

INSTRUCTIONS IN THE MOTHER TONGUE: A CASE FOR THE JJU AND THE TYAP LANGUAGES

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Abstract

The paper has succeeded in making a case for instructions in the Jju and the Tyap languages of the minority tribes of the Southern Kaduna. Since none of the institutions of learning in the State uses any of the minority tribe except Hausa. This submission is in line with the language provisions of the national policy on education over the years (NPE) that instructions at the pre-primary level should be done in mother tongue or language of the immediate environment. The choice of the two tribes out of 34 is purposive, hence, they are amongst the minority languages whose orthographies have been standardized and will be used as a microcosm for the establishment of this policy in the state. This study is therefore, hinged on the eclectic theoretical approach to teaching and learning. The conclusion of this study is on the premises that teaching and learning in the mother tongue at the pre-primary, secondary and tertiary levels will go a long way in the revitalisation and preservation of our mother tongues, most especially the minority languages of the Southern part of Kaduna State.

Introduction

The Jju (kaje) also called Bajju people of Nigeria are found in Kaduna State in Kachia, Zangon-kataf and Jema'a local government areas. They have a remarkable presence in Chikun, Kaduna South and North Local Government Area (L.G.A) in the Kaduna municipal city. The location is in West Africa (Nigeria) approximately $9^{\circ}.6' - 10^{\circ}.1'N$ and $7.8^{\circ} - 8^{\circ}2'E$. The origin of the Bajju people lies at Miango on the Jos Plateau. The language Jju is part of the Niger-Congo Language family Iso code (3 letter code) from ethnologic code. The population is put approximately between 300,000 – 481,000, National Population Commission (NPC) 2006 census put it at 360,000. The population is highly literate with more than [50%] literacy level attained. The Bajju people have a document on literary and literacy work in the dialect with a well concluded and adopted orthography and other literatures that are being promoted and put to use to enable reading and writing (cf. Joshua 2012).

The Atyap (Katab), as they were fondly referred to by the Hausas and other tribes, call themselves Tyap (the t being palatalized). The second syllable of Katab no doubt represents the word by which the tribe call themselves. This language has been provisionally included, on grounds of vocabulary in the Nigerian Semi-Bantu group of the Middle Sudanic Zone. The Atyap (katab) who number about 11,000 in 1931 as postulated by Meek, consists of four patrilineal groups or clans, viz (1) Minyam (population 3,600), (2) Agbat (population 6,100), (3) Shokwa (population 200), (4) Aku (population 960). Each clan is exogamous, that is to say that intermarriage between members of the same clan is not permitted (c.f. Meek1931:4).

According to Grace and Amos (2015), the Atyap people are found in other local government areas apart from the Zangon Kataf local government area. Some are found in Kachia LGA, Kaura LGA, Sanga LGA and Jema'a LGA all of Kaduna State of Nigeria. This explains why it is so difficult to have an authentic strategy of the total population of the Atyap (Kataf) people of Southern Kaduna State. In discussing the Atyap (Kataf) cluster dialect. D. H. Crozier and R. M. Blench (67) have estimated the Atyap people to 130,000 in 1990 (c.f. Grace and Amos 2015, 103-4).

The Bajju as well as the Atyap people are two of the three or four major languages that form the Southern part of the Southern Kaduna State minority languages. They are the two main tribes and the closest neighbouring tribes found within the Zango- Kataf local government area of the State. The Bajju people like the Atyap are also found in some other local government areas like Jema'a local government area of the State, while the Atyap too are found in Jema'a, Kaura and Sanga local government areas of the State. In discussing the Political – Geography of the Southern Kaduna people, Yohanna avers that one can view this enclave from the flat top of the Kagoro massif, as far as the Ludo Hills towards Kaduna, over one hundred and fifty kilometers away. Facing the Western horizon, the Kagoma, Nok- Chori and Jagindi Hills can be seen. To the North, the Surubu and Kauru Hills viewed from a distant and isolated stand. In all of these, the Kagoro- Attakar Hills happened to be the dominant feature of the Southern Kaduna landscape. Like the biblical Mount Nebo, from where Moses was shown the Land of Canaan so also can the whole of the Southern Kaduna region be viewed from the Kagoro Hills which stand conspicuously at over 4000 feet above sea level. The Kafanchan Township is located at the foot of these hills. And this is an area that one colonial officer, John Smith, described in 1954, as "Heaven on Earth." The Kagoro hills and several other lesser ones give rise to various inland water systems. These water systems divide themselves into two and empty their contents into the Rivers Niger and Benue respectively (1). The Southern Kaduna people form the two (2) third of the majority of the population of the people of Kaduna State with 34 languages from the Southern part of the State apart from the Hausa- Fulani. Votes from this zone remain the determining factor for who becomes the governor of the State. This region is fertile and endowed with both human and natural resources (c.f. Yohanna 1999).

