

THE IMPACT OF NIGERIAN LANGUAGES ON NATIONAL UNITY

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of language in the pursuit of national unity. It notes that since the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, the polity has been battling forces of disunity including bankruptcy, ethnic-religious crises, and minority issues. In order to address disunity, successive governments of Nigeria have put in place pro-unity measures to strengthen national unity, harmony and cohesion. Some of these include National Policy on Education, Civil-Military processes, National Youth Service Corps, Physical Infrastructure, Cultural Integration and Sports Activities. The paper employs language goals to show how the pro-unity measures are utilized. The paper also uses examples from Indonesian, Polish and Jewish to present efforts made to use language to achieve national unity. The paper concludes with recommendations that adequate language planning measures be used to strengthen Nigerian unity.

Keywords: Impact, National Unity, Pro-unity measures, Language goals, Indonesian, Polis, Hebrew

Introduction

Language can be used in many ways to achieve unity in a nation. This can be done in specific areas such as social and cultural communication, government decisions, political debate and media (Sutton cited in Grzywacz, 2015). Indigenous languages constitute a vehicle through which people's culture and self identity are transmitted. According to Nwadike (2014), language is the key to the heart of the people and when it is treasured, language brings about the desired impact in the nation. During the colonial days, the strength of Colonial empires depended on effective communication between the colonizers and the colonized. In Anglophone West African countries, for example, government functionaries and missionaries were agents of language, teaching, reading and writing; English became a powerful political instrument. Every cultural group has his own semiotic systems, experiences or values. Learning different artistic tradition allows people to understand what and how they are. It involves gaining knowledge, but also appreciation of otherness, the cultural conceptualizations which are foundations influencing other groups' collective encounter with reality.

However, this paper aims to show that language may be used as a political and social instrument in the process of national unity, unification and nation building. Examples of languages used are Indonesian, Polish and Hebrew to show different roles languages can play and how strongly they are related to the concept of national unity or identity.

Language and National Development

The role of language in development is of paramount importance. Essien (2000:4) affirms that “development programmes would be seriously flawed if languages were a restriction or an impediment to a majority of people in a nation”. Similarly, Kelman cited in Bamgbose (1992:20) states that for development to take place, “it must facilitate patterns of communication such that the socio-economic institutions in the country must function effectively”. Also, “it must make it possible for different groups in the society to have equal access to the system and opportunities to participate”.

One important observation made by Essien (2000:1-14) is that developed countries have developed with their mother tongues, that is, languages their “respective citizenry know well and which is rooted in their cultural heritage and tradition”. The mother tongue helps these countries to make impact industrially, commercially, technologically, and so on. Laneberg cited in Essien (2000:6) had shown that man is biologically or genetically programmed to acquire language. Languages are part of man’s mental make-up, the power house of development. This is why developed countries are able to use their mother tongue for economic well-being and other great purposes.

The present paper focuses on Nigerian languages, unity and development. We have examples of how we can use indigenous languages to achieve development in all spheres of human endeavour. Some of these are the 1970-76 Six Year Yoruba Project (SYYP) carried out at the ObafemiAwolowo University and the 1970-76 Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP), was jointly sponsored by the Twelve Northern States, UNESCO and UNICEF, by the Ahmadu Bello University, Institute of Education, Zaria. These projects showed that if the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction at the primary school level, pupils will not only perform better but excel in all subjects (Ayilara and Oyedeji 2000:31). Rodney cited in Ayilara and Oyedeji, (2000:31) affirms that of all the aspects of loss Africans suffered during the slave trade period, the loss of development opportunities is the most serious. Therefore, our educational system should be effectively adjusted and planned so that the mother tongue can be used as the medium of instruction throughout the primary school level and throughout the secondary level and selected compulsory courses should be taught using the mother tongue as medium at the tertiary level.

Development with a mother tongue is not peculiar to Europeans or North Americans. As Essien (2000:6) points out, “Although Western nations classify China, India and Pakistan as developing countries, they have become nuclear powers and powerful world manufacturers and traders primarily in their own indigenous languages of Chinese, Hindi and Urdu, respectively”. It is important that urgent measures be adopted so that we develop with our mother tongue. This involves using indigenous languages for all purposes.

