa which unfortunately have brought a serious barrier to their development. The first predicament that has continued to hinder the development of indigenous language is the negative attitudinal perception of indigenous languages among Africans themselves. It is surprising to recount that in other climes, people take pride to promote their own local languages but in Africa, the reverse seems to be the case. Africans hardly use their indigenous languages as medium of instruction in schools and other official engagements like business, governance and

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<sup>6</sup> N. Emeka-Nwobia, *The place of indigenous Nigerian languages in National development. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2015, 113.

<sup>7</sup> J. Adeyemi, *Indigenous Languages and the Development Question*, 2016, 42

education. They only manage to use them in their villages or homes for other unofficial engagements like cultural displays, traditional worships, family meetings etc. The current denigration of indigenous languages was reinforced during the independence of most African states because “the language in education policy that was adopted at independence, which is enshrined in the education Act, enhances the importance of English as the language of business and education.”<sup>8</sup> Because of this constitutional backing, all other indigenous languages were abandoned at the mercy of their users for their survival and sustenance. The level of denigration got so worse that the post-colonial instructors (who unfortunately were Africans) aided the thriving of the foreign languages by meting out corporal punishment to African students caught speaking their indigenous languages.

To ascertain the degree of this negligence of African indigenous languages, Magwa served questionnaires to schools to ascertain the attitudes of Zimbabweans on the use of indigenous languages. This questionnaire made enquiry on the best language that should be used as medium of instruction in (i) schools, (ii) colleges and (iii) universities and also to determine the preferences of the learners, parents, teachers and lecturers. Therein, Five hundred (500) Learners were asked their preference for language of instruction in African schools, the result shows that 304 (60,8%) of the learners who participated in the study prefer English as their preferred language of instruction. Only a meager number of 196 (39,2%)

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<sup>8</sup>W.Wagaba, *Foreign language teaching and learning: Challenges and opportunities at Makerere University Stellenbosch*, Papers in Linguistics PLUS, 2015. 2.

wanted indigenous African languages to be used as languages of instruction in their school.<sup>9</sup>

Just like the learners above, the teachers and lecturers preferred English to be used as medium of instruction in their institutions. The result shows that a total of 135 (67,5%) teachers and lecturers indicated that they would prefer English (as opposed to Shona or Ndebele) to be language of instruction in their school. Similar results emerged from the interviews conducted for both learners and their teachers in selected institutions. The result of the interviews show 60% of lecturers and 70% of learners preferred English as their official language of instruction.

The parents were not different from their counterparts above because 58,6% parents want their children to be taught using English as the official medium of instruction. Unlike teachers, an unexpected number of parents (41,4%) indicated that they would prefer African languages to be used as medium of instruction in their school system. The major reason why these respondents chose English as the official language of instructions over indigenous language is the perception that English is internationally recognized languages, which also double as the gateway to success. Another argument is that most African states are multilingual nations, so it is only English language that can be neutral when it comes to selecting a language of instruction in their school system.

The remaining parents (30%) that preferred the use of African languages as medium of instruction did so out of patriotism and task Africans not to be ashamed of what they have believing that languages are developed through use. For them “mother-tongue medium of instruction is the norm in countries like

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<sup>9</sup>W.Magwa, *Foreign language teaching and learning*, 2015:7

China, Japan, Britain and American who have successfully developed through the use of their mother tongues as media of instruction in education.”<sup>10</sup>The Chinese are developing so fast because they use their mother tongue as the official language in both the education and the business sectors. They are not ashamed of using their mother tongue as we do in Africa. It is a true saying that one cannot develop what he or she is ashamed of and what is not put to use tend to loose relevance and eventually go out extinction. We have observed that the prejudice to indigenous language emanates mainly from African elites but these days they are championed by parents belonging to the lower social group by their preference and insistence that their children must receive their education all in foreign languages. These parents pride in their children acquiring these foreign languages and deem it a priceless legacy any parent can give to their children. An elderly parent once said that she is being looked down on because she cannot speak *oyibo* language (that is, English language) and as a result, she made a vow to herself and to those who care to listen that in her next world that she must *tiwaa slate* (be extremely educated in queen’s English).

This quest for *itiwa slate* by all means didn’t start in our contemporary time but rather way back before the post-colonial times. Achebe made a striking observation that contrary to the conventional narrative, it was the desire of the colonialists to teach the African child in their mother tongue rather than impose their language on them. Rather it was “their patriotic parents” who revolted and resisted this move because they prefer their children to be taught in English language. In his own narration “as early as in the 1920’s and 1930’s the Scottish missionaries desired to teach kikuyu children in their mother tongue but their peasant parents started revolting and started

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<sup>10</sup>W. Magwa, *Foreign language teaching and learning*, 2015: 8

breaking away because they prefer English instead of their already accustomed vernacular.”<sup>11</sup>Achebe also cited the historic and influential Phelps-Stokes commission report in West Africa in 1922 where the report favored the use of the native language over English language as the language of instruction in schools. “Also by 1876 in Calabar, some of the traditional African chiefs were not satisfied with the amount of English language taught their children in missionary schools; as a result they hired private tutors for their children even at their own expense at a whooping rate”.<sup>12</sup>Achebe used the above proofs to invalidate the fact that the European imperialists forced their languages down the throats of unwilling natives but rather it was the natives who went out of their way to embrace these foreign languages and personally enforced them on their children.

Another predicament of African indigenous language is lack of written tradition and the dearth of proper documentation of indigenous languages in oral and written format. It is a veritable fact that foreign languages are enjoying wider audience and larger medium of communication than African languages because of this observed impediment. As a result of this dearth, most of African terminologies, concepts, wisdom has remained oral and most often esoteric. Rettova was particular about this development when she observed that “African languages are often underdeveloped, as far as their modern terminology is concerned; there are too many; and they mostly lack a written tradition, with only a few exceptions (such as the language

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<sup>11</sup> C. Achebe, “The Education of a British-Protected Child,” Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2009, 106

<sup>12</sup> C. Achebe, “The Education of a British-Protected Child,”2009, 106

Ge'ez in Ethiopia, which is however not spoken anymore)”<sup>13</sup> (Rettova 2002:130). In our current contemporary dispensation, African indigenous languages are disadvantaged because our libraries and other technological devices preserve more of documented knowledge resources than undocumented knowledge resources. As a result, it becomes difficult for libraries and information professionals to promote indigenous languages that have not been documented in printed and uploaded form. Rettova however advised that we can overcome this challenge by creating a written tradition in African languages which will fortify the position of African languages and also to enhance “the knowledge of African philosophical concepts”<sup>14</sup>. It is in line with this Rettova’s argument that Bamgbose opined that African indigenous languages need to be developed to cope with domains in which they are hitherto not used. In his words:

In the case of languages that already have a written tradition; it may be necessary to expand their vocabulary by creating terminology to serve adequately in wider domains. While it is true that use of language in newer domains requires language development efforts, the commonly held view that certain languages cannot be used to express concepts adequately in certain domains is false.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>A. Rettová, “The role of African languages in African philosophy”,(rue descartes, philosophies africaines : traversées des expériences), Presses Universitaires de France 2002, 130.

<sup>14</sup> A. Rettova The role of African languages in African philosophy” 2002, 150.

<sup>15</sup> A. Bamgbose, “African languages today: the challenge of and prospects for empowerment under globalization.” Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 2011, 4.

It is an established fact that lack of written tradition has stunted the growth of African languages and this deficiency gave the early missionaries and anthropologists the leeway of interpreting and translating African concepts within their intellectual limitations. These anthropologists did not write to capture the real worldview of Africans but they were rather writing with the intention of pleasing their European audience. These limitations are evident in most western works on Africa where they misconceived and misinterpreted most of Africa's original concepts in their attempts to interpret African worldviews.

