

LANGUAGE EDUCATION: TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

When an individual is trained to acquire language skills, it helps to facilitate his/her ability to cope with other skills, which results in personal development that leads to his/her participation in physical, economic, political, social, infrastructural and every other aspect of development. Language education qualifies and enables an individual to apply the skills learnt and acquired into work to achieve sustainable development. It is with language that manpower is built, the workforce responsible for making sure that sustainable development is actualized in a given society. Language imparted by professionals is applied into use. Evidently, the people involved in development and its sustainability must communicate at one time or the other in order to achieve their purpose. Hence, language learned or acquired is needed. The paper therefore, examines the role of language and language education in the attainment of sustainable development. It explicates the concepts of language education and sustainable development. It goes on to examine the impact of language education on sustainable development. The paper concludes with recommendations that would promote language education and ensure development and its sustainability.

Keywords: Language Education, sustainable, sustainability, development

Introduction

In the contemporary society, people at all stages and spheres of life get educated for different reasons and interests. Language is used as a tool to impart knowledge and transmit information to a particular group of people. Hence, the learning of language is imperative for the development of an individual who eventually develops the physical, economic, academic, environmental, social, political, structural and infrastructural aspects of the society for the betterment of the nation and its citizens. The primary concern is to examine how language education can help in the sustainable development goal. When developments are made and sustained, language education is a viable tool for it. It is a tool in the sense that teaching and learning a language especially the language of the environment of the users, the mother-tongue called first language (L1) and that of a second language (L2) used for communication by a group of people, information will be easily conveyed regarding how to achieve development and its sustainability. Language education helps to produce manpower through the acquisition of skills for development and its sustainability. Language has been defined by various scholars (linguists), all pointing to the fact that it is a system of rules, conventions, arbitrary symbols, codes written or spoken which a group of people communicate with. It is seen as an agreed and understandable symbols used in conveying information and interaction between persons or

individuals. Education could be seen as a system of teaching (training) and learning at formal, informal and vocational levels. Language education is the process of planning, developing and implementing the language arts curriculum in such a way that one is trained to acquire language skills that will facilitate his ability to cope with other life skills (Amadi 2014:1). When individuals learn a particular language whether L1 or L2, they apply it in the different areas of development and the sustainability of it. Knowledge is imparted through language acquisition. Information is relayed or conveyed with the use of language. Also, it is with the use of language that development is made and sustained. Development could be seen as increase in growth whether physical, economic, academic, environmental, political, social etc. it is a process of gradually becoming bigger, stronger or more advanced. Also, it is a process of increasing business, trade and industrial activity. A change that makes a product, plan, idea etc better. Development is an evolutionary process in which the human capacity increases in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems, adapting to continuous change, and striving purposely and creatively to attain new goals. Mensah (2019:4). Sustainability could be seen as a state of maintaining the existing achieved improvement in whatever aspect of life. If something is sustainable, it means maintenance of any positive impact/achievement. It also means being able to continue for a long time without causing damage to the environment. Therefore sustainable development means development that can be continued either indefinitely or for the given time period. Mensah (2019:6). The concern of this paper is to examine the relationship that exists between language education and sustainable development. It will further x-ray how language can be effectively utilized in the transmission of sustainable development ideas to the general populace, both in Nigeria and in other modern societies of the world.

Language Use in a Developing and Developed Society

Language is used in various aspects and spheres of life. It serves different purpose or roles. It is this purpose or role that makes a language important to its users. It is basic to man. With Language man has the capacity for dealing with changes in his environment. With it, man is able to organize his society as well as face the various emergencies of life. Through it, man's survival in a competitive world such as ours is guaranteed. Below are the functions of languages.

- ❖ Education: It is through language that we educate and receive education instructions, class lectures, tutorials and all forms of pedagogical activities that go on in schools are carried out through the language medium.
- ❖ Socialization: Language acquisition is imperative for socialization for people to mix and interact freely with one another, language is needed without it, people are likely to view one another with suspicion and this hinders interaction, integration and socialization.
- ❖ Documentation: Language is a vehicle through which we document information for future use and for posterity. Most of the things we know today are possible because they were documented for us to read. Breakthroughs and other research findings can easily be preserved for generations to come through documentation using language.
- ❖ International Relations & Diplomacy: All these can only be possible through language. No nation is capable of living in isolation without language with which a healthy international relations and diplomacy can be achieved. Languages like English, French, Latin, German (among others) are called international languages because their usage cuts across national boundaries. With such international languages, the entire universe is reduced into one global village, where nations can easily have access to world's science and technology. In addition, peace and mutual existence are sustained through such international languages.
- ❖ Governance and Administration: Languages facilitates general administration and governance of a people. Think of the constitution or rules and regulation of a group of people. It is with language that such important documents are written and interpreted.