Relation Between Language and National Unity

National unity or identity is an instrument used in a political sense but also regarded as an instrument for building and maintaining a complicated society. It involves loyalty towards the nation or state. Every government needs the support of public opinion but to generate this sense of loyalty is not without problems, especially in multi-ethnic societies, precisely because of the threat of losing social stability (Ortom, 2009:26). Fenton cited in Grzywacz (2012:20) states that groups are not just groups of people who share a culture and a common ancestor. The ideas of origin and

cultures are rather stimulated and used as a reference in order to strengthen a sense of community, a sense of “groupness” and a common destiny. Linguistic culture is defined as a set of behaviours, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief system, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of thinking about language and religions-historical circumstances related to a language. The basic notion postulated by Schiffman (1996) is that language policy is grounded in linguistic culture.

According to Amara and Mar’i (2002), there is a close connection among language, identity and policy. As Amara and Mar’i (2002) have pointed out, language should be treated and perceived broadly as an open system which influences and is influenced by nonlinguistic factors. Language is an important element of socialization which is both individual and collective, it provides knowledge about feelings and aspirations. Moreover, it defines us as we are and as we wish to be. Amara and Mar’i (2002) have equally stated that there is a distinction among language practices, language ideology and language policy. The use of the linguistic repertoire by a community is defined as language practices. Language ideology is understood as an expression of the perceptions concerning languages and their use. Language policy is government instrument, the means by which polity attempts to influence or to shape the language itself. Language policy could be anchored in official documents such as the Constitution, language, law, government document or in the administrative regulation.

Just as communities and groups try to strengthen national unity, one notes challenges which tend to destroy that unity. In his contribution on this issue, Oladele (2019, *Punch* newspaper, October 8, p.25) points out that one of the problems facing the Nigerian nation is leadership failure but that “even where there is leadership failure, there are other implied levels of failure other than that of leadership”. He highlights a number of fundamental issues that face the nation. Some of these are:

1. The nature of Nigeria’s political elite and;
2. Weak institutions.

With respect to the nature of Nigeria’s political elite, he points out that political corruption is often aided by the political elite through their appalling acts of political accommodation because of their quest to gain political power at whatever cost, whether it’s a “do-or-die” or “turning a blind eye” to corruption on the corrupt. He cites cases where corrupt politicians who defect from one party to another are welcomed with rallies and adulation. The second issue is weak institutions; such institutions are the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission. The problem is that of implementation of the rules. If these institutions are weak or compromised, for example, if the court gives mild sentences, we are bound to have problems. However, language planners should be highly committed to their work to ensure that national unity is strengthened using pro-unity measures.

Pro-Unity Measures for National Unity

Vitality of Nigerian languages, their protection, preservation and promotion are important elements for language unity. But our youths are not interested in using the languages actively for practical day to day purposes. Of the over 400 languages in the country, many run the risk of extinction, some are already extinct or have very few speakers left. Languages in Northern parts of Nigeria which are already extinct include Achaganna, Shirawa, Bassa-Gumna and BassaKontagora (Ohiri-

Aniche, 2010). In her survey, Afiesimama (1991) found that between 31.3% and 40.8% of primary school children in Rivers State could not speak their mother tongue.

Similarly, Shimizu cited in Ohiri-Aniche (2010) found from a survey of language in old Bauchi State that about 80% of the indigenous languages of the area were no more spoken by young people. The young people seem to be ashamed of their languages. Their indifference to their mother tongue affects their attitude to their culture. This indifference to things which have to do with Nigerian is bound to have serious consequences on Nigerian socio-political, economic, cultural, educational development and national unity. To tackle issues posing problems to national unity, a number of measures have been undertaken:

a. The National Policy on Education (1977, 1981, 1998 and 2014). (Federal Government of Nigeria; 1988)

The Federal Government has made great efforts for the development of indigenous languages. According to the National Policy on Education, the overall policy of Nigeria is to, among other things;

