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From Trenches to the Crest, effectuating a Greater Beneficence of Terminology Development to National Language Policy: the Nigeria Case

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Abstract: Terminology development as a tool that propels the evolvement of educational and translation materials and services besides enhancing the formation of a robust terminology is widely celebrated as a great linguistic tool. This is because of its' potency in knitting together a multilingual society like Nigeria towards a common understanding and purpose. The afore-stated promotion of national unity, effective communication and the preservation of indigenous languages directed towards the creation of an inclusive nation are the same goals pursued by the National Policy on Education which couches Nigeria's Language Policy. Consequently, this study titled, 'From Trenches to the Crest, effectuatinga Greater Beneficence of Terminology Development to National Language Policy: The Nigeria Case', primarily aims to explore the meritorious services of terminology development in the evolution, realization and implementation of an effective language policy in Nigeria. By surveying the historical development of Nigeria language policy, it identifies and condemns the overemphasis of the usage of English language for instructional and legislative purposes, pointing out its disservices to indigenous languages. The study also highlights the fundamental roles and challenges impeding a fuller beneficence of a symbiosis of terminology development and the National Language Policy in achieving national integration. Adopting the hermeneutical and content analysis methods of enquiry, the research in conclusion, suggests a novel pragmatic and proactive terminology development model, which will drive a vibrant language policy and implementation.

Keywords: Educational Policy, Terminology Development, Linguistic System, Multilingual Nation and Beneficence.

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INTRODUCTION

This study undertakes as its aim, the exploration of the significance of terminology development to the formation of an effective National Language Policy. Thereupon, the critical function of terminology development consists in its capacity for shaping language,its enhancement of creativity and the standardization of specific terms in different fields and disciplines. It ensures clarity, effective communication, mutual understanding among citizens and engenders social integration in a multilingual society like Nigeria.(The Importance of Terminology, n.d.) However, the policies which it enhances are courses of action, methods and legitimate procedures guiding practice and activities in establishments (Ihejirika, 2019). Policies on the other hand, determine the present and future actions of such outfits, institutions, companies,nations as well as individual lives. The afore-identified institutions are incapable of productive operation without such principles.

Nevertheless, language, as the principal method of communication which employs the instruments of words used in structured and conventional ways and conveyed respectively by speech, writing, symbols or signs necessarily need guiding principles found in policies to achieve its vital roles in educational planning. This is because all education contents are communicated through language and as Ene (2008) puts it, “the goal of education is to help the learner to develop his natural ability by creating the necessary environment that will facilitate challenge and involve him socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally in the art of knowing and doing” (p.197). Anyadiegwu (2012), however, opines that "language refers to man’s ability at exercising his innate vocal endowment. It could be seen as a means of expression available to a given community for the purposes of communication and socialization as well as projecting, preserving and the transmission of culture" (p.64). It is in the above two perspectives that language will be understood in the context of this study.

Besides its educational role, language is also crucial to the sustenance of politico-social cum economic, industrial and technological relations and the development of any country. It is a powerful mechanism that preserves cultural heritages, maintains a nation’s identity and unites the linguistic groups that commonly share in them. The foregoing roles of language give her an indispensible instrumental status in national planning. Therefore, its management, development and usage need to be carefully guarded and directed hence, the relevance of a language policy. What then is a language policy? Fisherman (1971) means by language policy, a particular area of planning which is constituted of a conscious government effort to effect the structure and function of language varieties. It apparently involves regulation, prescription and direction of its usage. Our work takes an ideological leaning on thismeaning of language policy in the context of this research.

