

The Teaching of English Language and Literature in English in Contemporary Nigeria: Applied-Linguistic Assumptions, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

This article concerns itself with the teaching and learning of English language and literature in English in contemporary Nigeria. It provides an in-depth explanation on the conditions that encourage language learning and teaching, while examining the interdependence between language and other aspects of human life. A distinction among First Language, Second Language, Indigenous Language, and Official Language is made but more attention is on English as a second language. The article identifies and discusses language-induced, learner-induced, teacher-induced, and policy-induced conditions as the major challenges of English language teaching and learning, after which suggestions are made based on these challenges.

Keywords: English language, literature-in-English, mother tongue, educational linguistics, challenges.

Language is a mirror of mind in a deep and significant sense. It is a product of human intelligence, created anew in each individual by operations that lie far beyond the reach of will or consciousness. (Chomsky, 1975, p. 4)

Introduction

One of the earliest and famous definitions of language was provided by E. Sapir (1921) that language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. A fairly recent definition of language by Finegan (2012, p.25) states that “language is an arbitrary vocal system used by human beings to communicate with one another.” Language is a shared “communication code” which is essential in conveying a great variety of information (Kuiper & Allan, 1996; Wardhaugh, 1998; Owens, 2008). UNESCO has offered another perspective to the subject by defining language as a tool for communication and knowledge and an attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group (UNESCO, 2003). A cursory look suggests that communication is the thrust of language. This has been stressed by S. Pit Corder (1975) who contends that:

We do not teach language for its own sweet sake...We teach language so that our pupils can communicate and be

communicated with, so that they may convey meanings and understand meaning, so that they may enter into satisfactory mutual relations with native speakers or writers of the language. (Corder, 1975, 409)

The following key points can be highlighted about what language and language learning involves:

- Human language is God's special gift to mankind and one of the attributes that makes man different from other creations.
- Language evolves out of man's social relations and is a chief instrument for interaction, communicating our desires, attitudes, beliefs, intents, ideas, and expressing our cultural experiences.
- As a chief tool for communication, language is a means to problem solving

These attributes show that language is a complex area of study and only a systematic study could provide very useful explanations as to how it works. Just as someone may drive a car successfully yet not be able to know how the car works, the same way many of us use language without knowing how it works. The scientific study of how language works is what is broadly referred to as linguistics (Akmajian, Demers, Farmer, & Harnish, 1995). Through linguistics—in particular *applied linguistics*, which is “the utilization of the knowledge about the nature of language achieved by linguistic research for the improvement of the efficacy of some practical task in which language is a central component” (Corder, 1974, p.24), we are able to answer basic questions such as how is language used (or should be used), how is language learned (or how should it be learned), under what conditions is a language learned, how can one know when and how to use a language, what is the role of language in learning and teaching, etc? This takes us to a very important dimension that is critical to this discourse: the interdependence between language and other aspects of human life.

The list of scholars who have made significant contributions to the field of applied linguistics is endless. But here, the discussion has been narrowed down to the work of Benard Spolsky (1978) as described in Stern (1990, p.37) on whose educational linguistic model this article has

been framed. Spolsky is a well known Emeritus Professor of linguistics who has made significant contributions in the areas of language policy, including language education policy and language management, Sociolinguistics, including language change and language maintenance, Educational linguistics, including literacy and second language learning, language testing and its history, Language attitudes and identity Applied linguistics and its history. In his research, Spolsky identified four disciplines namely psychology, psycholinguistics, general linguistics, and sociolinguistics that exert very strong influence on language teaching, especially second language teaching (Stern, 1990). Spolsky devised the term education linguistics to describe this relationship saying it is “a field relevant to education but based on linguistics” or “parts of linguistics directly relevant to educational matters as well as those parts of education concerned with language” (Spolsky, 2008, p.2). His ideas are captured in his educational linguistics model in Fig. 1 below.