- i. “live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice”- NPE, p.4:a
- ii. There is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive while interest and ability should determine the individual’s direction in education-NPE p. 4:d
- iii. For the philosophy to be in harmony with Nigeria’s national goals, education has to be geared towards self realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship; National consciousness, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress-NPE, p 5:6
- iv. The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject-NPE, p. 12:e
- v. From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French shall be taught as a subject-NPE, p. 12:f

While government’s effort at promoting Nigerian languages is commendable, as we have pointed out above, the measures are not powerful enough. Teaching the indigenous language from primary one to three only cannot make for the development of the language. One cannot even rule out relapse into illiteracy.

b. Civil-Military Roles

To achieve national unity, it is essential to inculcate civil responsibilities and national spirit in the people of Nigeria (Yusuf, 2008). In times of unrest, whether industrial, civil, social or political, the nation seeks to make sure that the nation achieves stability. In very serious cases, the military are brought in to ensure that there is safety of people and property. The military cannot do the work alone without the support of civilians. They need informants and the role of language in this matter is crucial. At this point, it is useful to discuss language goals in the context of civil-military role. Language goals are classified differently by different researchers. For Hall (1999:39-43), there are three domains: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational domains. The interpersonal domain comprises transactional and interactional modes. In the transactional mode, there are activities in

which the interlocutor seeks to obtain something from another, for example, seeking directions to locations in a town or village one is not familiar with. In the interactional mode, one seeks to establish and maintain interpersonal relationship, leading to the understanding of oneself and others. These activities are used to nurture family bonds, friendships and so on. This domain is used to conduct face- to-face interaction but they are also used to carry out such processes as letter writing, phone calls, audio, video, electronic mail and satellite exchanges. The interpretive domain focuses on developing a variety of texts for the purpose of transforming one's understanding of the world. Some of the texts we come across on daily basis are written, for example, radio broadcast, television programmes, film and so on; in the presentational domain, one is involved in activities in which we display what we know and make efforts to explore what we do not know. Activities in this mode help us to make sense of our world by participating actively with others.

There are five major types of purposes in the presentational mode: descriptive, narrative, demonstrative, explanatory and transformative. In the explanatory mode, for example, one seeks to create an understanding of some phenomenon so that through empirical evidence or logical explanations, we might provide such questions as “why” or “for what purpose?”.

The activities of Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria are urgent life threatening events that the military must deal with efficiently and effectively. In the interpersonal mode, for example, the soldiers can help civilians to provide information leading to locations-in towns or villages-where the insurgents are hiding so that the military might effectively deal with them. The interpersonal mode helps civilians and the military to interact through such elements as phone calls, audio, video and electronic mail to discover activities of Boko Haram insurgents in order to handle such situations effectively. Similarly, activities in the interactive and interpersonal modes contribute to information gathering to help build national unity.

c. The Nigerian Youth Service Corps (NYSC)

The NYSC was established by the Gowon administration in 1973 with a view to forging national unity in the country. The scheme affords young graduates of tertiary institutions the opportunity to render one-year compulsory service in States other than their own. It gives the young graduates the opportunity to experience a new culture. It offers them the opportunity to experience how friendly and accommodating other cultures can be. The programme is viewed as a veritable tool for promoting national unity. Inter-ethnic marriages and other forms of social intercourse among members point to the usefulness of the scheme as a vehicle for national unity. However, the April 2011 post-elections violence in some parts of the country in which killings were directed against innocent Corps members on national assignment gave some well-meaning Nigerians cause to canvass the scrapping of the scheme (Tangban, 2014). However, it is argued that scrapping the scheme would not help national unity and the review of the scheme which would ensure maximum security for members and reasonable sanctions on States that fail to ensure adequate security to corps members in their domains is a better option (Tangban, 2014).

d. Physical Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure such as transport (air, freight, and road) and communication links are also essential elements of national unity not only in Nigeria but world-wide. Poor physical infrastructure impacts negatively on national unity. Good physical infrastructure helps movement of people,

goods and services as well as the regular transmission of knowledge and information. As people interact using transport across geographical zones with ease, mutual distrust and suspicion among them melt away, giving impetus to national unity. It is probably because of this that successive governments of the country endeavour to provide physical infrastructure.