The challenge of multilingualism in Africa is another major predicament of African indigenous language. The present multilingualism in Africa can be traced to the mindless and arbitrary partitioning of the continent into different boundaries by the colonial powers. The consequence of this act was grievous because no consideration was paid to the peculiarities and diversities of African languages during the partitioning. This birthed varied language situations in Africa: Anglophone Africa, Franchophone Africa, Lusophone Africa and Arabic Africa and more recently Chinese Africa. As a result of this arbitrary partitioning:

A wide range of distinct ethnic groups became assembled in European protectorates and colonies while other ethnic groups found themselves divided by newly established artificial borders and were separated into two or more territories administered by different colonial powers. Externally imposed,

arbitrary borders created extremely mixed populations.<sup>16</sup>

This exercise eventually weakened the strength of each cross-border language in their respective territories and subsequently promoted and enhanced the dominance of imported official language thereby debasing the status of the indigenous language. It is regrettable however that these indigenous languages which should have been the instrument of integration thus become an instrument of division, since it is dominated by a different imported language in each territory.

In another turn, multiculturalism could be a serious asset to the development of African continent rather than the perceived divisive tool. Multilingualism becomes an instrument of integration, influence and development when Africans gives it an opportunity to flourish and thrive. It is not a coincidence in contemporary Africa that many African students are increasingly moving within and around the continent and are becoming more and more multilingual in African indigenous languages. Birgit Brock-Utne recounts that in Nima Ghana, 69% of those that he interviewed spoke at least four languages while 41% of these group spoke five languages. These assets and ingenuity has undoubtedly promoted brotherliness, peace and co-existence among Africans. With this development, it is evident that multilingualism promotes co-operation and also an instrument of integration among Africans.

A Tanzanian school inspector tells how he grew up with three different languages (Kimizi 2009). He

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<sup>16</sup> V. Viera, "Multilingualism in Africa. Challenges and Solutions" (*Institute of Oriental Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences Klemensova*), Bratislava, Slovakia. 2018, 248

would speak one of them with his father's clan, another and very different one with his mother's clan – they all lived in the same compound – and Kiswahili with his friends. He could not say which one was his mother-tongue or first language. AdamaOuane (2009), from Mali, the former director of the Unesco Institute of Lifelong Learning in Hamburg, also tells that he grew up with three different African languages simultaneously and, like Kimizi, cannot tell which one is his 'mother-tongue' or first language.<sup>17</sup>

We can see from the above that multilingualism is a two edged sword that can be used as a weapon of development and sadly, it could be exploited also as a weapon of conflict. It all boils down to the intention of the users but when it is harnessed properly, it can also be used as a medium of influence to propagate African values in our diverse cultures. An African who can communicate in four and five languages can effectively communicate African values like honesty, diligence, brotherliness to those cultures he found himself without being an agent of division there.

### **5.3 Comparative Advantage of Foreign Languages over Indigenous Languages**

Languages, whether indigenous or foreign, are inescapable tools in the life of man because there is no aspect of human activities that can be successful without the good use of language. Language is an important tool in the society, because man needs it to share his ideas, experiences, emotions, and interact with other people in the society or in his

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<sup>17</sup>B. Brock-Utne, "Language of Instruction in Africa- The Most Important and Least Appreciated Issue," (International Journal of Educational Development in Africa), 2014, 14.

environment.<sup>18</sup>This important tool in the lives of individual has some degrees of impact in the society that warrants the preference of one language over another. So far, we have observed that foreign languages are given more preferences in our society today than their indigenous counterparts. In this section of the essay, we are going to consider some of the prospects that foreign languages have over indigenous languages that made people to prefer them over indigenous languages.

Many Africans consider only foreign languages as languages worthy of use for international and official engagements while they see African indigenous languages as mere local languages that should be used for informal engagements. They do not see African indigenous languages as possessing the necessary paraphernalia needed in the contemporary global trends which will enable her to compete in the international community. Amadi outlined some requirements to be considered before a language is accepted as international languages. These are (a) it must have a number of speakers in many nations of the world (b) It must enjoy a widespread use in many countries (c) It must have a lot of literature written and diffused in it (d) It must be amenable to scientific and technological dissemination (e) It must facilitate international communication worldwide.<sup>19</sup>Most of the foreign languages especially English is remarkably uniform throughout the world and its printed material can be distributed internationally without adaptation. Finegan observes that, English spelling holds the distinction of being the

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<sup>18</sup> M. O. Ayeomoni, "Migration and culture: Implications on Nigerian languages", Internal Journal of English and Literature, 2(9), 2011, 195

<sup>19</sup> P.E. Amadi "The Internationalization of African Languages: A Communication Leap in the Present Millennium", Journal of Language Teaching and Research, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2015, 731.

most chaotic in the world. Equally, the spread of technology, notably the diffusion of American technologies in the 20th century can be said to be an added reason for its internationalization status.<sup>20</sup>

It is regrettable that these prospects are still latent in most African indigenous languages, hence the need for these foreign languages to motivate them in developing theirs to match these heights. Many African indigenous language users have denigrated the potential of African indigenous language in attaining such influential status. They believe that modernization is best achieved in an imported official language because “such a language is already widely used in science and technology hence the experience gained in the use of the language can be copied, particularly through transfer of technology.”<sup>21</sup> They don’t know that there are peculiar concepts that are unique to African/s and these concepts can only be captured adequately in African indigenous language. So, using foreign concept to represent African term will either misrepresent or misinterpret such concepts.

The sociological and political statuses of languages like English, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish and Arabic are another prospect of the foreign languages over African indigenous languages. These influences that have endeared them to powerful world organizations like the United Nations as her official language. Also these foreign languages have consistently bridged the communication gap among world bodies technologically, politically, culturally, socially, economically etc. Asadu echoes this sentiment albeit limiting her choice to English and French thus: “indeed English and

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<sup>20</sup> E. Finegan, “English”. In Bernard Comrie, Ed: *The World’s Major Languages*. London & New York: Routledge. 1987, 82

<sup>21</sup> A. Bamgbose, “African languages today: 2012, 2

French have become languages of world bodies like UNO, UNESCO and WHO. The united Nations through its General Assembly, stipulates in the resolution of 1st February 1946 that only English and French have the status of working languages; so all other interventions and texts will be obligatorily interpreted or translated into these two languages”<sup>22</sup> The influence of foreign languages over indigenous languages is so domineering that right now, the condition of accepting aid from organizations like the World Bank is the adoption of certain restructuring policies which includes changing of education policy with the goal of modernization and competitiveness in the global market place. This scenario shows why English language and other foreign languages continue to be the dominant languages in the education sector in many countries.

Foreign languages have been tipped over indigenous languages because they are regarded as the language of globalization. Their preference is hinged on the fact that they facilitate maximum access and participation in the global village by increasing the chances of employment opportunities for graduates. A foreign language like German enables students to compete favorably for international job opportunities such as Secretarial Studies which enables students to meet and interact more easily with people working and living in German-speaking communities.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, the rapid widespread and diffusion of these languages in the world is unconnected to their syntactical formations. These foreign languages are mainly in S-V-O language (Subject-Verb-Object) formations. One distinguishing

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<sup>22</sup> F.Asadu, “Foreign Languages and the Problem of African Identity: The Nigerian Situation.”(Unizik Journal and Arts and Humanities), Vol, 19, 2, 2018, 176.

<sup>23</sup> W. Wagaba, Foreign language teaching and learning, 2010, 101.

characteristic of this S-V-O formation is that its lay-out is less ambiguous than the S-O-V or V-S-O language formations.