It is therefore against the backdrop of the Political- Geography of the Southern Kaduna people that the case for the Atyap and Bajju people is advanced for a prompt consideration. This is consequent upon the fact that none of the 34 Southern Kaduna Tribes is taught at any of our educational levels; not even in the Kaduna State College of Education Gidan- Waya, Kafanchan where the writers of this paper teach. Below is the list of a 34 languages of the Southern Kaduna people:

| | |
|------------|----------|
| Aegworok | Bakulu |
| Tyap | Bunu |
| Attakad | Eggon |
| Asholio | Gbagyi |
| Igbiri | Gwong |
| Adara | Fantswam |
| T'kurmi | Ningkyop |
| Attacherak | Kuvori |
| Anirago | Kiwollo |
| Abisi | Amap |
| Aninka | Ham |
| Anunu | Nunku |

Atom
Abinu
Amalan
Angan
Jju

Nandu
Nindem
Uzar
Mbang
Atsam

Examples of the Jju and the Tyap Orthographies

The Jju Alphabets (Zuzzwa Njju)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----------|----------|------|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|------|------|
| a | a | <u>a</u> | b | bv | bvw | c | cw | cc | d | dw | dy | dyw | dyy |
| f | ff | g | gw | gy | gyy | gg | ggw | gb | gby | gbyy | h | hw | hww |
| hy | hyw | hyy | hyyw | j | jj | jjw | k | kw | ky | kyw | kyy | kyyw | kk |
| kkw | kp | kpy | l | m | my | myy | n | ny | nyw | ng | p | py | pyy |
| pf | pfw | r | rw | ry | ryw | ryy | ryyw | rr | rrw | rrw | s | sw | ss |
| ssw | sh | shw | ssh | sshw | t | tw | ty | tyw | tyy | ts | tsw | tss | tssw |
| u | <u>u</u> | v | w | ww | x | y | yw | yy | yyw | z | zw | zz | zzw. |

Adopted from, Kuhyop and Bature (“n.d.”).

The Tyap Alphabets (Zhunzhwuo Alyem Atyap)

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------|-----|----|-----|-----------|-----|-----|----|----|-----|--|
| Aa | <u>Aa</u> | B | Ch | Chy | Dd | Ee | Ff | G | Gb | | |
| Gh | Ghw | Ghy | H | II | <u>II</u> | Jj | Jhy | Kk | Kh | Kp | |
| L | Mm | Nn | Ng | Ny | Oo | Pp | Rr | Ss | Sh | Shy | |
| Tt | Ts | Uu | Vv | W | Yy | Zz. | | | | | |

Adopted from, Carl, F. (1992).

Unlike the English alphabets that are 26 in number, the Atyap has 39 alphabets that help in the formation of the Atyap morphology and syntax and on the phonological aspect of the Tyap language: /n/, /A/, /Aa/, and /ah/ are very pronounced in the Tyap consonants and vowels. The Tyap language has 12 vowel sounds and 74 consonant sounds as contained in Dimos, H. Carl, & Joy F. (n.y. 72-3) (c.f. Grace and Amos 2015, 103-4).

Sherma argues that no foreign language can take the place of the indigenous language[s] and no system of education can afford to disregard it without serious detriment to the mental development of the child (c.f. Sherma 1975, 35). This postulation underscores the pivotal role and place of the indigenous languages in our educational system, most especially at the pre-primary and primary level of education that invariably is the foundational level of the teaching and learning experience. The mother-tongue of the child or the language of the immediate environment is the language that the child acquires at birth and finds it very easy to articulate his feelings, emotions and desires in it. No other language can best express the child’s feelings, emotions and desires like the mother-tongue at that developmental stage of the child; not even the English Language.

To support the above stated argument, the National Policy on Education stipulates that every child should be “encouraged to learn one of the three major Nigerian languages other than their own.” These major languages are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Therefore, this paper makes a clarion call for collaboration with the Nigerian government via the NINLAN Aba in the introduction of some Southern Kaduna languages that have on their own efforts developed and standardised their

orthographies in our institutions of learning, instead of learning only three major languages to the detriment of our mother tongues that are now endangered.

This Baldeh stresses with a view to consolidating the position of language as a medium of education and a vehicle for the expression of indigenous culture. Especially, in connection with the national languages, the policy continues: “Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary level is initially the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community and, at a larger stage, English” (c.f. Baldeh 1990). Sad to mention here is the fact that this policy, to the Minority Languages of the Southern Kaduna people remains a mirage since the government’s efforts have not been felt by the good people of Southern Kaduna who form the two third of the population of the State and two third the votes casted in general elections in the State over the years now.