However, good roads of the 1970s and 1980s are now death trap owing to official neglect hampering inter-group relations among Nigerians. The railway system which flourished in the 1960s and 1970s is today a shadow of its former self; if infrastructural amenities are restructured, it would no doubt give impetus to the ongoing efforts at attaining unity in the country.

e. Sports Activities

Sport is a veritable tool for bringing Nigerians together, especially young people. As Nigerians take part in different types of sports, the activities cut across ethnic groups and regions and help to strengthen bonds of friendship. For this purpose, it is important for educational institutions, sports associations and private bodies to promote sports in order to help strengthen unity among Nigerians

f. Cultural Events

Girigiri, cited in Sanderson (1988:160) defines culture as a complex totality consisting of three interrelated sets of phenomena: “the tools and techniques or simply the technologies that people have invented to adapt to their environments; the pattern of behaviour that individuals engage in as members of society; and the shared beliefs, values, and rules that humans create as a means of defining their relationships to each other and to their natural environments”. A wide range of cultural events are used by various Nigerian ethnic groups to strengthen Nigerian unity. Some of these include cultural displays, dance, drama, New Yam festival, and so on. Nigerians use these to showcase the rich cultural heritage and values of the nation. They employ these events to revive healthy cultural practices and to remind the young ones of the need to use their mother tongue effectively. All these elements contribute towards making Nigeria one indivisible nation.

Indonesia-Language and National Unity

Every country in Southeast Asia since independence has been making efforts to cope with ethnic tension, social stability and national unity issues. These three elements have been having effects on each other. As a country which just regained its independence, it is important that issues of national unity be undertaken without delay to avoid chaos and disintegration. Indonesian territorial integrity and national unity are based on post-colonial nationalist project implementation with the theme of “unity in diversity” (Grzywacz, 2012). Indeed, there was political tension and dispute among local ethnic groups creating chaos which became a threat to national unity.

Indonesia had been colonized by the Dutch for more than three hundred years and there was no statehood until the late forties of the twentieth century (Vickers, 2005). The attack on Indonesia by the Japanese in 1942 served as the impetus for the national movements, leading to the Indonesian Revolution (1945-1949) and finally the Declaration of Independence (Vickers, 2005). Innovative ideas began to appear. The first idea was focused on the issues of leadership while the other was based on social, religious, political and economic concerns. The leaders can be divided into two groups-elite Javanese aristocratic members of the Upper Class- Priyayi, and a group of Santri-derived from religious and reformist Muslim communities (Laskowska, 2011).

The project to build the Indonesian nation and state was established through the adoption of the Indonesian language as a neutral language, to unite all ethnic – linguistic groups in Indonesia using Pancasila ideology as the basis for the social and political relations and the rejection of Islam as state religion. The problem of determining national language in Indonesia appeared with the beginning of the formation of nationalist movements in the first decade of the twentieth century. To achieve national language in Indonesia, there was some choice of three languages, that is, the Dutch as the language of the colonizer, the language of the largest and most influential ethnic group-Javanese, and the historical lingua franca of the region -Malay (Paauw, 2009). It was decided to discard all previous languages and to accept the Indonesian language as the national language, a language based on Malay language (Grzywacz, 2012). Dutch language was rejected because the adoption of a foreign language would not be appropriate for Indonesian nationalism. In the case of the Javanese language, it was discarded because of the fear that the idea of favouring the largest ethnic group in Indonesia would become an obstacle to the unification of the nation.

Indonesia is an archipelago with about 13,000 Islands. Its geography in some sense reflects the diversity of the nation, plurality of ethnic groups, cultures and languages. It is estimated that there are over 400 languages in the country (Grzywacz, 2015). Bahasa Indonesia was declared the “state language” in August 1945 in Indonesian Constitution. As a national language, it serves as the only official language in Indonesia and is treated as an instrument of connecting all ethnic groups in Indonesia. The National Centre for Language Development of the Ministry of Education and Culture as the main institution for the development of the language has been protecting Bahasa Indonesia from strong regionalisms and localisms (Nabanan cited in Grzywacz, 2015).