#### **5.4 How African Languages ‘Serve Actual Needs’ In Contemporary Times**

African indigenous languages as we have observed are replete with many complex challenges. But as awkward or reasonable as these complex challenges are, Achebe advises that we should be bold enough to contemplate on it, deal with it once and for all and if we can, move on. The reason that makes foreign languages to retain their relevance and dominance in contemporary Africa is because “they serve an actual need.”<sup>24</sup> *Serving actual need* means that these languages retain their purpose, influence, resourceful and systemic way of operations in 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa. In Ghana for instance, though Kwame Nkrumah fought imperialism to a standstill, yet English language was so influential in their conversational economy that against all odds, it was still chosen as the best language for achieving national communication and political unification. The unifying, widespread scope and technologically driven roles of English languages were so profound to the Ghanaians that it compelled them to choose it as their official means of communication. These profound qualities are what we mean in this essay when we say that a language serves an actual need. These profound services are what we believe that has given foreign languages a little edge over African indigenous languages. Following up on this premise, this paper encourages African indigenous language developers to incorporate these prospects from these foreign languages into African indigenous in order to complement their evident deficiencies.

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<sup>24</sup> C. Achebe, *The Education of a British-Protected Child*, 2009, 105

To this effect, African indigenous languages must strive to develop her latent and subaltern linguistic resources and use them to communicate, interact and advance scientific and technological knowledge within Africa. The truth is that most African languages are resourceful and have the flexibility to act as medium of instruction and research both in arts, science and technology. The reservation is rife among critics that the subjects taught in an African language are mainly “soft” subjects like social studies and religion, while mainline subjects like mathematics and elementary science can only be taught using imported official language. This is undermining the potential of African indigenous languages because languages develop through continuous usage and every language has the potential to be used for any purpose. As Ouane and Glanz rightly observed “African languages can be used as languages of education right through to the end of tertiary education. In Mali, for example, one committed professor teaches physics and chemistry in Bamana. It is technically possible for every African language to be used at this level of academic discourse.”<sup>25</sup>

Through this way also, they will be marching gradually to meet the language internationalization benchmarks. In the world language model, languages that met these criteria are mainly languages that are widely used for international trade and communication. For example, a foreign language like English is currently witnessing an increasing widespread use in the world today because of its S-V-O syntactical formation.

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<sup>25</sup>A. Ouane and C. GLANZ, *Why and how Africa should invest in African languages and multilingual education an evidence- and practice-based policy advocacy brief*, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning Feldbrunnenstraße, Hamburg, Germany, 2010, 22.

Fortunately, Yoruba language shares a little of this syntactic structure with English and French language, so it naturally follows that borrowing the processes responsible for this technical discourse in French and English would contribute significantly towards attaining the same goal in Yoruba and other African languages. This also goes to show that African languages are not that inferior as some narratives have portrayed them to be. They can match many foreign languages in the world in terms of richness in terminologies and concepts. An example of this richness is found in Vidunda, a small Tanzanian language where a linguistic research project on biological terminology shows an impressive richness of wild plant names and existing botanical knowledge.<sup>26</sup> So, the S-V-O's synthetic and semantic processes in polysemy, antonym, synonymy, homonymy makes for easy learning and fluidity in communication.

It is therefore a worthwhile project for other African indigenous languages to borrow these syntactical and semantic formations from their foreign counterparts in order to expand their scope and widespread reach. Hence "African languages need only adhere to the basic steps necessary for wider recognition and dissemination to be assured a place on the information superhighway. This can be achieved through well-coordinated linguistic efforts aimed at internationalizing the continent's indigenous languages in the present millennium. Such actions would, most hopefully, provide the much needed communication leap for African languages in particular, and

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<sup>26</sup> K. Légère, 2004. Against the Myth of African languages Lacking Terminologies. In: Joachim Friedrich Pfaffe (ed.). *Making Multilingual Education a Reality for All. Operationalizing Good Intentions*. Zomba: Centre for Language Studies, University of Malawi and GTZ. 2004, 58.

the African continent in general”<sup>27</sup>To satisfy the need of the global audience, ICT and other computer software applications are required for easy translation of computer terminologies into African languages. Such computer operations need not be carried out exclusively in English, rather hosting some engines like Google Search Engine in Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba or any other African indigenous languages will surely enhance the widespread of African languages to the outside world. It was Mazrui who argues that “an indigenized approach to national development cannot be complete without great usage of African languages in the pursuit of scientific, artistic and cultural change.”<sup>28</sup>He further asserts that Korea, Japan and Malaysia have developed mainly because of the advantage of their own languages. Africa can develop too if they can adopt this same strategy by taking full advantage of their own indigenous languages. This, they can do by laundering the uniqueness of these indigenous languages and coding their research possibilities in the search engines to the benefit of the international world. When such is accomplished, researchers can utilize this window to further their research potentials in African languages. This is what we call intellectualization of indigenous language.

The intellectualization of indigenous languages is a project that our educational functionaries should vigorously pursue and promote. We have observed that the main problem of an African child is a linguistic problem. This is because the

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<sup>27</sup>P.E Amadi, “The Internationalization of African Languages”, 2015, 735).

<sup>28</sup> A. Mazrui, “The Asmara declaration on African languages: A critical reappraisal”. A keynote address delivered at the annual conference of linguistics held at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 2002, 198

language of their instruction in these early years is mostly a language that is foreign to them. This has proved to be a poor strategy because the use of foreign languages has impoverished the mental state of the African child by alienating them from their indigenous cultures. The indigenous languages on the other hand help the African child to establish both emotional and intellectual closeness with his or her parents in communicating their feelings in their own indigenous language. To avoid what Bamgbose sees as “early exit model” he proposes that ‘a properly planned mother tongue based multilingual education should make provision for the first language to be used as a medium of instruction at least for the entire duration of basic education, while the imported official language is taught as a subject. The advantage of this model is that children will develop enough confidence in their own languages before they make any transition into another language’<sup>29</sup>

To achieve the above blueprint, a carefully articulated policy on medium of instruction is essential for African indigenous languages to boost their quest in attaining global relevance. This is why the intellectualization of the indigenous languages will help the development of indigenous terminologies to enable them to reach a wider range of domains where they did not cover initially. Fortunately, Globalization has turned the 21<sup>st</sup> century man into an “internet native”, where information and ideas are shared and borrowed without restrictions. Okere advised Africans not to be scared of embracing these new developments no matter how strange they may look. He insists that Africans should also not be ashamed to borrow other cultures because all cultures are both borrowers and lenders at the same time. Hence, African language developers should also be aware that “it is not a crime to borrow concepts and

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<sup>29</sup> A Bamgbose, “African languages today..2011,7

terminologies from other languages because every culture is in one way or the other indebted to another. The current trend in the globe is bringing the whole world into closer contact and relationship more than we had ever witnessed before.”<sup>30</sup>

As part of this intellectualization exercise, Africans have explored foreign languages and appropriated them in propagating African indigenous languages. For instance, Samuel Ajayi Crowder promoted Yoruba language by translating some part of the bible into the language for Christian evangelism in Nigeria and Sierra- Leon and this exercise has contributed significantly to the development of Yoruba language. Recently too, Profs Cecilia Emeh and Ikechebele Joseph of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, volunteered and translated the probiotic infographics into Igbo language, making it the first African language to be included among other world languages that probiotic infographics has been translated into<sup>31</sup>. The intellectualization exercise of translating these foreign languages into African indigenous languages have given African indigenous languages more international scope and equally enhanced the spread and development of their indigenous concepts and terminological.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

African languages are treasures yet to be explored and their potentials are yet to be maximized to the fullest. This is why internalization and intellectualization of African languages will expose these latent potentials and standardize them for international exploration. When these languages are

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<sup>30</sup> T. Okere, *Philosophy, Culture & Society in Africa*, Afro- Orbis Publications Ltd, 2005,86

<sup>31</sup>Unizik.edu.ng.2022. <https://unizik.edu.ng/probiotic-infographics-translated-to-igbo-language-by-unizik-professor/>

intellectualized and used for instructions and research purposes at all levels in our educational system, it will serve the need of the century by presenting them for usages in the domain where they were not previously used. These areas include official usages in tertiary education, public domain, in courts, media, and governance and in global business transactions.