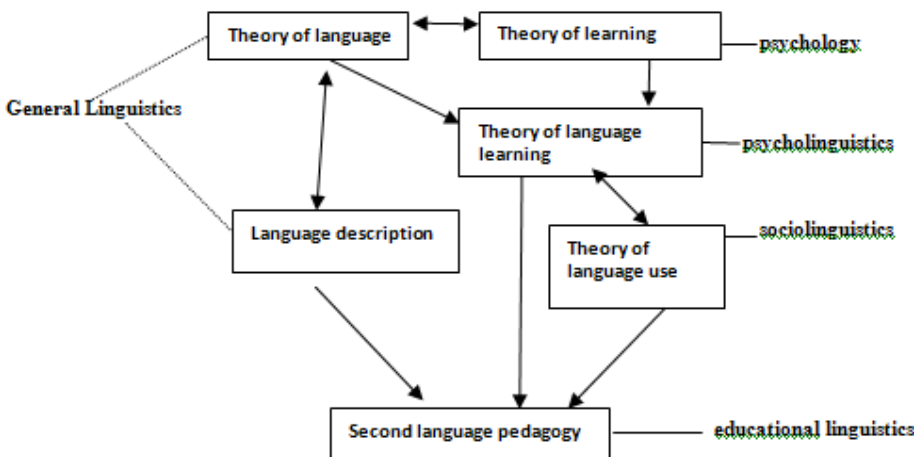


Fig. 1: Spolsky’s Educational Linguistics Model (1978) adopted from Stern (1990)

In Fig. 1 above, Spolsky (1978) as described in Stern (1990, p.37) provides arguments to show the interaction between language and language education noting that language teaching has three main sources: (1) language description (2) a theory of language learning, and (3) a theory of language use (Stern, 1990). To Spolsky, a position corroborated by Stern (1990), psychology provides the necessary

theoretical foundations and the data underlying language teaching, psycholinguistics for the theory of language learning, general linguistics for a theory of language and language descriptions, and sociolinguistics for a theory of language use in society. This background is essential in providing explanations of the following two major language classifications, subjective and objective, which are pertinent to this discussion.

Linguists and language educators often classify language subjectively. This means they look at language and describe it according to its relation with an individual or group. Going by this subjective view, we talk about language from the perspective of First language, native language, mother language, mother tongue, primary language, stronger language, second language, non-native language, foreign language, secondary language, weaker language, from which we generate commensurate terms such as Foreign language teaching/learning, second language teaching/learning mother tongue instruction/learning, bilingual education (bilingualism), etc.

The objective view on the other hand describes language without reference to the relationship of individuals to that language. Here, the focus is on “the geographical distribution, social function, political status, origin, type or importance of the language” (Stern, 1990, p.10). In this classification, we talk about language with reference to language of wider communication, Standard language, Regional language, National language, and Official language, etc.

In adherence to the scope I have carved, I will limit my discussion to only mother language (otherwise called mother tongue or first language), indigenous language(s), second language, and official language.

Distinction among First Language, Second Language, Indigenous Language, and Official Language

First Language (L_1): One’s first language (L_1) is synonymous with *mother tongue* (MT), *native language* (NL), *mother language* (ML), and *primary language*. UNESCO (2003, p.15) defines first language as

“the language which a person acquires in early years and which normally becomes their natural instrument of thought and communication.” At the time of acquiring this language, a child’s mother’s influence is greater than any other person. It is believed that the child learns this language from his parents, especially the mother with whom more time is spent. For this reason, many tend to call it mother language or mother tongue. Other features of mother tongue that make it different from second language are as follows:

- At the time of learning the MT, no other language interferes with its learning.
- It is acquired informally (there are no organized classrooms or environment for learning the MT/ML).

Noam Chomsky proposed that all humans have the innate ability and predisposition called Language Acquisition Device (LAD) to develop the ability to use (this) language (Bruner,1993) and that the rules governing language use are universal, i.e. are common with and in all human languages. Children will be able to learn language quickly, especially orally to a point of perfection because they already possess the predisposition to know these universal rules.