Today many Southern Kaduna minority languages do not have orthographies and some are going extinct as a result of the entrenched language policies that do not favour the minority languages in Nigeria. The resultant effects therefore, are the general apathy and attitudinal problems of our native language speakers who now allow such languages like the Jju and the Tyap to be relegated to the background due to the effects of imperial hegemony of the English language and the dominant effects of the Hausa hegemony on the minority languages too. Consequent upon this, the Attacherak language, which happens to be one of the neighbouring tribes of the Tyap has become moribund and extinct. Almost all of it older speakers today speak Tyap, and few of their children speak Tyap and other languages. If urgent actions are not taken to forestall the disappearing of our mother-tongues and their non-usage in our pre-primary education level, our mother-tongues’ epilogue will be summarized in the following words: One hundred years or slightly more ago, the Native American people were still speaking their own languages. They did not choose to shift to English. Their children were forced to go to government boarding schools where their hair was shaved and they were beaten if they were caught talking in their mother tongue. So, many lost their own language. There was nothing natural or voluntary about it. (- Tom Eoeddes, 2010).

It is therefore, against the above extrapolations that this study will attempt an assessment of the implementation of mother-tongue or the Language of the immediate community in the teaching and learning of our pupils at the pre-primary education level.

The Thrust of the Discourse

The thrust of this study is to make a case for the development of the orthographies of the Southern Kaduna Minorities Languages and to advocate for their entrenchment in our teacher- training institutions in the State. Sad to reiterate is the fact that not even one of the above listed languages whose orthographies have been standardised is taught in our institutions of learning in Kaduna State. The NPE document, 2004 section 3 Sub-section C unequivocally stated that the Nigerian government shall ensure that the medium of instruction at the pre-primary level is principally the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community; and to this end will develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages and produce textbooks in Nigerian languages. It is worth stating here that linguists in the turn of the 21st century warned that 10% of the 6,000 to 7,000 existing languages would not survive into the 22nd century if nothing is done to prevent such an outcome. Every language as postulated by UNESCO (FAQ on Endangered languages) reflects a unique world-view with its own value systems, philosophy and particular cultural features. The

extinction of a language results in the irrevocable loss of unique cultural knowledge embodied in it for centuries including historical, spiritual and ecological knowledge that may be essential for the survival of not only its speakers, but also countless others. For speaker communities, languages are the creations and the vectors of tradition. They support cultural identity and are an essential part of a community's heritage.

It is therefore against the back drop of the above explications that this study got its relevance; the preservation of the minority languages in the Southern Kaduna State of Nigeria by ensuring that the NPE policy document on the aforementioned is implemented to the latter, hence teaching the child in his mother-tongue will rather help in the preservation of his folklore and culture; which are the integral part of his literature. The implementation of this policy will also enhance the development of his Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and his ability to learn other languages very fast, most especially the English language. This study is geared towards a passionate appeal on the introduction of some of the Southern Kaduna minority languages in our educational system in Nigeria for effective national development in line with government's efforts in relating education to the overall community needs (NPE, 3). This is consequent upon the fact that we are victims of European hegemony and imperialism as well as the Hausa hegemony; so if our Mother-tongues die, it then means that our rich orature will also die with the languages, that is, virtually everything about the people's culture, myth, legends and their world-view will also be lost, if no serious pragmatic and sustainable action plans are taken to introduce such languages in our institutions of learning.

Conceptual Explications

The National Policy on Education was influenced by the Rome declaration of 1930 on the position of the vernacular in national education. The resolution, which was at the instance of the international institute of African Languages and Cultures succinctly intones that: It is a universally acknowledged principle in modern education that a child should receive instruction both in and through his mother tongue, and this privilege should not be withheld from the African child. The child should learn to love and respect the mental heritage of his own people and the natural and necessary expression of this heritage is the language. Neglect of the vernacular involves the danger of crippling and destroying the pupil's production powers by forcing him to express himself in a language foreign both to himself and to the genius of his race. As a general rule, therefore, during the first three years of school education, instruction should be carried out exclusively in a native language and we understand that there is a considerable body of educational experience which supports us in this opinion. We consider that no European language should be taught during that time and that it should be followed by a period during which the pupil begins to learn a European language while other instruction is continued in the vernacular (c.f. Benzie's 1940, 4). But unfortunately this declaration is a mere policy document that falls short of implementation. Especially with regards to the 34 languages of the Southern Kaduna people who until now are victims of the English language imperialism as well as hegemony and the Hausa language domination.