Relating the foregoing to the Nigeria context, it could be recalled that after the British amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates on January 1, 1914, a total of 625 different linguistic groups with their different cultures were merged into a single country, Nigeria.This brought about the problems of multilingualism, which severally manifest in Nigeria as: challenges of lack of unity and mutual understanding, difficulties in meaning-making, dearth of social control/integration and that of almost a total absence of a national value system. These challenges, which fall under the ambit of planning and management as overseen by the government through the country’s constitution, laws and government policies, guide against the disintegration of a society into the Hobbesian state of nature, where there is war of every man against every man, life is brutish, nasty, short and violence is rift. Suffice it therefore to say that Nigeria escaped this situation by a flint of wool going by her present deep divisions

in politics, tribalism, lack of both common purpose and a sense of patriotism. This then, is the central problem that informed this research. Hence, our work explores the possibility of enhancing the application of terminology development for improvement in the National Language Policy such that different tribes with their diverse linguistic systems could find common grounds for forging mutual understanding among the citizenry through a novel, robust and pragmatic language policy in Nigeria which represents the suggestion of this study.

Review of Relevant Literature

In order to achieve the aim of the research, the following literatures whichare pivotal to the mainstay of our discourse are surveyed. These are namely: The available documented records which include: The November 14, 2022 Federal Republic of Nigeria Memo on New Language Policy. The 1979 & 1999 versions of the Constitution of the Federal Republicof Nigeria, The 1977 & 2004 editions of National Policy on education, and the National Language Policy (NLG, 1979) as contained in the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 1979) respectively. In any case, secondary materials such as Books;Journal article,National dailies and Online sources are explored as would been seen in the segment on Result and Discussion. Some of these authors and commentators shed more light on our topic. Imam tells us that, "educational policy in Nigeria has passed two significance stages, thecolonial and post independence eras… and that the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 created a pluralistic society" (2012, p.18). In their own contribution, Antia&Ianna (2016, pp. 62-83) posit that "terminology development in language planning contexts of the developing world is fundamentally linked to the management of knowledge growth or change….It therefore requires attention to knowledge structures". However, Amuseghan (2010, p. 53) holds that "language has been widely studied and acclaimed as the most invaluable human endowment, which is indispensible in all spheres of life". While Anyadiegwu (2012) remarks that, English language engenders mutual understanding, cooperation and peace in a country bedeviled with too many ethno-political problems. In any case, Anukaenyi (2019, p.18) notes that "issues related to language diversity and language policy in education have been one of the major factors responsible for poor educative content and poor student academic performance in Nigeria education system".

Study Objectives

The researcher proceeded to discuss the objectives of this paper amongst which is the submission of a brief survey of the historical development of Nigeria National Language Policy. Adopting an admixture of the hermeneutical and content-analysis methods of enquiry, the researcher goes ahead to provide a detailed analysis of the contextual meanings of the terms and concepts couching our discourse, which includes meanings and referents of the terms and concepts like Policy, Language,National Language Policy, Terminology and Terminology development. Subsequently, the author highlighted the roles of language in communication, social cohesion and national integration. Besides, this work exposes the relevance of terminology development to the National Language Policy of Nigeria and the inextricable nexus of both. Nonetheless, the researcher highlights some challenges that limit terminology development in enhancing the National Language Policy. Similarly, thestudy identifies several ways of improving terminology development.

While identifying the ambiguities in the National Language Policy, the author observes that paying mere lips service to the principles expressed in the National Language Policy ends up as sheer verbalization if urgent and proactive measures are not taken. In order to forestall this danger, this study suggests the evolvement of an all-inclusive, pragmatic and robust model of terminology development, which is to be structured is such a manner that considers the interests of all the 625 linguistic groups in Nigeria rather than the present overemphasis of a foreign language namely, English language.

Also, the preference for only the languages of the three dominant ethnic groups of the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. This bias in favour of the above identified three linguistic groupsover the rest, occasions the decline of the languages of the rest of the peoples of Nigeria politically tagged "minorities". The paper in conclusion, warns that if there is no urgent government intervention by way of promulgation of proactive laws that are enforced and implemented, society runs the risk of having some language groups in Nigeria, lose their identities, culture and values or even go into extinction since all these are sourced from our language.

