

## LANGUAGE PROVISIONS OF NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION AND THE EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF NIGERIAN LANGUAGES

By

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### **Abstract:**

*Language is a means of communication by which human beings interact and exchange their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Nigerian languages now co-exist with English language which has been institutionalized. In view of the above issue, there is a great need for the speakers of this foreign language to learn Nigerian languages for diverse purposes. This paper discussed the instructional role of the teacher in improving quality teaching and learning of Nigerian languages with emphasis on systematic planning (Educational technology) and making learning experiences more meaningful for learners. Finally, the roles of educational technology in improving quality teaching of Nigerian languages are identified.*

**Keywords:** Teaching, Instruction, Effective Teaching/Instruction, Educational Technology.

### **Introduction**

Language is a means of communication by which human beings interact and exchange their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Language is therefore an indispensable tool in any given human society. In agreement, Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2004) appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction, national cohesion and preserving cultures. The policy also stresses that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Nigerian languages now co-exist with English language which has been institutionalized.

In view of the above issue, there is a great need for the speakers of this foreign language to learn Nigerian languages for diverse purposes. It becomes pertinent to adopt an instructional technology that can help achieve this objective. Education technology (instructional technology) stands for the continued improvement of effectiveness in education especially the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching occupies a key position in all educational activities. Most other educational issues or matters are geared towards supporting and promoting teaching and learning. It is also common knowledge that teaching in its multiform is one of the most important conditions that encourage and stimulate learning. The strategic position or focal role of the teacher stems from the central position of teaching in the education process. The quality of education lies squarely in the domain of the teacher and he will only have himself to blame if he fails.

For the teachers, their main function and task in the educative process is instruction through which curriculum objectives and in fact all other objectives of education are achieved. At this point, some relevant questions may be asked. These are:

- 1) What is teaching/instruction?
- 2) What is effective teaching/instruction?
- 3) How can educational technology contribute to effective teaching of Nigerian languages?

The rest of this paper will attempt to provide some answers to these questions.

### **Teaching**

This paper focuses upon professional teaching within the setting of school, classroom or learning situation. Teaching constitutes the curriculum implementation level and the most problematic area of education. It is the nerve-centre of education i.e., the whole process through which curriculum objectives and other intents of education are achieved. What is achieved culminates in character formation, personality development and eventually national advancement. Teaching processes involve the teacher, learner, curriculum guide and working conditions – good school surroundings, classroom/learning spaces with seats, materials and other facilities that promote learning. Teaching simply represents the series of interactions or events which take place at different intervals during communication in the classroom or in a teaching – learning situation. As an involving human activity, teaching is complex. Teaching is a complex activity because it involves the subject – matter, methods and materials as well as human beings who have physical, emotional, psychological and intellectual reactions. As an education undertaking, it is dynamic.

Teaching may be defined as an attempt to bring about desirable change in human learning, abilities and behaviour. The aim of teaching therefore is to influence learners to make those desirable changes in their behaviour that contribute to better living. These changes may take three forms:

- 1) An increased store of useful information and the understanding of basic principles in the subject – matter.
- 2) Acquisition of skills, abilities and habits, for instance, psychomotor skills – the physical competencies required to perform certain activities efficiently.
- 3) Possession of desirable attitudes and ideas, such as developing satisfaction about learning outcomes or achievement obtained through the process of sharing meaning.

Teaching is the creating of opportunities from which learners can gain such experiences that will enable them acquire the knowledge, skills, attitude and appreciation that will serve as tools in life. In the school situation, teaching involves the determination of worthwhile objectives, the selection and arrangement of learning experiences, guidance, motivation as well as testing and correcting with a view to ensuring and improving upon learning (Onwuka, 1996, P. 314).

Teaching is a closed system of social interaction which exists wherever teachers and students meet for the purpose of giving and receiving instructions. Teaching involves arranging, manipulating, adapting or adjusting and managing the learning environment so that any person with appropriate entry behaviour placed in that environment may learn and exhibit the desired learning outcomes. No wonder then (Imogie, 1988. P 43) summarized the knowledge and skills required in teaching as follows:

The mediocre teacher tells  
The good teacher explains

The superior teacher demonstrates  
The great teacher inspires.

Finally, teaching refers to getting the student from where he is to where we would like him to be; in other words a movement from entering to terminal behaviour. The purpose of teaching is to change behaviour in a specifiable and desirable way both in the classroom and outside it.