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## *Chapter 6*

### **A PHILOSOPHICAL APPRAISAL OF THE USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

There appears to be a growing tendency at Europeanizing African culture and indeed every aspect of African life. This tendency by government, government agencies and private individuals alike is evident in the Nigerian society especially in the educational sector. It is evident that colonialism and its twin brother neo-colonialism are taking their toll on the cultural identity of Nigerians as found in our mode of dressing, religious practices, language and manner of speaking. And this has greatly influenced the mind of the average African learner, and the mode of transmission and acquisition of knowledge in our institutions of learning.

In spite of the beauty and glamour associated with the fact that one who claims to have passed through the four walls of an educational institution can speak correctly and express himself in English language, there is a need to investigate into the rationale for the use of foreign (English) language to teach and learn in a particular locality like Nigeria or any other African countries where English is not the first language, and its effect on the overall development of the African child. To do justice to this research, attempt will be made to answer the following questions, why is English language the language of instruction in Nigeria secondary schools, and by extension in most African schools? What are the effects of this on the development and academic performance of the African learner? Why is the African child's mother tongue not used as a language of

instruction in teaching and learning? What effect does this have on the cultural and national development and identity of the child? And to what extent has the national policy on education and the Nigeria philosophy of education contributed in providing the rationale for the use of English language in teaching and learning in secondary schools in Nigeria.

The point will be made that one such effect is that the African child (learner) tends to be Westernized having been tutored in Western ideas and in Western language. Thus, his identity as an African and as a Nigeria in particular is gradually being eroded and he loses touch with his culture and indigenous language and thought system. Moreover, the child who does not quite understand the language of instruction does not quite understand whatever is being taught; hence a deficiency is being created in his educational and intellectual growth and achievement. This chapter will conclude with recommendations on the way forward.

## **6.2 Philosophy as a Foundation for Teaching and Learning**

There seems to be no action or activity which has no philosophy or reason behind its operation, existence or practice. The same is the case with the act of teaching and learning which constitute what is called education. Thus, according to Honderich, as a foundation for education, philosophical understanding is applied to the illumination of issues on education (1995, 216). In other words, philosophy when applied to teaching and learning undertakes the task of clarifying the aims, content, methods and distribution of education appropriate to contemporary society. It is this sense of philosophy as a foundation of education that Akinpelu was referring to when he quoted George Newsome as saying that "philosophy might also be applied to education by utilizing the methods, tools and

techniques of philosophy in investigating problems of formal schooling" (1981, 6). Thus, a person's or nation's philosophical disposition on several issues can and do influence their educational process and systems.

Again, for Akinpelu, some metaphysical (philosophical) theories do influence our teaching methods in the classroom and one of the tasks of philosophy of education is to explore such theories and expose whatever is still valid in them. In this way, the teacher is made aware of the assumptions behind his activities and no longer teaches in ignorance. John Dewey as quoted by Sharma and Hyland shows the centrality of philosophy to educational study. According to them, if we are willing to conceive education as a process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow man, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education (1991, 8).

The point to be noted is that the connection between philosophy and the process of teaching and learning has been in evidence from earliest times and philosophers have traditionally focused their critical attention on all aspects of the educational process, indeed, philosophy forms one of the foundation disciplines in curriculum design and development. This is why R Ndifon stresses that for any education curriculum to be useful, it must be autochthonous, in that, it must have a true reflection of the nation's philosophy of life (2004, 109). This is because it is through the curriculum that every philosophy of education finds its fulfillment and actualization.

Okafor tends to support the above view when in an attempt to examine the relationship of philosophy to the area of curriculum and instruction, quotes Thomas Hipkins as saying that philosophy has entered into every important discussion that

has been made about curriculum and teaching in the past and will continue to be the basis of every important decision in future (1984, 12). What is important to note in the above assertion is that whether today's education is to help to solve today's problems and to assist the young to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to be responsible and effective citizens in the world tomorrow, will depend, by and large on the educator's and the society's approach to curriculum. On the other hand, the context of the curriculum and the nature of its implementation will depend on such philosophical perception as the nature of man and society and the issues related to human values and human destiny.

G U Umoren has attempted to show the philosophy behind the study of (environmental) education. According to her, the philosophy behind environmental education is to unravel the justification or need for teaching the people and learning about their environment (1998, 96). Why do we need to study about the environment? This forms the - foundation for the learning and teaching of environmental education. This is why G. O Ozumba, in an attempt to articulate sound and progressive philosophy of education for the Nigerian State, avers that "a philosophy of education that is worthwhile holistically, will only be possible if the leader himself has insight into what time and reality really are" (2001, 78-79).

What Ozumba seems to argue here is that the educationist, the administrator of education or whoever that is involved in the formation of the policies of educational concern must be one with a great deal of philosophical insight and ability. Continuing, Ozumba holds that genuine philosophy of education for Nigeria must come from the wealth of intuitive insight which the philosopher king has. He knows what the state

is all about, the ideals of good state and the centrality of education.

This explains why the federal government of Nigeria in the National policy on education states that, a nation's policy on education is government's way of realizing that part of the nation's goals which can be achieved using education as a tool (6). No policy on education, however, can be formulated without first identifying the overall philosophy and goals of the nation. Thus, we agree with Onyewuenyi that a sound philosophy of teaching and learning will involve the consistent and wise effort towards making all the facts of education in all the psychomotive, affective and cognitive domains of teaching and learning come to a balanced-unconflicting harmonious and successful end (1997, 12).

Similarly, Ijiomah observes that the science of philosophy is meant to improve policies even in education. The professional educator with philosophical training and insight must appreciate the need for intellectual self-reliance. He should neither regard his meeting with the philosopher in academic landscape as a strange affair, nor regard philosophy as an irrelevant subject on his curriculum (1996, 53-55). In addition, because of crisis of inconsistency in many disciplines in the early part of the twentieth century, it became necessary for all disciplines to seek their foundations. In an attempt to sort out these crises in the various subject areas, philosophy went foundational. Thus, we have the various "philosophies of".

Thus, while it is true that a teacher is elected into office to transmit knowledge, he should not be in the office as robot. He has to evaluate what he transmits. "Philosophy liberates him from dogmatic slumber and disciplinary parochialism. As Okeke rightly observes", problems confront education and the

resolution of such problems require philosophical analysis and rational treatment" (1989, 10). Quoting Kneller, Humphrey and Charles Aver that, philosophy as a foundational discipline is an attempt to work out a systematic framework of concepts and values which will assist in the selection and fragmentation of educational goals and policies. But these goals, they continued, can be considered realistically to the extent that they are related to other more general questions such as, the nature of the reality to which we belong, the meaning of life and of himself, of the society he lives in and of the political responsibilities he must assume (2005, 48). J. D Okoh's remark is also significant here. According to him, as a foundational discipline philosophy of education takes the theoretical findings of philosophy and translates them into some kind of practical proceed of (education) teaching and learning (1998, 62).

### **6.3 The Use of English Language in Teaching and Learning and its Impact on the Development of the African Child.**

English language is so freely used among people that there is a tendency to forget that development of the ability to speak and communicate with people is not an easy task. As a medium of communication, language can be in form of signs, symbols or words. P C Nwokocha defines language development as the systematic improvement in the art of communication (2000, 178). It involves improvement in the use of the gramma and syntax of the language. According to innate capacity theory of language development, represented by Noam Chomsky and quoted by Nwokocha, language development occurs because some innate ability which determined language production matures as the child develops physically (2000, 179). Thus for Chomsky, the child only needs experience to speak a specific language. By nature, the child has innate capability to speak.