METHODS

The materials used in this research are mainly theoretical literature found in school libraries, the Internet, Government Publications such as: The 2022 Federal Government of Nigeria Memos on Language Policy, The 79 and 1999 Constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the National Policy on education of 1977, 2004 and 2006, and the 1979 National Language Policy as contained in The afore identified Constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria respectivelyare herein reviewed.In any case, secondary materials such as Books, Journal works, National dailies and Internet sources relating the research topic were consulted and surveyed.

Nonetheless, for the purpose of clarity in thought, the researcher adopts the hermeneutical and content analysis methods of enquiry within which the meanings of terms, concepts and words found in this research were interpreted along with their referents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Terminology Development, Language Policy and the Role of Language in Communication: Significances and Challenges

Terminology development holds much significance for language policy. Terminology, which may include non-linguistic items as formulae, codes, symbols and graphics, has become one of the chief vehicles that represent and convey fact, opinion and other 'higher' units of knowledge (Ihejirika, 2020, p.01).

A sound terminology has the capability of reducing ambiguityand doubles as a clarifying tool. Hence, specialist communication more often than not, owes most of its successes to the terminology quality involved in its communication. (The Importance of Terminology, n.d.) Conceived as a process of functionally extending, especially the lexical semantics of a language into new domains (Antia 2016, p.33), this work finds that its major purpose is the facilitation and communication of specialized knowledge units or knowledge structures that were hitherto not conceptualized in certain languages and in the forms seen as adequate for evolving communication demands.

Besides the development of standardized terminologies, terminology development drives the smooth implementation of language policies. This is consequent upon the fact that whenever concepts, processes and objects within any particular discipline are built and clarified, consistency and precision are achieved in communication and this, in turn, enables those in government at all levels to consciously develop terms which is a necessity for effective discussion and resolution of language related matters.

Through terminology development, language planning initiatives, development of educational materials, language interpretation and translation are generally enhanced. Even so, Linguistic diversity and inclusivity in areas with diverse linguistic systems are similarly encouraged.

Howbeit, language in this paper is considered as an effective tool for pursuing social interactions and communication of cultural, economic, industrial, technological, political and most of all, educational aims of the society. Linguistic network in the words of Amuseghan (2010, p.53) aids "the facilitation of national cohesion and ensuring smooth international interaction". As a result of this, language and thought are inextricably intertwined hence, education,

which shapes man's thoughts and adapts generic man to his immediate cultural values and environment, becomes one undeniable front where language plays a prominent role.

A cursory look at Nigeria National Language Policy reveals that the functions of language are predicated upon the recognition of indigenous languages, English Language, Pidgin-English and lastly, foreign Languages of French and Arabic. While English as the lingua Franca, French and Arabic are meant to smoothen communication with Nigeria's neighbouring countries whereas the indigenous languages are meant to preserve the cultural values of the people.

Unfortunately, it is observed that the implication of the preference and overemphasis on English language, a foreign language for educational purposes and instructions stalls the development of a robust and pragmatic national language, which is indigenous to the people of Nigeria. This factor diminishes the chances of national integration and causes a decline and near extinction of indigenous languages. To ensure a proper structuring of an effective language policy, three conditions are outstanding. Jernudd (1973) advises that for any language treatment policy to bake the relevant bread, there must be a serious consideration of: (i) Language determination or language allocation which focuses on decisions that determine functional distribution of language varieties in a community which also spells out the languages that should stand out as a national language and that which should serve as regional indigenous languages. (ii) Decisions relating standardization of language by the employment of the instruments of spelling manuals, word lists, grammar are made under this consideration. Furthermore, codification of varieties of languages either spoken or written, Nigeria English as well as mother tongues are achieved through this element of language treatment. (iii) Another important feature of language treatment has to do with language policy implementation. The emphasis of this latter factor is on legislative acts, policy statements and decrees not excluding guidelines and laws that determine what is and what is not implemented. Under this consideration, attempts at influencing the use of language through educational institutions, the private and public organizations and the media are made through the application of the decisions on language policy implementation.