### **Instruction**

Instruction is a deliberately arranged set of external events designed to support internal learning processes. According to Driscoll (2000) “Gagne’s nine events of instruction refer to steps instructors should take in an effort to meet learning outcomes”. These events of instruction are:

1. It is imperative to gain student’s attention.
2. It is important to help students recall previously learned information which might be helpful in learning new materials.
3. Instructors should make students aware of the learning outcomes(s).
4. New material should be presented.
5. Instructors should provide students with learning guidance for example; you might suggest an effective way for students to organize the new information.
6. Students should be given a chance to demonstrate that they have learned the information.
7. Providing feedback is corrective rather than final.
8. Assess performance – specifically, whether students have achieved your initial learning outcomes and
9. Retention and transfer. Instructors should strive to reinforce learning and help students apply it to other instructions.

When instruction is designed, it is these events that are being considered, chosen and represented in the communications and other stimulation offered to the learner.

As a result of New Technologies of instruction in education, a modern conception of instruction is therefore clearly explained by modern authors. For example, instruction is the arrangement of information and environment to facilitate learning. By environment we mean not only where instruction takes place but also the methods, media and equipment needed to convey information and guide the learner’s study. Information and environment can be arranged on a continuum from very formal to informal. The relationship between the information and environment can change depending on the instructional goal (Heimlich, Molenda & Russell, 1993).

The new dimension introduced by these writers is the crucial issue of learner – centered education. It means that self-instruction can be effectively carried out when a learner is appropriately guided with the right methods, relevant media and equipment needed to convey the right and precise information. The teachers’ role then changes from expert to facilitator or coach.

Imogie (1988, p. 44) states that instruction “is the process whereby the environment of an individual is deliberately managed to enable him to learn, to emit or engage in specified behaviours under specific conditions or as responses to specified situations”. Emphasizing on the definition, he states that objective guidance is the main purpose of instruction in education as against teaching which is less objective or less directional. Instruction consists of leading the learner through a sequence of

statements and restatements of a problem or bodies of knowledge that can increase the learner's ability to grasp, transform and transfer what he is learning.

The term instruction contains all the elements necessary for promoting effective classroom interactions. It is therefore preferable to teaching.

### **Effective Teaching/Instruction**

The word effective means having effect or producing the intended result. Effective teaching or instruction is therefore that which stimulates and inspires the learners into attaining the desired instructional/lesson objectives, maintaining positive attitude and using the knowledge and skills gained in solving problems in new situations.

Several studies have been carried out on factors associated with effective teaching or teaching behaviours that facilitate pupils' learning. Findings that indicate teacher's attributes are as follows:

- Warmth,
- Understanding,
- Organized and businesslike,
- Stimulating and imaginative, (Ryan's factors)
- Ability to ask questions,
- Acceptance of pupils' feelings,
- Acknowledgement of pupil's ideas,
- Use of praises and encouragement, (Flanders indicators)
- Enthusiasm,
- Businesslike and task oriented,
- Clear presentation of instructional content,
- Use of variety of instructional materials and procedures, and
- Provision of opportunities for pupils to learn the instructional content.

Since the learners are the centre of all instructional activities, they are the reflector of the teacher's instructional efforts. They are therefore in a better position to identify or establish what effective teaching means for them through their behaviour and performance. Therefore effective teaching contributes to the individual's understanding, helps to improve his abilities and develops in him more desirable attitudes.

Rosenshine and Berliner (as cited in Onyejemezi, 1995) identify seven observable indicators of effective teaching as exhibited by pupils' behaviour and performance. They are:

1. Pupils show knowledge and understanding as measured by performance on tests.
2. Pupils exhibit independent behaviour in learning curriculum content
3. Pupils exhibit behaviour which indicates a positive attitude towards the curriculum and the school.
4. Pupils exhibit behaviour which indicates a positive attitude towards teacher and peers.
5. Pupils exhibit behaviour which indicates a positive attitude towards themselves.
6. Pupils do not exhibit behaviour problems in class.
7. Pupils seem actively engaged in learning academically relevant materials while the class is in session.

In conclusion, the researchers stressed that the last indicator which they refer to as “academic engaged time” is a very vital factor in the achievement of teaching – learning objectives.

Rosenshine and Berliner see the academic engaged time as the amount of time the pupil spends on reading, writing or other activities which involve the pupil or student in learning academically relevant material. The findings and conclusions of Rosenshine and Berliner along with the other observable indicators of effective teaching establish that effective teaching or qualitative instruction is that which satisfies learner needs and objectives.

Relating this learner satisfaction to the manager of the learning environment (the teacher), the observable studies strongly indicate that the effective teacher is one who is able to demonstrate the ability to bring about intended learning outcomes. Finally, an effective teacher is one who is able to influence classroom behaviour to achieve specified and appropriate educational objectives; he is resourceful and imaginative and can blend his own unique style of teaching and his personality into basic teaching skills to produce useful results.