Second language (L₂): Generally speaking, a language learnt and used in addition to the first language or MT could be termed second language. A more specialized definition of a second language is a language whose level of command compared with the first language is lower, i.e. the language in which one has lower proficiency (Stern, 1990). In Nigeria, English has the attributes of and is called a second language. This, according to Spencer (1971), Bamgbose (1971), Quirk (1971), Tiffen (1969), and Oyetunde (2013) is for a number of reasons: it is a language of utilitarian communication between and among people of different linguistic backgrounds; the official language of government, business, education, literature, mass media, internal and external communication, and an instrument of national unity. English language is both a subject in its own right and a medium for learning most of the other subjects in the curriculum. This status has far reaching implications for the educational pursuit of the child. Children who are

not literate or proficient in English find learning a frightening experience.

Indigenous language(s): To use Spolsky's (2002) words, an indigenous language refers to a language spoken uniquely by an indigenous community and/or with origins in a given community or country. There are conflicting estimates of the total number of indigenous languages in Nigeria. Whereas Hansford, Bendor-Samuel and Standord (1976) put the number at three hundred and ninety four (394), Bamgbose (1971) estimates these languages to be four hundred (400). But we do know that Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba have the highest number of speakers followed by the nine other languages popularly called network languages namely, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Ibibio, Tiv, Izon, Edo, Nupe, Urhobo, Igala and Annang (Jibril, 2004). The Federal Government of Nigeria has recognized the worth of indigenous languages and has thus made a policy on indigenous languages teaching in line with UNESCO provision and principles that:

1. Educational opportunities be given to children in their mother tongues as this will improve educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers.
2. UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.
3. UNESCO supports language as an essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights. (UNESCO, 2003, p.27)

This policy promotes bilingual education and bilingualism

Official language: Nigerian has two official languages namely English and French. Already, much has been said about English, so I will shift attention to French. It has been reported in the literature that French was introduced in Nigerian education as far back as 1956 and officially pronounced as the second official language during the Abacha Government (Ademola, 2011). Since then, French has been on the curriculum of all the three levels of education as contained in the

National Policy on French Language Education. One major reason that necessitated the introduction of French as the second official language of Nigeria is that Nigeria is surrounded by Franco-phone countries and the citizens of Nigeria definitely need the knowledge of French language and culture to relate with their Franco-phone neighbours for purposes of communication, education, and commerce.

Next is a discussion on literature teaching. But first let us explore the connection between literature and language.

The connection between Language and Literature

There is a thin line between language and literature as both of them operate in social contexts. Language complements literature and literature is complemented by language. Rees' (1973, p.9) definition of literature as "writing which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings, and attitudes towards life" seems to define this relationship. Sapir (1921) attests that language is the medium of literature as marble or bronze or clay is the material of the sculptor. As an appendage of language, literature springs from language and at the same time is a product of language. Literature is rendered either in oral form (example songs, incantations, folktales, proverbs, poetry) or in written form (example plays, novels) to create and express a people's cultural identity and belief systems and to provide entertainment and a platform for socialization. Like literature, language takes two main forms: oral and written. Although many feel that literature is only writing, literature comes both in oral and written forms, thus suggesting that language in graphic form is a good example of literature.

The study of literature is beneficial in many other ways: it helps the learners to see language in context. Literature depicts happenings in real life situations and the lessons literature brings are helpful in helping both the young and old to lead meaningful lives.

Literature is called language in action (Labo-Popoola, 2010). Through its many elements such as drama, prose and poetry, literature provides the learners inexhaustible opportunities to learn and master expressive skills much the same way language does. Through the study of literature in English, students get opportunities to practise oral skills

such as pronunciation, intonation, discussion, critiquing, dialoguing, acting, argumentation, mimicking, and motor skills such as miming, dancing, chorography, etc.

Literature is an art, a form of man's intuitive creation to express his inner feelings, reasoning, likes and dislikes, and above all, a representation of his view of the world around him. Literature plays other functions too. It gives people an understanding of the life and society to which they belong (Mkaanem, 2007). Through the study of literature, we are placed in a better position to discover very valuable things about our culture and the culture of others and to help us appreciate their peculiarities. In other words, literature is a means of cultural identity and historical record.