What is noteworthy here is that Chomsky recognizes that both environmental and biological factors influence language development but emphasize that innate potentials play a more prominent role. Chomsky notes that language learning involves learning of rules that enable the speaker to generate new sentences in the way a listener will understand. This further suggests that, depending on the rate at which a learner learns and understands the language of instruction, he will either understand or fail to understand what is being taught (Enyimba, 2007, 27). Thus, as Aliyu et al pointed out, language teachers are faced with the goal of getting learners to learn English language in a proficient manner (2006, 1). This explains why O. A Essien laments the non- implementation of the provision of the national policy on education by most schools; especially in the area of language (1981, 70-71). It will be recalled that the national policy on education (2004) 4th edition, among other things, stipulates that;

- a. Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and at a later stage, English.
- b. At the Junior Secondary School level, students select two Nigerian languages as core subjects, one of which should be the language of their own area in addition to any of the three main Nigerian languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.
- c. At the senior secondary school, the core- curriculum is the group of subjects which every pupil must take in addition to his or her specialties (NPE 2004, 17).

Following these provisions, Essien observes that, today these three language provisions are obeyed in the breach. Elitist primary and even nursery schools use English as medium of instruction throughout the primary school system, in violation of the nation's law as enshrined in the national policy on

education and no one calls teachers and schools to order. Several factors account for this non-adherence or non-implementation of the policy provisions, but that is not our concern here (1981). The point to be noted is that as far as language as a vehicle of teaching and learning is concerned, there have been shifts of emphasis back and forth on English and a corresponding de-emphasis on Nigerian languages, de-emphasis on French and emphasis on French, downplaying of English and promotion of French, etc. According to Essien, these vicissitudes are bound to create language problems for Nigerians, particularly students. For our children are faced with the prospects of having too many languages to learn. Yet language is fundamental to education, teaching and learning and thought (1981, 72).

The point being made here is that in trying to solve the problem posed to education and indeed to teaching and learning, by the existence of several languages, Nigeria has taken an ambivalent position of having English as its official language and Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo as other languages that are to be used in conducting the business at the National Assembly (see 1979 constitution section 53). This constitutional provision, according to Obododimma, places Nigeria somewhere between linguistic nationalism and (1999, 188). English is a symbol imperialism or British colonization and for it to be Nigeria's national language is to give Nigeria the identity of being an extension of the British Empire.

Thus, it has been argued by most African scholars, especially the Afro-centric stock, that it is improper for an indigenous African state like Nigeria to have English as a national language and therefore as a vehicle of instruction in classroom situation. But as Obododimma rightly observes, the choice and use of an indigenous language as a national language and as a means of

teaching and learning in Nigeria is a more sensitive issue than linguistic decolonization can cater for. According to him, the choice of Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba as co-national languages has generated a lot of controversy within academic and political circles in Nigeria and this has had undue effect on the education and development of the child (1999, 189). What is obvious from the foregoing is that the official position on the teaching and learning, by means of indigenous languages in Nigeria, as presented in the national policy on education is ambivalent, if not pretentious, on linguistic and cultural rights of the citizens. One of the problems created in the learner and in his development due to the use of English language as vehicle of teaching was stated clearly by Nwachukwu-Agbada in the following words:

The quality of English written by Nigerian High school students while answering school Certificate examination questions has remained lack luster and uninspiring. Those who grade English language and literature in English Papers in the yearly W.A.E.C examinations will attest to the above claim. The answers in these two subjects are so badly written that one wonders if the students were ever taught in English language during their six-year stay in high school, thus, when they manage to scrap some credit passes-often times at two sittings and come to higher studies we are faced with young citizens who are barely literate in English (2000, vii).

B O Oluikpe and others draw attention to the other angle of the problem faced by students whose mother tongue is not English language but are instructed through the same language. According to them, in learning of foreign language, we naturally assimilate the sounds of that language to the nearest

similar sounds of that language, and pronounce them accordingly. This causes problems where two or more sounds in the target language are assimilated to one sound in the mother tongue between sounding words in the target language (2001, 1).

The obvious implication of the above assertion is that, if the students encounter such problems in understanding and pronouncing the language of instruction, then, how well will they understand and assimilate what is being taught through the medium of such language? This is the thrust of the matter. A cursory look at the foregoing would reveal certain basic truths that form the findings of this discourse.

#### **6.4 Philosophical Analysis of the Findings**

One of the findings of this study is that, there is a significant relationship between the use of English language in teaching and learning and the performance as well as the development of the learner. This implies that as a language teacher, one's major goal should be to get learners to learn English in proficient manner so that classroom learning can be organized in order to promote maximum effectiveness. Nwokocha supports this finding in his "Language Development". According to him, to improve performance as well as learning development, learners should be helped to develop listening skills, by listening to the teacher's model speeches and loud reading (2000, 178). Syntax formation should be made stimulating to make learners develop interest in them since they need them to understand lessons and to express what they have learned.

Aliyu et al also observed in line with the above finding that to improve the performance of the learners and to enhance the development of the learner, language teaching and learning has

to be organized according to the sub-skill-listening, speaking, reading and writing (2006, 7). For Ebele, Eko, the prevalent attitude among students is that they are sufficiently prepared in English for work in their school (1999, 199). This attitude often militates against their benefiting maximally from classes or lessons. Eko thus concludes that as long as English is the medium of communication in all their subjects, there is need for improvement on their English language. Another important fact worthy of note is that, performance and development of learners are greatly affected by the medium of instruction. This particular fact appears to be a product of the earlier finding. The point being made here is that if the medium of instruction is not effective and if the students or learners are not conversant with that medium, it will show in the level of performance and overall development.

This finding lends credence to the view of Awubi who observed that it is not always that academic qualifications of Nigerians in various fields of learning reflect comparable competence in their use of English language. For him, many Nigerians have by their performances that the problems of the use of the language in teaching, learning, writing, reading and speech mainly, are varied, but that they can be greatly minimized by exposure to appropriate linguistic environments and commitment to use the language properly. Essien also maintained that the three-language-provision of National Policy on Education (NPE) is obeyed in the breach. Elitist primary (and even nursery) and secondary schools use English language as a medium of instruction throughout the primary and secondary school system in violation of the nation's law as enshrined in N.P.E and no authority calls the teachers and schools to order. The result is that students' performance level is greatly affected.

It was also one of the findings of this essay that, certain reasoning or thought system (philosophy) accounts for the use of English language in teaching and learning in Nigerian Secondary Schools. The question that attends this particular finding is, what then is the reasoning behind the nation's use of English in teaching and learning. As Aliyu and others opined, one of the reasoning behind the use of English in teaching and learning in country is because of the benefit which some of the language learning theories hold for teaching and learning situation (2006, 59). They believe that these theories of language learning provide the teacher with some scientific basis for his teaching. In form of answering the above question posed by the third of this essay, Obododimma avers that, in trying to solve the problem posed by the existence of several languages to which its member ethnic nations use in symbolizing their identities, Nigeria has taken the ambivalent position having English as its official language.

Obododimma believes that the choice of a national language especially in the context of multilingualism is an attempt to minimize differences which create and intensify disunity in the nation-state (1999). This position is further supported by Awubi, when he asserts that none of the large number of Nigerian languages will be allowed by Nigerians in unison to replace English (1998, 105). But Essien and Fafunwa are of different view from Awubi. Essien calls on Nigerian nationalists to fight for the replacement of English just as English itself replaced latin in the interest of English people (1981, 7). Fafunwa, on his part, feels that English is the cause of Nigeria's underdevelopment since we teach agriculture in English while our farmers farm in Yoruba, Hausa, etc (1980, 5).

It was further discovered in the course of this research that the provisions of Nigerian philosophy of education and national policy on education, have some limitations and hence need some improvement. This finding was supported by Obododimma who states that, indeed, the official position on the teaching and learning of indigenous languages in Nigeria as presented in the national policy on education is ambivalent, if not pretentious, on linguistic and cultural rights of the citizens (1999, 189). The relevant section states:

In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the education 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 should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (NPE 2004, 26).