### **Learning**

Learning is basically a process of adapting to and improving the environment. What is learned can be measured either by those things that we observe in the behaviour of the individual or those that can be inferred. There is continuity in learning and it builds on experience and practice. Learning is also seen as the process by which we acquire and retain attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behavior patterns or physical growth. Learning by its nature requires reasoning and co-ordination. As a process, learning progresses are in stages. Skinner experimented with this idea in the 1960s and discovered that when the content or the material to be learnt is effectively planned or designed i.e. broken down into very small steps and arranged in carefully designed sequence which leads from the known to the unknown and presented to students, meaningful and pleasurable learning takes place. Meaningful learning is the off-shoot of teaching and instruction as conceptualized in modern education and the major objective of education. It is defined as adaptive change in behaviour as a result of experience, conditioning, training, acquiring of motor skills, effective and cognitive learning.

### **Educational Technology: Conceptual Framework**

Educational technology is an area of study in education that adopted the small step-by-step programmed learning approach during the mid 1960s for the effective handling of educational problems especially instructional and learning problems. The step-by-step programmed learning approach is also known by other names such as step-by-step plan, systems analysis, systematic approach and systems technology. When emphasis moves from tools technology to systems approach or systems technology, this change became known as educational technology.

Educational technology is defined as the application of the small step-by-step programmed learning approach of breaking complex tasks into simpler parts to the process of improving education as a whole and particularly in the process of teaching and learning. The Association for Education Communication and Technology (1979) in Iwu, Ike and Chimezie, (2006, p. 43) defines educational technology as “a complex integrated process involving people, procedure, ideas, devices and organization for analyzing problems and devising, implementing, evaluating and managing solutions to those problems involved in all aspects of human learning”.

Akude (2004, p.5) sees educational technology as “the selection and utilization of instructional materials, identification of target audience, formulation of educational objectives to help solve the identified problems, utilization of appropriate teaching methods and strategies as well as evaluation of the whole processes with a view to improving learning in the classroom”.

Onyejemezi (1996, p. 448) concluded that:

Educational technology embraced educational objectives, curriculum content, means of learning and the evaluation and modification of the learning system with a view to improving effectiveness. It is concerned with the whole process of acquiring knowledge. This process involved the learner, the content, methods, resource materials as well as other educating agents. Educational technology emphasizes new developments in teaching and learning, course content and the fullest use of central services concerned with the application of instructional materials and devices.

From the foregoing, it is evident that educational technology is both product and process. The product must be fully and properly integrated into the process in order to achieve objectives by instruction or overall education objectives.

The product aspect of educational technology includes all kinds of instructional resources/materials. They range from real objects/life situations to all representational materials such as print materials and non print materials, radio, television, films, computers, satellite and models. the process properties of education technology are:

- i) An objective oriented approach
- ii) A systematic approach to instructional design or course development.
- iii) A systematic approach to the management of instruction or teaching and learning processes.

### **Federal Government Policy on Educational Technology**

National policy on education calls education technology “Educational services” (NPE 2004, p. 51). The Federal Government educational services objectives are stated in the following vein: To facilitate the implementation of educational policy, the attainment of policy goals and the promotion of effectiveness of educational system. The goals of national policy on the educational services are to:

- 1) Develop, assess and improve education programs;
- 2) Enhance teaching and improve the competence of teachers;
- 3) Make learning experiences more meaningful for children;
- 4) Make education more cost – effective;
- 5) Promote in-service education and
- 6) Develop and promote effective use of innovative materials in schools (NPE 2004, p. 51).

### **Improving the quality of teaching and learning of Nigerian languages through educational technology**

#### **Benefits of educational technology in education**

In instructional activities, educational resources can be used to:

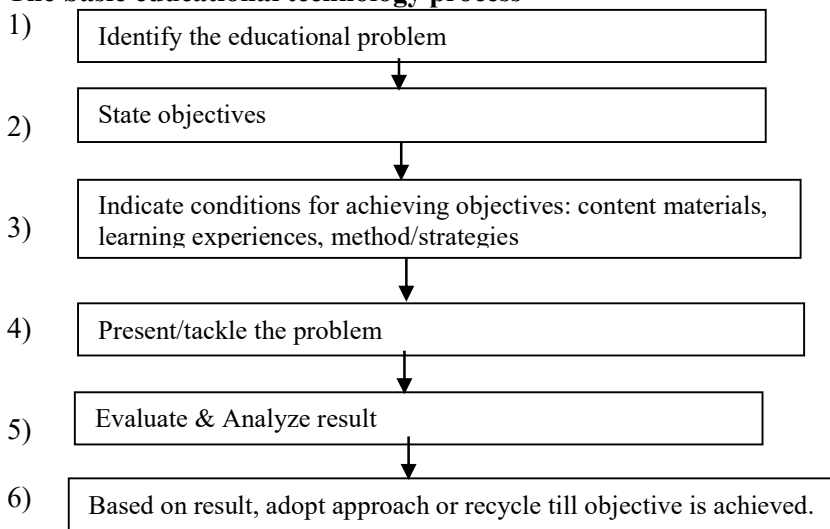
- 1) Help the teacher provide his students with meaningful sources of information.