Through the study of language and literature, important information such as dress patterns, how the people marry, how they bury their dead, how they interpret the cause of death, how they settle their disputes, how they relate with one another, how they relate with the Supreme God, how they regulate behaviour, what their eating habits are, and their traditional occupations, etc. could be known. African literature in particular evolved out of African customs and practices such as idol worship, ritual performances, songs, dance, marriage rites, myths, folktales, and festivals, etc. African writers have tended to explore these areas both as literary themes and an expression of an African identity that makes Africa distinct from the rest of the world. Chinua Achebe's works of fiction, especially the award winning *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is a good example. Other examples are Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963), Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* (1971), Ayi Kwei Armah's *The beautiful ones are not yet born* (1968), Micere Githae-Mugo and Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *The trials of Dedan Kimathi* (1976), etc. A study of literature in the mother tongue is also encouraged as it has the same function as literature in English. The themes of these works could vary but the African cultural elements are common in such works. For instance, it is common to come across patterns of worship (of idols), superstition, centralized legal system, polygamous marriage, use of proverbs, dance and music, etc. in African literary writing.

In the humanities, apart from being subjects of instruction, language and literature are the commonest modes of evaluating learners' literacy skills. Language and literature can be used to elicit valuable information on one's ability to speak intelligibly, read with understanding, think creatively, and make predictions. Literature is also useful in determining a person's reasoning ability and his entire perspective about the problems of life. The knowledge of literature in English is useful for students who want to read courses such as English, Theatre Arts, Mass Communication, Law, History and International Relations. For this reason, the candidate must sit and pass literature in English at a credit pass to qualify to read these courses.

At this juncture, it should be stressed that English language and literature in English are meant to be taught integratively even though they are two separate subjects at the senior secondary school levels. The teaching of literature in English according to WAEC (2014) is aimed at helping the students to develop critical responses to awareness of how literature functions. Students are also expected to gain in-depth knowledge of terms and concepts associated with the appreciation of different literary genres (prose, drama and poetry). Furthermore, the literature syllabus exposes students to effective use of language.

The inclusion of literature as a subject on the school curriculum was borrowed from the Greek and Roman governments as it was believed to inculcate in the learners core values of life such as endurance, hard work, honesty, discipline, steadfastness, love, peace, patriotism, etc. fostered through literature. Because of the importance attached to the learning of literature, books on literature recommended for use followed very stringent criteria. The idea of *literary canon* therefore, came to be associated with literature and language teaching. Taken from the Greek word *kanon* meaning "the measuring rod or rule" (Abrams, 1993, p.19), metaphorically canon denotes books accepted as official scriptures of the Hebrew Bible (Abrams, 1993; DiYanni, 2000). In contemporary usage, canon or literary canon has come to mean literary works officially accepted to be part of the school or college curriculum. M.H. Abrams states:

Literary canon has come to designate—in the world of literature...those authors who, by a cumulative consensus of critics, scholars, and teachers, have come to be widely recognized as “major,” and to have written works often hailed as literary classics. These canonical writers are the ones, which at a given time, are most kept in print, most frequently and fully discussed by literary critics and historians, and most likely to be included in anthologies and taught in college courses... (Abrams, 1993, pp. 19-20)

Owing to their literary worth, works by writers of European, French and African nationalities have been on the curriculum. Till today, Shakespeare’s works are still studied much the same way as works by Oliver Goldsmith, Jonathan Swift, Horace Walpole, Alfred Tennyson, etc.

Pertinent Questions about Literature and English language instruction

Here, we raise very pertinent questions which are relevant to literature and language instruction:

1. Of what educational value are the works selected or recommended for use in school?
2. How do such works fit into the quest for the attainment of educational goals of the nation?
3. What is the place of literary works in the political and civic life of the citizens?
4. Are the works selected merely on the basis of their language value or consideration is given to their interdisciplinary relevance?
5. Do the literary works that feature in the literature in English syllabus address contemporary issues and social problems, and the core values of the nation state?
6. Do teachers recommend books based on their literary worth?