Indonesian language may be classified into three: Bahasa Indonesia, local or regional languages also called “vernaculars” and foreign languages. According to the 1971 census, the proportion of the number of speakers is as follows: 40.8% of Bahasa Indonesia, 59% of vernaculars, and 0.2% of foreign languages. The figure for the vernacular languages showed the percentage of speakers who did not speak Bahasa Indonesia at all (Nabanan cited in Grzywacz, 2015). According to the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, “it is only right that as a developing nation we should want to have a language of our own... If the national language is not introduced, our country will be devoid of a unified character and personality- as I could put it, a nation without a soul and without life”. Language is a powerful instrument for development, but what is more important is that groups should identify with their collective consciousness (Hoy-Kee 1971:73).

Poland-Language and the Struggle to Achieve National Unity

Polish language belongs to the West Slavonic group of Indo-European languages. The language began to spread in the tenth century and played an important role during the formation and development of the Polish state. Until the fourteenth century, Polish language was in existence only in the regional and folk spoken varieties. The development of the Polish language was initially influenced by the neighbouring languages-German and Czech, as well as Latin, and later France. Polish speakers of the language were estimated to be more than 45 million people, of whom 38 million live in Poland. Polish language is used by Poles in Poland and also by Polish people living abroad in such places as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Germany, Great Britain, France, and also in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Lithuania and Ukraine. The most common spoken dialects used locally are Kashubian and Mazovian (Grzywacz, 2012:9).

One of the greatest problems of Polish national identity was the Partitions of Poland which resulted in the elimination of sovereign Poland for 123 years; the first Partition of Poland took place in 1772, the second was in 1793 and the third in 1795. The Polish territories were divided into Russia Empire, Habsburg Austria and the Kingdom of Prussia. The people of Poland are divided into various blends such as Germanization and Russification of the territory, but the Polish people remained to keep Polish language and culture. Despite lack of statehood, the language becomes an essential element of national identity. The Polish language was the most important expression of national consciousness and that's why Russification and Germanization met with fierce resistance. Germanization took place long before the partitions of the Polish state. It occurred in 1740 when Prussian king Frederick the Great occupied the area of Upper Silesia. There were a number of Polish people there. He placed a ban on Polish language used in the judiciary. Ten years later, teachers in school who did not master the German language were stopped from teaching. In 1763, no teacher was allowed to teach Polish in primary schools. A year later, all the teachers who did not understand the German language were banned from teaching in schools. An Edict was issued in 1766 by Frederick the Great, ordering all teachers to master the German language or lose their jobs. After a series of prohibitions of using Polish language, the Germanization process began to change in the sixties of the nineteenth century. As Germanization process stopped, the Polish language came back to life in schools and the administration (Grzywacz, 2015).

Russification process started later. Education was carried out under the supervision of former University of Vilnius using the Polish language as a language of instruction. The Society of Friends of Learning and The King of Saxony Frederick Augustus affirmed the integrity of the Polish language. In the early years of the Congress in Poland good conditions existed. Basic education and vocational training were carried out and in 1816, the University of Warsaw was established (Korobowicz and Witkowski cited in Grzywacz2015).

Russification aimed at strengthening the Russian language and the Polish language was downgraded. Russification coincided with the collapse of the November Uprising in 1831 and in 1832; Russian language became an official language. In 1866, people were asked to learn and use Russian languages; in 1868 Russian became the language of administration and the judiciary. In 1869, public schools were transformed into Russian schools. However, in 1905 authorities made some concessions by allowing Polish language to be used in private schools.

In March 1989, Poland's Communist rulers carried out roundtable talks with representatives of the opposition on governmental and economic restructuring. Consequently, Solidarity was relegalized, the media freed and election scheduled for the Sejm and a newly formed Senate. Also a Presidency was created. The elections held in June 1989 marked the end of communist domination in Poland. The Western World countries created aid programmes to assist Poland in building a democracy and in restructuring the country's economy (The Encyclopedia Americana International, Grolier Incorporated, 1995:323). The Polish language has suffered a great deal as an endangered language but it has remained a strong tool for connecting the Polish society.

Israel-Language and National Construction

Hebrew was the language spoken in ancient Israel from the era of the Babylonian exile. However, it gradually became a dead language. Hebrew was used only in religious context and during

economies. In daily life, Jews used other languages: originally Aramaic, later Yiddish and Ladino or Arabic. At the end of the nineteenth century, Eliezer ben Yehuda made vigorous efforts to revive the Hebrew language and the modern version of the Hebrew language started to be created. With the establishment of Israel in 1948, Hebrew has become the official language of the State (Robbin 1973, Saenz-Badillos 1993).