The contention of Obododimma which this study shares is that, the above provision, on the one hand, appears to cater for cultural identity which is relayed through languages, but also appears to care more for "National Unity". Since language preserves and transmits cultures, will the compulsory learning of the so called major languages "in the interest of national unity" not create conflicts in cultural identity? The provision on the learning of the three Nigerian languages infringes on the "autonomy face" of the other linguistic groups. In the same vein, Essien laments the lack of implementation of some of the provisions of the National Policy on education; especially in the area of language provisions. According to him it is the lack of will and commitment to these provisions that has led to its non-implementation (2000, 67). At this point, Ijiomah's thought

becomes significant. According to him, the quality of our actions can be no greater than the quality of our understanding. More particularly, the quality of our making and implementing of educational policies depends in large measure upon the quality of our individual maps of the conceptual and normative terrain of educational policy (1996, 43).

## **6.5 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The aim of this essay has been to investigate the philosophical foundation for the use of English language in teaching and learning and its impact on the development of the child. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the philosophy behind the use of English language in teaching and learning is for easy communication and for national unity in the absence of any consensus in the use of any Nigeria language in teaching and learning. Since the national policy on education and the Nigerian philosophy of education applaud the above reason or philosophy, it was necessary for government and other stakeholders in education to amend and improve upon the provisions of this policy and philosophy in order to ensure a sound philosophy and policy for the Nigerian educational system and the proper implementation of same. In addition, the findings of the study led to the conclusion that there is significant relationship between the use of English language in teaching, learning and performance as well as the development of the learners. Thus, the performance and development (intellectual and otherwise) of the learners are greatly affected by the medium of instruction. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. If the English man sees the need to constantly study the grammar and other features of his language, Nigerians should be very willing to constantly refresh their thinking on how the English language works before confronting their students with the ingredients of effective

- communication. To do otherwise would amount to efforts to impart knowledge one does not possess and in the process complicate the English language problems that are daily weighing down students.
2. Words should be pronounced distinctly and sentences said with proper intonation to enhance learners' understanding.
  3. Since it is problematic to use any particular Nigerian language, English language was evolved as a vehicle of instruction. It is recommended that the teachers of this language in our secondary schools should make concerted effort to impart the rules of grammar and syntax to the students to enable them have mastery of the language which will in turn help them to improve their performance in other subjects.
  4. It is also recommended that a national conference of the minister of education, state commissioners of education, local government area supervisors of education and other major stakeholders in the educational sector be convened to re- examine very critically all aspects of the national policy on education (N.P.E). This would include, among other things, revision, revitalization, re-orientation, as well as re- examination of all the factors or problems that frustrated its efficient implementation.

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# *Chapter 7*

## **EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE, INDOCTRINATION AND THE AFRICAN CHILD**

### **7.1 Introduction**

One of the concepts which are closely associated with the concept of education and in fact, knowledge process is indoctrination. Most scholars believe that it is a form of education and a process of knowledge while others argue contrarily. Those who refuse to see any relationship among the three concepts of education, knowledge and indoctrination have a pejorative notion of indoctrination. In other words, for them indoctrination portends everything negative in the teaching and learning process. This chapter attempts to examine critically the nature of indoctrination in education and the process of knowing with the aim to establishing a relationship among these concepts. The position will be held that education, knowledge are closely related to indoctrination in that it is a form of education and that all men get indoctrinated in one form or another. Hence, indoctrination is not a derogatory concept in relation to education and matters of knowledge. In an attempt to achieve its stated goal, the paper begins with a clarification of the meaning of education.

### **7.2 The Concept of Education**

Education has been loosely or simply defined as knowledge, enlightenment or wisdom. This definition tends to make education a synonym of science, and this is not very correct. Hence, it is grossly inadequate. Thus for Egunjobi and others, education is the process of transmitting societal lore, values and desirable attitudes from one generation to another in order to socialize individuals so as to equip them with the desired mode of behaviour that is in conformity with the way they live (2006,

2). What this definition suggests is that education aims at inculcating in individuals certain knowledge, abilities, skills or behaviour to enable them function in their immediate environment and to contribute meaningfully to the society at large.

It has been argued that education is a desirable change in human behaviour (Egunjobi 2006, 12). Ukeje on the other hand agrees that “education occurs whenever any influence produces a change in the physical and mental behaviour” (1966). What is significant about these definitions is that they point at a positive change in human behaviour as a mark of good education. In this sense, defining education as a process that changes the learner becomes very informative here. Accordingly, to learn is to change.

For most scholars education is a bunch of deceitful ideas or processes which is used to delude the people to become stooges, servants and slaves to the ruling class. Education thus becomes a political weapon in the hands of the ruling power to foster their will on the masses by means of distortion and misrepresentation. Kevin Harris is one scholar who aligns with this line of thought. According to him, education is also a process that in certain political circumstances transmits as knowledge structured distorted, misrepresentations of the world. For him:

To find those particular political circumstances, one need not necessarily seek out totalitarianism or turn to horror regimes such as Nazism; one can look much closer to home for in any capitalist liberal democracy, education functions to transmit to each new generation a structured misrepresentation of reality (1979, 2).

Harris' conception of education is problematic. This is so because it is politically conceived and this does not show the true nature of education. It is this type of conception that leads most scholars to confuse education with the idea of indoctrination. For such scholars, education has become indoctrination and since indoctrination has a negative connotation, education thus is conceived negatively.

This explains why Akinpelu is very critical of such conceptions of education. He describes some of them as narrow, unduly restricted and therefore, inadequate. Hence, he avers that "education is much more than the activities that take place within the four walls of a school" (1981, 174).

However, if education is understood from the perspective of Hornby, then it involves a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills (1974, 169). This definition of education suggests two major constituents namely: teaching and learning. In other words, teaching and learning are essential part of the educational process which is geared towards the impartation of knowledge and the development of certain skills in the learner, which he originally did not possess. This means that there has been a change in the learner's overall being.

The implication of the above is that a person is said to have acquired education if in addition to developing some skills, he has acquired new experiences, which must have caused certain changes in his behaviour. As stated in an earlier chapter of this book, this is one of the reasons degrees are awarded in the universities and other tertiary institutions in "Character and learning". That is to say that the behaviour and experience of

such a person is considered of utmost importance before a degree is awarded to him as an educated person. What is significant about these definitions is that they point at a positive change in human behaviour as a mark of good education.

For Egunjobi et al, education is the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in cultural setting and heritage in order to foster continuously the wellbeing of mankind and guarantee its survival against the unpredictable, a times hostile and destructive elements and forces of man and nature (2006, 2). A S Orji corroborates this definition when he asserts that it is not only as many people think of as what goes on within the four walls of a school; education would be the sum total of all the experiences whether formal or informal, which a man comes across in his journey of life. It is the continuous development of the physical, mental and spiritual potentialities of man... to enable him live efficiently and effectively not only for his own benefit but also for that of the society in which the finds himself (2002, 3).

### **7.3 The Concept of Knowledge**

Knowledge has been described as the understanding of, or the information about a subject which has been obtained by experience or study, and which is in a person's mind or possessed by people generally (Hornby, 1974, 705). In other words, knowledge is the totality of the mind's content in terms of experience and, or study. This definition brings to mind the concept of epistemology which concerns itself with the question of how one acquires knowledge, and the extent and limitations of such knowledge. In fact, J I Unah equates epistemology with knowledge. According to him, epistemology is derived from the Greek word "episteme", meaning "knowledge". It is, therefore the theory of knowledge

concerned with the nature, origin, scope, reliability and limits of human knowledge (1995, 22).