Basic Assumptions about Language and Literature in English Instruction

- A theoretical knowledge of linguistics and applied linguistics (educational linguistics) is required by all teachers of language and literature for the effective teaching of the subjects.
- Literature in English is learnt via English language. This suggests that both the teacher and student must be proficient in the language of instruction. Both have to be proficient in the grammar, vocabulary and idioms of English to become effective teachers and learners.
- Language and Literature in English teaching that lacks practical application to the problems of man or society does not make much meaning to the learners. Teachers have to make a connection between what is learnt and what happens in the larger society.
- Some learners are not yet aware of the complementary nature of English language and literature in English.
- Reading is a requirement for effective English language and literature in English instruction.

Major Challenges of Language and Literature Instruction in Nigeria

Language-induced Conditions

English language itself as a problem: At all levels of education in Nigeria, it is mandatory for students to learn English either as a core subject or as a general subject to aid communication and study skills. But English is a difficult language to study. It is full of ambivalent grammatical rules, complex spelling and phonological systems requiring a lot of expertise on the part of the teachers. Unfortunately, most teachers teaching it lack this expertise.

The problem of L₁ interference: L₁ interference still accounts for the nature of difficulty students have in learning foreign languages. It refers to the transfer of the habit associated with one's mother-tongue to the target language being learnt. Interference takes place at different

linguistic levels: sound system, lexical level, grammatical level, and semantic level.

Learner-induced conditions

Overreliance on classroom instruction: It has been observed that many L₂ learners do not have the drive for self-enquiry. As such they depend entirely on what teachers present to them. Whenever teachers are not working or teaching, learning also becomes dormant.

In-group communication habits: Students' in-group communication habits seem to outweigh the formal language taught and learnt in the classroom. It is unanticipated how the students easily master a language form that is unacceptable but find it difficult to master the form that is acceptable. It is also worrisome how pidgin has taken over our institutions of higher learning. Students hold academic discussions in Pidgin instead of the standard variety of English.

Complacency: This refers to the false contentment that people have about their language proficiency levels even when it is obvious that such levels do not meet international standard (intelligibility). Both teachers and students are victims of this. Teachers who are complacent with their language proficiency neither read on their own nor attend academic meetings like workshops, conferences and seminars to improve themselves. When a typical Nigerian school learner is accused of not using language inappropriately, he/she gives such excuses as "I am not a language major," "So far as you understand what I meant, leave me alone" etc. There is a marked difference between:

What has been said/spoken/uttered & What ought to have been said/spoken

I came to sign my course form.

I came to have my course form signed

I dropped my project file with you...

I passed/submitted my project file...

Sharperly

sharply (quickly; very fast)

Wetin wetin

and whatnot

Now, let us look at the word *bathe* commonly substituted for *bath* by many students and teachers. Many say: *I want to *bath* instead of "I

want to bathe.” This is because they are not aware that *bathe* is a verb and *bath* is a noun. By always mispronouncing the verb form, it leads them to commit the mistake of making wrong word form. This development sends very pitiable signals about the quality of language instruction and learning in Nigeria.

Poor coverage of recommended literature textbooks due to poor attitude to reading: WAEC Chief Examiners’ Reports (2003), (2004), (2008) have blamed students’ poor performances in the area of reading comprehension and literature on poor attitude to reading and the habit of not reading all recommended textbooks. Also, when teachers meet difficult topics, they treat them carelessly or skip them completely. This encourages examination malpractice.

Teacher-induced Conditions

Absence of good models: Experience has shown that many language teachers teach the subject without being models to their students. It is disturbing to see so many language teachers still struggling to grasp the fundamentals of language (Oyetunde, 2006). Modern methods of language teaching and learning focus on contextualizing language forms and communicating in the culture of the language studied. The language teacher should aim at communicative competence as the goal of language teaching and must demonstrably use language in performing the functions language is known for (Wilkins, 1972; Richards & Rogers, 1986).