- 2) Provide the teacher with interest compelling spring boards which can launch students into a wide variety of learning activities.
- 3) Multiply the teacher's efficiency in providing tutorial stimuli and responses, guidance for individual students and small groups.
- 4) Clarify and illustrate non-verbal symbols and images, quantitative relationships, complex relationships, abstract concepts, partial relationships and special details.
- 5) Provide increased interest in learning
- 6) Hold the learner's attention
- 7) Offer rich opportunities for learners to develop communication skills while actively engaged in solving meaningful problems.
- 8) Offer a variety of reality of experience which stimulates self activity on the part of learners.
- 9) Stimulate learners through both visual and auditory controls.
- 10) Provide the learners with the opportunities for independent and individualized learning.

### **Conditions for achieving effective teaching and learning of Nigerian languages through educational technology**

Education technology can be used to achieve instructional objectives or effective teaching and learning of Nigerian languages through the application of both process and product aspects of educational technology.

#### **The basic educational technology process**



#### **Education technology for effective teaching of Nigerian languages**

Education technology provides the system approach to learning. The systems approach, according to Adeosun (1988) is the break-up of a task into many parts, the study of the connections between these parts and the utilization of these connections to achieve cost-effective results on the task. The application of this approach to the teaching – learning situation refers to the step-by-step, systematic planning and delivering of instruction. This would involve what Onyejemezi (1995) refers to as the identification of educational problems, the specification of objectives, the planning of the

implementation of the objectives, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the operation and the revision of the processes.

These are however, to be proceeded by a clear, thorough, realistic and accurate understanding of the present system to identify future goals and the necessary medications on present functions. Through this analysis of the present system, which may also be regarded as initial evaluation aimed at identifying future goals, many factors are considered including the theories of learning. Through these theories, we know how learning could be enhanced. Through the perception process we know the five sensory modalities through which the learner becomes aware of his environment. These are the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.

Okoye (1967) as cited by Adeosun (1988) makes it emphatic that learning is better facilitated through multi-modal perceptual utilization. A child will gain a better learning of what Okoro soup is by seeing it, hearing its name, touching the soup, smelling it and finally tasting it than by only hearing its name or by only seeing it. This goes on to show that the more sensory modalities we involve in the learning process, the more learning we achieve. Education Technology makes use of these theories through its systems approach and this is where instructional materials come in. A teacher may have problems with verbal communication in the class due to the language factors but there are languages understood by everyone. If the teacher strives very hard to effect the utilization of as many sensory modalities as possible by the students he sets goal. Some of the students will understand through visual perception, some through auditory perception and so on. Whoever does not see may hear or be able to feel, the language we speak notwithstanding.

Therefore, it is only left to the teacher to determine which experience will easily achieve his objectives, knowing fully what language problems he has with the children. Hence, he must have the knowledge of the existence of various instructional materials/methods and their uses, for example, the use of print media in teaching language. There are different ways of using for example newspapers in the language classroom. The student may read the articles therein written in Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba and this could transmit some form of culture into the student or reader. An example is reading a story with the headline; “New yam festival of Owerri turns into a great carnival”. Here the younger generation who do not know much about new yam festival in Nigeria, in Igbo land or in Owerri, will acquire vital information about the culture. Newspapers also help in reflecting changes in the language, morphological, semantic and even stylistic changes and as well assist students, readers and even teachers where necessary to keep themselves abreast with changes.

Again the use of television conveys a great number of signs simultaneously. It can gain heavy impact from mutually reinforcing gestures, words, postures and sounds and a background of symbolically significant issue. An example is watching movies with a Nigerian language say Igbo as the dominant language of communication. The visual and critical awareness of the student is increased and thus enhances language learning and development. The student listens to the authentic language as it is spoken by the native speaker in the movie aired by the television station, the student sees the action of the characters, listens to what they say (their words) and thus matches action with words and gets a better grasp of the language. Again photographs and illustrations presented on a television program help the learner to describe situations, objects or images in an apt manner.



## Conclusion

This paper has tried to highlight a few things. The major issue is the need to approach the instructional role of the teacher in improving the quality of teaching and learning of Nigerian Languages with emphasis on systematic planning. This calls for the use of educational technology in the real sense of it. By its nature educational technology has a very important role in the development of Nigerian languages and in bringing about quality teaching and meaningful learning of Nigerian languages. The process of educational technology is a quality control instrument which should not elude any serious educational system. The need for teachers and educational administrators to be well equipped and encouraged to apply educational technology processes and materials is at best mandatory for the attainment of the national objectives on Nigerian languages.

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