The foregoing indices have been used by the Nigeria Language Policy makers to overemphasize the importance of English Language hence, it is erroneously held today as the criterion of rationality and intellectual excellence and to the detriment of indigenous Nigerian languages.

That apart, it is observed that the discrepant promotion of the languages of the three dominant tribes of Nigeria plays down the relevance of the linguistic systems of the less dominant tribes derogatorily called 'the minorities'. While some linguists are of the view that these languages should be given equal treatment, some others strongly differ.

With regards to the evolvement of a pragmatic language for the implementation of the purposes of education, Amuseghan (2008) again warns that it should be clearly stated that the linguistic principle equating all languages on the basis that there is no concept that cannot be expressed in any language ifthe need for so doing arises, is considered very elementary when it comes to legislative and educational matters, especially in a multilingual setting such as Nigeria. Buttressing Amuseghan, Mackey (1984) observes that there is hardly a sovereign state an earth that is without a language minority, some have more than one including aboriginal, colonial or immigrant language groups. Although, they maybe of equal potentials, yet, "the language of these minorities are far from being of equal educational value. All languages are equal only before God and the linguist" (p.43). Danladi (2013) identifies the reason for the dominance of English language in Nigeria. For him, Nigeria's multiplicity of languages is so obvious that languages of people living within a 20

kilometers radius are particularly different and not understandable to one another. Howbeit, some scholars also attribute the dominance of English language in Nigeria to her colonial master.

One of the backlashes of the preponderance of language difference in Nigeria is that these diverse tongues create the need for a common effective means of communication. This situation forces Nigeria to have the Hobson's choice of English as the institutional means by which people from different ethnic groups interact hence, English language represents both a contact language between local diverse ethnicities and the language employed in international communication, educational instruction and legislative purposes.

The much harped Nigeria National Language Policy is variously and initially captured in Section 55 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the National Policy on education (NPE, 2004). The grounds for the provisions of this section of the Nigeria Law was hitherto prepared and launched in the maiden edition of the constitution as found Sections 51 and 91 of the 1979 Constitution. In relation to the language provision in The Constitution,Anyadiegwu (2012) reports that it prescribes the following: "the use of English in the affairs of government at the national and state levels and any of the three major indigenous languages. Use of the mother tongue, the English language and the French language at the primary level. Use of English, French and anyone of the three languages (provided it is not the child's mother tongue) at the Junior level, Use of English and any indigenous language at the Senior secondary level. (French and Arabic are language option). No specific prescriptions are made in the policy document for language education at the tertiary level" (p.67).

However, language provisions in this edition subsequently got revised in 1981 and 1989 respectively with its latest revision (albeit, a new policy) being announced in the year 2022. The core of this latest language policy according to Nigeria former minister for education,Adamu Adamu in Voice of Nigeria News reportage is to promote the teaching, learning and reading of Nigeria languages at the basic educational level and beyond. Put in other words, the objective of this new language policy makes the following provisions for instruction in primary schools namely, that the first six years of learning are to be done in their mother tongue. However, Sahara Reporters tell us that after primary education, English language and mother tongue will be combined from the start of junior secondary school. The intention is to promote and enhance the cultivation and use of all Nigerian languages. Noting that so much has been already lostto the extinction of some languages, he added that government is determined to preserve our cultures (Nigeria Approved, 2022). This latest document not only seek to preserve indigenous cultures,it also affirms the equality of all Nigeria languages but regrettably, the Memo on this National Policy on education regarding language use as approved by the Federal Executive Council on Wednesday 30. Nov. 2022 is only in principle for now, just like the old narratives of the former. And here again, lies the perpetual danger that riddles Nigeria National Language Policy.In spite of much comprehensive language policy provisions, Akere (1995) posits that the language situation in Nigeria's educational system remains confused (179-198).