It was this resolution made by the Rome declaration of 1930 on the position of vernacular in national education that prompted the formulations of language policies across the African continent since 1930. However, many Southern Kaduna Minority Language speakers have been denied this opportunity. Even the efforts made by the minority languages to develop their orthographies have

not been complimented by the government. If the rich cultural heritage of the Southern Kaduna people will in the nearest future not go extinct, then necessary steps should be taken in the right direction to support, their efforts. The place of teaching in the Mother tongue in our institutions of learning in Southern Kaduna State at this time is very expedient. Baldeh strongly agrees with this by reiterating that, it has been necessary to look at mother tongue education for the following educational and social reasons: It is generally believed that instruction in the mother tongue greatly helps instruction in the second language. The more languages one knows the easier one finds it to learn other languages, as the case of Schliemann starkly illustrates. It is immoral and unethical to plunge the six year old child into the bewilderment of a foreign language and culture on the very first day at a school, making it difficult for him to grasp the subject matter of teaching (c.f. Baldeh 1990, 48).

In the same manner too, Fafunwa (1975) buttresses the above argument by stating that a child taught in a language that he is not familiar with can develop skills with trauma. He believes that Mother- Tongue is a base for learning subsequent languages and it also facilitates understanding, internalization of concepts and continuity in thinking. Giving credence to this postulation also, Opoola (2002:12) noted that: the proper development of the child is closely bound to the continuous use of the language he has from birth, the language of his parents, brothers, sisters, friends and people he is used to; which is the language he has acquired in his first experience of life (142).

Fasold reported that data obtained so far have strongly convinced project leaders that the African child will learn better and develop his talents faster if he is taught in his Mother- Tongue (Fasold 1997). This is why this paper makes a case for teaching and learning in the Southern Kaduna Minority Languages, using the Jju and the Tyap languages as a microcosm. Hence researchers have also shown that children who begin their education using their Mother Tongue are more confident and learn better than those who are made to learn in a second language in their early years (c.f. Lawal 2009). This is true because teaching in the Mother- Tongue becomes the sure foundation to a successful brighter education, and it is also hoped that the introducing of the aforementioned languages into our institutions of learning too will surely go a very long way in giving the Bajju and the Atyap children a successful brighter future and it will also help them to learn other languages, most especially the English language very well in their school.

Theoretical Frame Work

This research work finds its relevance within the ambit of Eclectic Approach to Language Teaching which was propounded by Harold Palmer as not a compromise between the two antagonistic schools, but a combination of what is valuable in many systems or methods of teaching. This method as posited by Adeyi, Mike et.al is basically a compromise between the extremism of Audio-Lingua (A/L) method and the Cognitive Code Learning (CCL) method. In other words, it seeks to moderate what the linguists in the groups believe is the excess of the two methods. Thus, the eclectic method is looked upon as a bridge between the two methods. This method insists that language learning is basically a combination of mental activities and the imitation of adult speech (Adeyi et al 2013, 109-110). It is also hoped that this same approach will be adopted in the teaching and learning of the Jju and the Tyap languages in our institutions of learning within and outside Kaduna State.

Conclusion

The above discussed languages are two among the Minority Languages of the Southern Kaduna whose orthographies have been developed and standardized and have bibles and other documents or texts printed and documented locally by the native speakers and few stake holders like the Nigerian Bible Translation Trust Fund, but are not taught in institutions of learning in Kaduna State. Over the past years and until now, no government intervention is seen, received and felt by the people of Southern Kaduna on efforts to document their languages and standardize it for academic purpose amongst others. This paper has succeeded in stating a case for the incorporation of the two mentioned languages that will serve as a platform for a pilot testing in the incorporating of the other 32 minority tribes of the people of the Southern Kaduna who have been victims of divide and rule as well as other forms of marginalisation. The entrenchment of these two of the major languages of the Southern in the teacher training syllables will underscore the government commitment towards the revitalisation and preservation of our mother tongues, most especially the minority languages of the Southern part of the State.

Recommendations

- If the National Language Policy on education is not a mere document, then pragmatic efforts should be made to develop the orthographies of the remaining minority languages of the Southern Kaduna State and in the training of minority language teachers.
- Efforts should be made by the government and stakeholders in education to assess the implementation of the National Language Policy on Education over the years with regards to instruction in the mother tongue and the language of the immediate environment.
- The National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) in corroboration with the Bajju and the Atyap leaders together with stakeholders should take some practical steps towards the entrenchment of the Jju and the Tyap languages in institutions of learning in Kaduna State, especially the Kaduna State College of Education Gidan- Waya, Kafanchan.
- Government and non-governmental Organisations should join hands with the Jju and the Tyap to train teachers at the NCE level and produce more texts books and instructional materials for the teaching and learning of the said languages.
- Other minority tribes of the Southern Kaduna should see the success of this case as the beginning of their success story too.
- Consequent upon the aforementioned, a clarion call for attitudinal re-engineering of the minds of the good people of Southern Kaduna who hitherto have been victims of political and socio-cultural forms of marginalisations et cetera is graciously coveted.

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