The Hebrew language can historically be divided into several periods:

1. The spoken Hebrew language was used in the twelfth century BCE;
2. An ancient Hebrew (biblical) was defined as the literary language in which the Hebrew Bible was written from 12000 to 200 BCE);
3. Rabbinic Hebrew (Rabbinic) was dated since the fourth century BCE until the middle of the second century CE. It was the spoken language of Jews living in Palestine along with Aramaic. In the first century, Rabbinic Hebrew became the language of literature.
4. The medieval Hebrew (500 to 1880) was primarily a liturgical language. It was used to write poetry, scientific and philosophical works;
5. Modern Hebrew was used from 1881 onwards; this was the year in which Eliezer ben Yehuda arrived in Palestine and began his great work. It was also the period of revival of the national culture and political thought among the Jews (Kutscher 1982 and Hoffman 2004).

Hebrew language is used by more than 5 million people but it is estimated that from the Israeli Arabs and Israelis living in exile, the number of people using the Hebrew language may be about 8 million. The Hebrew Academy is the Israeli Supreme Institution which is dedicated to the Hebrew language and it was established in 1953 by the Israeli government. Hebrew is the main language of the Jewish population in Israel but also serves as the native language of non-Jewish Israeli citizens, mostly native speakers of Arabic (Myhill 2004:73). Hebrew language had never completely disappeared but the language may be related with language re-creation.

Myhill (2004) has stated in *Language in Jewish society: towards a new understanding*, “it is necessary to state clearly at the outset that the revival of Hebrew is, as far as we know, an event unique in human history. There has never before [been] a case of what I am referring to as ‘revival’, a natural language which was previously spoken by native speakers, then ceased to have native speakers, and then came again to have an entire community of speakers-infact an entire nation of native speakers. (Myhill 2004:74)”.

The role of Hebrew may be understood as an expression of Judaic heritage. Zionist ideology has aimed to create a new identity but the Hebrew language is the central instrument for bringing together the Jewish people, immigrants and Arabs together as one. The aim is to foster “the teaching of the Hebrew language and culture in all the ranks of the society”, “to achieve a high linguistic competence in spoken and written Hebrew” (Amara and Mari 2002:55).

Conclusion

There is no denying the fact that language promotes loyalty and internal cohesion. Nigerian languages serve as a rallying point for the process of socio-cultural development and national unity. Successive governments of the country, in a bid to keep centrifugal forces under check, have put in place unity-promoting measures to ensure that the country remains as an indivisible, indissoluble

society. These elements include the National Policy on Education, the Civil-Military Roles, and so on. It can be seen that Nigeria has made commendable efforts to achieve national unity. But the situation in which many young people are not interested in using the mother tongue actively and also many of these languages are dying is a national problem which should be tackled urgently. Apart from the Nigerian context, three different languages were used in the study to show how language can promote national unity and identity. The Indonesian language as a neutral language was adopted primarily to unite the nation. The Polish language was a highly endangered language and has been struggling to serve as an essential instrument of connecting the Polish people. The Jewish language has been revived in a spectacular manner and is serving as a key element of national pride and identity.

Recommendations

Based on the issues presented in this paper, the following recommendations were made:

- Indigenous languages should be taught as medium of instruction from primary school level and throughout the secondary school level, in both public and private schools; selected courses should be taught as medium of instruction at the tertiary level.
- The indigenous languages should be well planned and developed
- One of the problems we have in Nigeria is the implementation of decisions arrived at. Therefore, implementation measures should be effectively and efficiently applied for Nigerian indigenous languages
- The PTA, community leaders, teachers and educators should be active in encouraging the children to learn their mother tongue.
- Media houses should seek to encourage children to use the mother tongue actively using a variety of strategies such as competitions.
- Training and retraining of indigenous language teachers are crucial
- Suitable teaching materials for the teachers should be provided.
- The level of illiteracy should be reduced to the barest minimum.

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