Preponderance of non-specialist teachers in the teaching of English language and literature in English: Proprietors, especially of privately-owned schools in a bid to minimize cost of administration, keep employing semi-skilled teachers to teach English. This is a major problem at the primary school level where, instead of assigning teachers to teach specific subjects, such teachers are asked to teach all the subjects. In one study, Udu (2010) found that out of 851 teachers sampled in Katsina-Ala LGA, only 74 representing 8.6 % had specialization in English and were qualified to teach English and literature in English.

Policy-induced Conditions

Methods of language testing: Whereas we use Nigerian English variety in our day to day business including language teaching, we use the Standard British variety (SBE) when it comes to language testing. In the West African Senior School Certificate Examination test of oral section for instance, given hereunder, the examiners will only accept ‘C’ as the correct option even though in spoken Nigerian English no one uses it or questions it when used incorrectly:

1. Which vowel sound is present at the underlined part of the word market?

- A. /e/
- B. /ə/
- C. /ɪ/
- D. /æ/

The problem is even worse when we look at the way English words are stressed in Nigerian English usage:

Nigerian English (NE)	British English (BrE)
mainTenance	MAINTenance
laBOLatory	LABoratory
triBALism	TRIBalism
eCONomics	ecoNOMics
veGEtable	VEGetable
coLLEAGUE	COLleague

In a similar vein, the idioms and collocations that we accept in spoken Nigerian variety of English (NE) are not accepted in examination situations. Therefore, any candidate who uses such idioms and collocations in an English language examination pays the penalty for mechanical inaccuracy.

A few examples will suffice:

NE: *Cut your coat according to your size*

BrE: *Cut your coat according to your cloth*

NE: *Last but not the least*

BrE: *Last but not least*

The art of teaching languages without supporting apparatuses: Twenty first century apparatuses such as language laboratories, computers, tape recorders, compact disc players, television, etc. are essential in supporting language teaching and learning. Unfortunately, these are hardly available for use in some schools. To make matters worse, till today, many Nigerian teacher training institutions are yet to acquire these facilities for teacher training. Consequently, one cannot boast of the products of such institutions having the expertise to use such apparatuses when the need arises to support their teaching.

Poor methods of teaching language and literature: Some teachers are not even aware of effective approaches and strategies for teaching language and literature in English such as communicative language teaching, computer aided instruction, literature circles, book clubs, collaborative learning strategy, think-pair-share, advance organizers, etc., which have been found to increase interest and achievement in the subject. As such, they still teach using traditional methods.

Promoting the school instead of promoting the learners: In some schools in Nigeria today, the desire to venerate the school overshadows that of improving the quality of the products of such schools. In pursuit of their goals, proprietors, principals, parents, and teachers go all out to ensure that their products record 100% pass in examinations, especially in English and Mathematics. In doing so, they render all forms of killer assistance, the underlying reason being to attract more intakes and make more money, while our education system continues to suffer.

Prospects and the Future of Language and Literature Teaching

Use of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to foster language teaching and learning: ICT is the hub of national and international life. There is hardly any part of modern life

that ICT has not positively affected. The gains of ICT in the areas of language teaching and learning have been highlighted in Udu and Shuaibu (2015, p.71) to include:

- a) The emergence of ICT tools such as computers, CD players, overhead projectors, videos, television and accompanying software make instruction/learning easier and more effective. To make gainful use of these both teachers (including non-English specialists) and students must develop the love for these tools and make them part of the teaching and learning of English language
- b) A pool of relevant resources for language and literature teaching and learning like thesauruses, online dictionaries, pronouncing dictionaries, and you-tube speech practice lessons are available on the internet to help teachers and students improve language teaching and learning. This has also reduced the cost and burden of looking for books and materials that are not readily available in the market.
- c) Quicker ways of sending and receiving information is fostered by the ICT. Communication between two or more people through the process of text messaging, e-mailing, online chats, Skyping, audio and video conferencing are some of the resources for teaching and learning language and literature effectively, and teachers and students can make contacts with experts in language and education across the globe for both materials and professional advice.
- d) ICT resources such as computer-aided games, television and the satellites not only provide pleasure for the viewers, but also enable them to acquire experience about the cultures of other people. These experiences are relevant to language and literature learning.
- e) We are encouraged to make use of ICT facilities and skills in developing materials to promote literacy and learning in the indigenous languages, which is an area needing attention.
- f) Teaching and learning of 21st Century Skills: Globally, nations are interested in ensuring that both teachers and students acquire 21st Century skills. 21st Century skills are a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are