Omoregbe agrees with Unah's disposition, but adds that, "epistemology is knowledge taking a critical look at itself to justify itself" (1998, vi). Agreeing with this view, Ekarika avers that, the totality of the data of one's experience constitute his knowledge; and philosophy (Epistemology) performs the primary task of determining man's knowledge or experience in relation to all other things in the universe (1986, 7-8). Similarly, Ijiomah believes that a discussion of epistemology as a theory of knowledge without first identifying the whatness of knowledge would yield no result. Hence, he defines knowledge as "the disposition demonstrated behaviourally in a manner that is favourable to human welfare or to the solution of human problem" (1996, 22). This definition stems from his belief that knowledge has everything to do with human action. Howbeit, in this paper, the term knowledge shall be used interchangeably with epistemology.

As a theory of knowledge, epistemology is a philosophical inquiry into the nature of knowledge in terms of its sources, extent and process. What can we know? How can we know? And how much can we know? Several epistemic schools and theories have emerged in an attempt to respond to these fundamental epistemic questions. For instance, the empiricists posit that the much we can know depends on our senses which for them are the ultimate source of knowledge (Locke 1894, 105). Other empiricists who subscribe to this view, though, with some modifications here and there include Berkeley, Hume etc. The rationalists of the likes of Descartes Spinoza and Leibniz, held an opposite view. For them, the human mind can acquire knowledge of the truth only through reason for the

senses are not reliable enough to give men adequate knowledge (Descartes 1988, 40).

In other words, the scope of human senses and reason respectively determines how much man can know. Kant on his own part came with the view that only a combination of senses and reasoning can present us with genuine knowledge. The reason for this position is his belief that “there is nothing in the mind which was not originally in the senses” (1987, 41). Following this, we submit that the entire discussion on epistemology, nature of knowledge and the subject-object problem in an epistemic situation centers on the mind and its nature. It is in this connection, that we perceive a relationship between education and epistemology. Education is a source of knowledge in that it serves as a means of transmitting knowledge from one person to another and from one generation to another. Such knowledge may be experiential, intellectual, cultural, societal values or all of these.

Harry Schofield appears to agree with the above assertion on the nature of education and knowledge. According to him, “we can accept that education does pass worthwhile things on, from one generation to the next. When we ask what is worthwhile? We think of what is valuable, of values and of culture,” (1972, 36). Education is cognitive in nature such that it deals with the process of understanding. The process of understanding involves the process of knowledge acquisition and dissemination. The process of knowledge acquisition and dissemination is an epistemic process. Hence, if education necessarily involves some form of indoctrination as we have been trying to argue in the preceding pages, then it follows that it is very fundamental to knowledge acquisition and as such to epistemic situation.

## **7.4 The Concept of Indoctrination**

The problematic nature of this concept stems from the fact that it is open to diverse meanings and interpretations even lexically. For instance, Webster's New International Dictionary (2<sup>nd</sup>ed) attributes to the concept two different connotations. Accordingly, "to indoctrinate means to instruct in the rudiments or principles of learning" (31). This implies that indoctrination is a part of teaching and could be used in similar sense as teaching. On the other hand, the second lexical meaning of the concept appears to be derogatory and negative in perception. Thus, it states that indoctrination is the attempt to "imbue with an opinion or with a partisan or sectarian point of view" (31).

The above ambiguous use of the concept explains, the divide among scholars, on the nature of indoctrination and its place in education. While some align with the first meaning and as such regard it as synonymous with teaching, others reject it as a misnomer in teaching and learning process and therefore must be discouraged. For instance, Dewey vehemently rejects indoctrination. According to him, as quoted by Nagai, "instead of recommending... indoctrination, we are striving to challenge all the indoctrination of conscious dogma and of the unconscious bias of tradition and vested interest which already exist" (1976, 10).

Barrow contrarily believes that indoctrination is closely related to teaching and as such, all men in one way or the other get indoctrinated. Thus, he says, "on almost any view, however, the philosopher-kings in the republic are being indoctrinated and on literally any view the mass of the people are" (1975, 74). Egunjobi and others see indoctrination as involving non-rational means in an attempt to impart unquestioning commitment to the truth of certain unprovable claims with the

intention of making them sick” (2006, 5). What this definition suggests is that indoctrination involves some element of coercion. This is so because indoctrination occurs in the teaching of absolute moral values, example truth, justice, purity, religious beliefs, political ideologies etc.

Akinpelu agrees with the above conception of indoctrination. For him, to indoctrinate a person is to make a person accept certain types of beliefs (doctrines and dogmas) in a way that shuts out the learner’s ability or freedom to ask questions or raise doubts about it (1981, 198). In the same vein, Kevin Harris, conceives education in certain spheres as simply indoctrination and hence is disprovable. According to him, “education is a process that in certain political circumstances transmit as knowledge structured distorted misrepresentations of the World” (1979, 2). In other words, indoctrination misrepresents reality and hence, any education or teaching and learning involving elements of indoctrination misrepresents reality and must therefore be rejected.

Uche quotes white as referring to indoctrination as the same with teaching, according to which he states that, “to indoctrinate” and “to teach” has similar meaning with “to instruct”. Thus, to indoctrinate an individual meant essentially to get the individual to acquire some learning” (2009, 253). At the same time Wolman is quoted as saying that “indoctrination is the art of providing or imparting an instruction primarily designed to gain complete and uncritical control or acceptance, rather than critical consideration (Uche, 2009, 253).

In all these controversies emanating from diverse interpretation of the meaning of indoctrination, there is yet a point of convergence. In a very general sense, and with careful

scrutiny, one would perceive the agreement on the basic point that to indoctrinate involves implanting beliefs. The nature of the belief here is immaterial. Thus we refer to indoctrination as that aspect of education or teaching and learning which involves the impartation of a body of beliefs to the learner in order to influence his character and behaviour. Following this, there is a thin line between education (teaching and learning) and indoctrination such that without strict discipline or care one may slip into the other while exercising one. Thus, while teaching or education is not synonymous with indoctrination, it however necessarily involves elements of indoctrination.

This is why it is argued that, in one way or the other, people (learners) have always been indoctrinated and will continue to indoctrinate each other. Perhaps, a critical examination of the relationship between education and indoctrination will further illuminate the nature of indoctrination.

### **7.5 Indoctrination in Education the Education of the African Child**

Is there any relationship between indoctrination, knowledge and education? What is the role of indoctrination in education or in the process of (knowledge acquisition) teaching and learning, and how does this impact on the education of a child?

Indeed, there is a relationship between indoctrination and education such that indoctrination plays important role in the education of the learner, and in the process of knowing and by mankind generally. One basic fact that presents itself very strongly, irrespective of whatever any philosopher or scholar may construe is that education is so closely related to indoctrination that most times and in most circles they are used interchangeably. The first definition given in this essay from Webster dictionary attests to this fact. It was simply defined as

a form of teaching or instruction in the rudiments of learning. This definition speaks for itself concerning the relationship between the two concepts or the place of indoctrination in education.

Again, there are some levels or stages in the educational or learning process of a child or learner, when he/she has not yet developed the capability for independent thinking or critical mindedness, yet there are basic concepts, ideas or views that he needs to acquire open-mindedly. It is in such cases that indoctrination presents itself as the only available vehicle of teaching such fundamentals with the view that in due course when the learner develops criticality, he/she will be able to re-examine these ideas whether to continue holding them or to discard them.

In this regard, Schofield quotes Duccasse thus, “education takes place through instruction, training and indoctrination” (1972, 32). These points to the point earlier made, that education involves elements of indoctrination, while indoctrination itself is a means of education. In collaboration to the point being made in this section, Brubacher states that:

Every education makes use of indoctrination: children are indoctrinated with the multiplication table... love of country... the principles of chemistry and physics and mathematics and biology and nobody finds fault with indoctrination in these fields (1975, 77).

Furthermore, a good teacher cannot help incorporating some elements of indoctrination in the teaching process, since education itself is normative in nature and the teacher is a communicator of values to the students. Thus, as Kneller

rightly observed, “indoctrination is not at variance with good teaching” (1971, 53). Bertrand Russell seems to agree with Kneller by maintaining that “education must of necessity contain some elements of indoctrination and insists that the ill effects of indoctrination can only be adequately handled by a process of education through the act of equipping learners with skills needed for making impartial judgment (1967, 197).