This policy, in other words, prescribes that instruction in primary school for the first six years of learning will be done in mother tongue. After primary education, English, and mother tongue will be combined from the start of junior secondary school. The new policy also seeks to promote and enhance the cultivation of the use of all Nigeria languages unlike the former that emphasized only but a few. It also affirms the equality of all Nigeria languages. But the perennial problem still raises its ugly head in the sense that this recent Government Memo on National Language Policy, still onlyexists in principle and this is still worrisome. It could be recalled that paying lips service to the language policy was the

undoing of all previous policies.Hence, this present research makes a strong case for a robust and pragmatic terminology development template that should be fiercely implemented. This is because our languages defines us and make us unique across the globe and we must make every effort to ensure their preservation and effective utilization in our drive to make Nigeria great (Nigeria Approves, 2022).

Notable among the factors responsible for poor implementation of the National Policy on education as identified during the International Conference on teaching, learning and education held in Berlin, Germany between the 15th and 17th days of March, 2019 include: multi-linguistic challenge, negative attitude of students, lack of curriculum materials, ambiguities in the policy, parental factors and teacher quality. In addition to this list, the present researcher adds lack of translators, scarcity of indigenous languages' translated educational materials including lips Service paid to the provisions of the policies. Its prescriptions are often considered as merely the 'ought' of the society and as the Shakespearean mantra asserts, "Covenant without a sword is but a mere word". The problem identified here is that of non-implementation of the provisions of the policies.

To torpedo the foregoing challenges, Lewis (1981) remarks that for any policy of language especially in education to work, it must also consider the trio indices of conformity to the expressed attitudes of those involved. This is done by the persuasion of those who express attitudes about the rightness of the policy, or rather seek removal of the causes of the disagreement. They should bear in mind that knowledge about attitudes is fundamental to both the formation and successful implementation of such policies. We dare add again, that terminology development has much role to play the growth of the indigenous languages of the different peoples of Nigeria by provision of codes, orthography and meta-language, which these so called 'minority' languages lack and could again be the reason for the derision they suffer.

In the making of a pragmatic language policy, terminology development shapes the linguistic landscapes which constitutethe identity of people in a multilingual society like Nigeria. It therefore needs the evolving of a vibrant strategy which has the capacity of bridging the linguistic gaps and getting the different language groups of Nigeria and (by extension), any multi-lingual society to develop a set of terms with which to drive common understanding and common purpose for their development.

This could be done through concerted efforts of formal and informal educationists and parents, who should aim at teaching the child his or her indigenous language, not only its mere verbalization, but also a writing culture of such indigenous languages. Subjects in school should be given their foundational introduction in mother tongues. This makes it a necessity to groom enough trained hands to take up this early indigenous language orientation challenge.

Despite other challenges of terminology development, inclusive among which is namely, the dearth of sufficient research and documentation,the absence of coordination and standardization (which account for lack of uniformity and synchronization of terms by different disciplines at the cost of harmony) results in confusion, inconsistency in policy implementation, limited manpower and human resources and expertize which calls for adequate training and capacity building.

This present researcher observes that terminology development could be encouraged in the following ways:

(i) Enough funds should be made available by Government's provision of appreciable budgetary allocation to the educational sector with special emphasis on indigenous language development, where presently, enough education materials are unavailable for

instruction to engrain indigenous languages into the students.

(ii) The use of indigenous languages of the country should not only be given a nominal attention in mere principles. Rather, the implementation of the promises in the latest National Language Policy (NLP, 2002) namely, to have all subjects taught in primary onward to the junior secondary schools with the mother tongue should be strictly monitored. Mouthing these policies without enforcement or rather implementation is as good as making no language policies at all.

(iii) The continued overemphasis on English language as a criterion for rationality should be less-emphasized. Our languages are the repositories of our cultural values and mores. Also, the adoption and preferences for foreign names over our indigenous names make us bastards in our own homes as it amounts to loss of one's original identity and a borrowing of a foreign one.

(iv) Terminology development should be made an attractive professional career choice such that when terminology developers are well remunerated, there will possibly be an influx of a good number of people interested in that area of language development.