believed—by educators, school reformers, professors, employers, and others—to be critically important to success in today's world, particularly in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces (Great Scholars Partnership, 2014). We must acquire these skills for three reasons: the changing needs of education, economic competitiveness, and the changing needs, skills and demands of the workplace (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008; Thoughtful Learning, 2014). These skills include learning skills consisting of critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborating, communicating; literacy skills consisting of information literacy, media literacy, technological literacy; and life skills consisting of flexibility, initiative, social skills, productivity and leadership.

- g) Making a career out of the field of Language and Literature Studies. Products of the field of language and literature have brought fame to themselves and their nations. When Prof. Wole Soyinka became the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, many began to appreciate the worth of literature on the African soil. Then Prof. Chinua Achebe too brought honour to himself, Africa and Nigeria through his many literary works, especially, *Things Fall Apart*, his popular novel which won many international prizes. Apart from aspiring to become creative writers, products of language and literature studies can be gainfully employed to work in media houses, airports, seaports, Internal Affairs Departments, Embassies and Consulates, etc.

Implications for Curriculum and Teaching

- A theoretical knowledge of linguistics and applied linguistics (educational linguistics) is required by all teachers of language and literature. Those who are not qualified to teach but are currently teaching must be shown the way out of the classroom.
- Teachers must not only possess the 21st Century Skills, but they must also ensure that these skills are imparted in children through attractive instructional channels.

- Teachers of other subjects require the basic knowledge of English (the language of instruction in Nigeria) to teach the contents of their chosen subjects and should aspire to be language models to their students.
- Psychological, political, maturational considerations should be put in the picture of our language preparation and teaching.
- English language teachers must ensure that they place priority on oracy skills (listening and speaking) and also ensure that children master these before literacy skills (reading and writing).
- Teachers should not leave the business of language teaching to language teachers alone. They too should work in partnership in the teaching of English language by way of correcting students whenever such students use English language inappropriately. They themselves should be good models of English language by using it appropriately at all times.
- Parents and teacher should encourage the love for reading in indigenous languages and promote the writing and publishing of short stories, novels and plays in the mother tongue.
- Activity-based learning, academic collaboration and interaction should be encouraged among teachers and students.
- Teachers should focus on language learning that places significant emphasis on meaning and context.
- Parents and teachers should give children their linguistic rights by ensuring that the children first learn in their mother tongues before anything else. By this, we are encouraged to discourage early introduction of English. This is useful both academically and socially.

Conclusion

English and French are languages of developed nations. They are the languages of modern technology, governance, international trade and partnership. Alduais (2012, p.205) once said, “the need of transferring the knowledge of one advanced nation to another developing nation requires the educated people of the developing nation to learn the language of that developed nation.” According to Soh, Arsad, and Osman (2010), students should be fluent in the language in which

advance technology operates. English and French are these languages! We may view the teaching and learning of these foreign languages as a form of neocolonialism, and suggest the introduction of an indigenous language as a national language to address the situation, but the truth remains that the indigenous language question has more demerits than merits. At a quick look, many of us appear to openly show hate for English and French languages, yet our love for our indigenous languages is as miserable as its motive. We hardly encourage our own children to use our mother tongues appropriately nor do we encourage those with the desire to study indigenous languages in higher institutions to do so. English language has come to stay, and all efforts must not be spared to ensure its quality learning and teaching in schools.

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