In all, indoctrination plays more significant role in school education than in the university education. This is so considering the differences between school education (elementary and secondary education) and university education. In the former, there are varieties of subjects which are to be taught to the learner most times by one teacher. This makes indoctrination necessary if all of these must be taught and the syllabus completed. While in the later, there are rooms for specialization and for choice making on what course or the other to do. This fundamental difference between the two systems makes it possible for indoctrination to form the major process of teaching in the school education with less difficulty or problems. This is what Nagai appears to be saying in the chapter two of his education and indoctrination (1976, 45-49).

## **7.6 Conclusion**

In criticizing indoctrination in education, it must be noted that education has always been cut in the web of ideological conflicts and political dogmatism in the society. And this has had negative effects on education. More so, considering the differences between education and indoctrination, one may be tempted to join the crusade against indoctrination in education. One readily identifiable difference between the two concepts is that “education leads to open mindedness on certain issues while indoctrination closes the mind on some issues” (Uka

2010, 144). Again, education inculcates facts whereas indoctrination inculcates beliefs.

These differences notwithstanding, many similarities abound between education and indoctrination that makes it rather difficult to dismiss indoctrination as unacceptable. For instance, the three essential elements of education also constitute indoctrination, namely, teacher, learner and content. “The role of the teacher, the learner and what is taught are central in every education process” (Akpan 2010, 129). It must be noted that none of these is more important than the other. The moment we place the teacher as primary or more important, we brand such education indoctrination. This ought not to be so. Besides, is it truly correct that, education inculcates facts lone and indoctrination inculcates beliefs alone? This is arguable. The definition of education by Nwaiwu quoted earlier in this paper proves otherwise. Education has been described as “a process that involves the training to acquire skills and attitudes and seeks to communicate facts and beliefs” (Uka, 2010, 144). Similarly, does education a times not close the minds of the learner on some fundamental issues that is believed to be true, absolute and sacrosanct? Does this not involve indoctrination if indoctrination merely thrives on closing the mind of the learner on issues?

Infact, Fafunwa’s definition of education quoted by Egbai shows clearly the relationship between education and indoctrination and as such does not give room for the dismissal of indoctrination. According to him, education is the intentional transmission of something worthwhile in a morally acceptable manner” (Egbai 2008, 99). Following this definition, in indoctrination like in education, the teacher or instructor intentionally transmits something – be it knowledge, skills, facts or beliefs which they consider worth the while and

morally right to the learners. From this analysis it becomes clear that the two concepts are closely related such that we cannot dismiss indoctrination, for doing so will amount to dismissing of education also as acceptable.

It is in this sense, that we argue that men has always been indoctrinated and will continue to be indoctrinated. This is so in our thinking because we perceive education and indoctrination as two sides of a given coin, in the sense that, while both are not exactly the same, they are so closely related that in educating, some form of indoctrination takes place and indoctrinating some form of education occurs. Thus, we must not dismiss indoctrination, for rejecting it implies a rejection of a substantial aspect of our education system. And as Edmund rightly puts it:

Indoctrination need not be a bad thing. To say that a person has been indoctrinated is according to the OED, to say that he has been imbued with a doctrine, idea or opinion. Indoctrination, if this definition be accepted, need not be a bad thing, because it is sometimes morally justifiable to become imbued with a doctrine (1973, 61).

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

The book *Philosophy, Language and Education in Africa* is a product of a consistent and detailed intellectual excursion by ebullient academics whose intellectual savvy and doggedness traversed all sections of philosophy. The authors are concerned with the need to expose the society with topical and existential issues in the society relating to the interrelatedness of the phenomena of language, philosophy and education in Nigeria, as a nation, and in Africa as a continent. This book is a harvest of their academic sojourn.

As the title implies, it is a very critical and reflective text meant to be seen on the shelves of every educated being that is keen to know the challenges and prospects of philosophy, language and education in the development of an individual African and the continent of Africa in contemporary time. The dialectic findings of this book cuts across issues and topics on curriculum development, indigenous language, language of education, philosophical foundation of education, indoctrination in education, etc, and their influences on the African and their world.

The simplicity and conversational nature of the language used in writing the book makes it an important and rich research material for all categories of persons as knowledge acquisition is for everyone. This book is relevant for different categories of persons such as educationists, policy makers, language scholars/experts, philosophers of education, and philosophers of language, educational administrators, curriculum designers, and students of these adjacent disciplines.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Dr. Oyin Nwojiré is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. He is a leadership expert with a passion for book development and all round excellence. He is a convenor of a weekly leadership platform, Phenomenal Leadership Circle. He is the organizer of Phenomenal Book Review Network, a unique platform that encourages reading culture for the youths. He facilitates in-classroom lectures through e-learning and e-readings. Dr. Oyin Nwojiré has published numerous high impact journal articles and book chapters in reputable outlets. He has supervised and examined many undergraduates and Master students. He has given talks and presented papers in many workshops, conferences and colloquiums. He is the Coordinator of General Studies (GSD) at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and the editor of *Black Journal of Arts and Humanities* (BJAH). He is the Assistant Secretary General, of Academic Staff Union of Universities, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Chapter (ASUU-UNIZIK). Dr. Oyin's e-mail: [Oyin@nwojire.com](mailto:Oyin@nwojire.com) or by direct mail to his book club.



Dr. Modupe Eyo is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar. Her research and teaching interest is in Philosophy of education, African philosophy, environmental ethics, development studies, and existentialism. She is an international conference speaker and a regular panel member of numerous articles in reputable journals such as *Ontario African Studies Journal*, *African Journal of Philosophy, Religion and Culture*, *African Heritage: Philosophy Today*, *Philosophy International*, *African Perspectives*, etc. He is the author of the following books: *Philosophy, Education, Art and Reality* (Michele Tambo, 2002), *Reason and Development: Epistemology and African Epistemology* (Dagmar Sauter Munkit, Bielefeld, 2002), *Religious Realism in Political Thought* (Oxford: Hudsonville Publishers, 2019) and *Environmental Philosophy: Concepts, Issues and Perspectives* (Lanham: Gray Matter Co, 2021). He is on the editorial and reviewers' list of reputable international journals and serves as editorial committee Universities within and outside Nigeria. Modupe Eyo is a member of Continental Society of Philosophy (CSP), African Society for Inclusive Development, and a Fellow of the Society for Research and Academic Excellence (SRAE).



Rev. Sr. Dr. Augustina Adenwa IGW, OUBA (SCEC) is an Associate Professor and the HOD of the Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. She teaches Pragmatics, African Diaspora Literature, African/African American Literature, Caribbean Literature and Semiotics. She is supervising and presenting and publishing articles in different secondary schools, Colleges of education and Universities in Nigeria. She has presented papers at several local and international conferences. Sr. Adenwa has published numerous articles in both national and international journals. She has English textbooks to her credit. One of which is entitled: *Emerging Pragmatics*. Her book, *Rev. Sr. Dr. Augustina Igwe's essays*, by Dr. Jemmy Director of the Academic Center at University of Nigeria, Nsukka (2018-2019), Council Member, National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NIJLAN) (2016-2020), Former Chairman, Prerogative Committee, University of Nigeria, Nsukka Senate Cerebellum (2018-2019), Former Deputy Director, Center for Sustainable Development, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (2012-2012).

Currently, she is the Deputy Director (HET/UNIO) at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She is also a member of the 5th governing council of National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NISILAS), 2021 till date. Dr. Igwe is a board member of The Guild of Convention and English Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. She is equally a member of Nnamdi Azikiwe University senate Cerebellum and Chairman of the Board, Faculty of Arts Library, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Finally, she is the Chairman, Business Committee, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Faculty of Arts/sofa, Awka and Umuahia.



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