(v) Pragmatism should be the driving philosophy behind the entire educational policy and more particularly, the language policy. The share verbalization of prescriptions of the National Language Policy should immediately give way to co-intended and proactive exercises toward implementation of the National policy. If possible, the promulgation of more proactive laws that protect the National Language Policy and the evolvement of public enlightenment strategies through the print, social and all media is a good starting point in this language re-orientation project. Debates could be organized in our primary and secondary schools in this regard. Bill boards could be placed in public places in Nigeria to encourage interest in indigenous languages.

(vi) If the Western world can come to Nigeria and with their experience of traffic hold up in Lagos Mainland Bridge, derive a new term namely, "go-slow" and add same to their lexicon, our lexicographers and terminology developers should exploit the dynamism of language and develop terms that are of indigenous origin which must also be understood by all. That will be a right step toward publication of comprehensive indigenous languages lexicons.

CONCLUSION

This research in its attempt to examine the benefits of terminology development to the National Language Policy in Nigeria establish the fact that the language policy of any society determines its language use for instructional, legislative and social purposes hence, human interactions, mutual understanding or otherwise are determined by the nature of these policies. The author agrees with Anukaenyi that "there has never been a structured comprehensive language policy in Nigeria, what has been in existence as a language policy, that tends to find solution to language concerns in Nigeria, is the National Policy on Education enshrined in the Constitution" Anukaenyi (2019, p.24). This study further brings to clarity the intertwining relationship between language and thought, which represents the criteria of meaning based on standardization, qualification and development of terms that enhance social integration, mutual understanding and harmony. It is also observed in this paper that stopping at mere provision of principles that direct language use without a proactive and

pragmatic structure or template for immediate implementation of already made policies, render language development in every nation redundant. Many challenges delimiting terminology development in its services to language policy are identified in this work to include: insufficient resources; funding, lack of skilled professionals to handle indigenous languages teaching; resistance to terminology development owing to poor language policy implementation; lack of both standardization and consistency in terminology.

Having in similar vein observed other significant roles of terminology development, the study establishes the fact that it drives clarity and engenders effective communication, which in turn dovetails to unity, mutual understanding and their associated harmonization by way of social integration of a multilingual society. This research also recognized some factors that drive terminology development's effectiveness to include: collaboration and partnership among different disciplines in the business of terminology development; capacity building or professional manpower development; use of science and technology, public awareness and re-orientation strategies; promulgation and enforcement and/or implementation of effective laws to encourage terminology development and finally, the provision of incentives/motivations to the same effect.

By way of rounding off, this research suggests the evolvement and implementation of an all-inclusive pragmatic and robust terminology development strategy, which considers the interests of all ethnic linguistic groups found in any multilingual society. The paper advocates for an early orientation of the child, a considered dedication to indigenous languages and the placing of less emphasis on foreign languages at the earlier stages of life. This is to be undertaken in such a conscious way that the child realizes the importance of his/her mother tongue early enough and recognizes the possibilities in open mindedness when interacting with people of different cultures based on mutually understood terms enabled and created in the process of terminology development. This research maintains that proper cultural modesty is a function of a sound social interaction as propelled by terminology development and effective language policies and this, is the vehicle that drives national integration in any multicultural and multi-linguistic setting. While national policies should consider the uniqueness of different ethnic groups, their sensibilities and interestssuch policy makers should also be made to tailor language policies according to the patterns of the commonalities among different peoples of a multilingual nation as championed by terminology development.

The researcher therefore recommends a less emphasis on the use of foreign languages in local affairs and makes a case for researchers to give quality attention to promoting the adoption of indigenous languages for educational and legislative purposes. To succeed in this, this present work recommends that researchers delve more into groundbreaking researches that may provide sociolinguists and lexicographers with a good base for enriching local languages in order to favourably compete with dominant foreign ones. This project demands enough budgetary allocation by the government for the development of indigenous dictionaries that will engender language development in Nigeria and by extention, all multilingual countries.

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