- ❖ Humanization: Language humanizes mankind as it is only human beings that can use language for the purpose of communication. This makes man a superior creation of the Almighty God.
- ❖ Commerce and Industry: For all forms of business transactions, production, distributions' including international trade, language is simply inevitable.
- ❖ Development: A nation without language can hardly develop. It is through language that researcher and breakthroughs are made, reported and developed for the benefits of the larger society. The Development which Japan has recorded today through breakthrough in technology wouldn't have been possible without language. In Nigeria, the importance which the national policy on education attaches to the languages policy issues goes to justify the function and importance of language as agent of development, Nwaiwu and Obi (2008:60-64).

Furthermore, the uses of English language in Nigeria are enumerated as follows;

- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Commerce and Technology
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Unifying Instrument
- ❖ Lingua Franca
- ❖ Judiciary
- ❖ Mass Media

Following are:

- ❖ Governance and administration
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Music & entertainment

Nwaiwu and Obi (2008:64-68)

Language Education

As earlier mentioned, Amadi (2014:1) opines thus, “language education is the process of planning, developing and implementing the language arts curriculum in such a way that one is trained to acquire such a way that one is trained to acquire language skills that will facilitate his ability to cope with other life skills. Language is a medium of communication between the sender and receiver. Both the sender and his receiver are literate as a result of language education.

Background of Language Education in Nigeria

Early efforts in language education (in formal, western type of education) was introduced into the country by the Christian missionaries just before the middle of the nineteenth century. For about four decades after that initial date, both the nature and main thrust of language education in the country were completely left to those missionaries to decide (Taiwo 1980: 10 – 11, Fafuna 1974:92). And given the well-known belief of the missionaries, first, that the African child was best taught in his native language (Hair 1967:6), and, second, that the interests of Christianity would be served by actually propagating religion in indigenous languages. It is not at all surprising that the teaching and learning of indigenous languages received much genuine attention in those early days of western type education in the country. But not everybody liked or approved of the products of such a system of education. Quite on the contrary, members of the then elite were widely of the view that the people turned out under that system of education were not well enough suited to the job market of those days, whose unsatisfied needs were for persons with training in English rather than in the indigenous languages (Taiwo 1980:11). Influenced perhaps only in part by such views, the governments in the country began as from the early 1980's gradually to intervene in Education of the country with a view to according English a lot more prominence in it. Overtime, that policy succeeded so well that interest in language education in the country shifted substantially away from the indigenous languages.

Towards English, the language of the colonial masters. Proof of this was that, first, pupils and their parents gradually formed the opinion which is regrettably still widely held even today that it was financially more rewarding to study English than any of the indigenous languages, second, certification became conditional upon passing English, and, finally, the various governments in the country from the colonial times till well past the attainment of political independence in 1960 rarely felt that they had any duty to promote the study of the indigenous languages whereas they considered themselves obliged to encourage and even enforce the study of English. Luckily for the indigenous languages, however, the realities of the situation then, as now, were such that the teaching of the indigenous few school children, if any at all, in those days spoke any English before actually entering school. Such children therefore had will-nilly to be instructed in the medium of their mother – tongues until they had gained enough proficiency in English by their fourth, fifth or even sixth year in school to be able to receive all or most formal instruction in it. But even up to this stage, the mother-tongue existed as an optional subject on the curriculum, particularly in the case of those languages like Efik, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba that were lucky enough not only to have been reduced to writing but also have sufficient reading materials both sacred and secular for use in teaching school children.

Awobuluyi states further the birth of national policy on language education by quoting (Bamgbose 1976: 12 – 13) thus, “Not only have some indigenous languages thus been taught in schools since formal western type education was first introduced into the country, after the attainment of political independence in 1960, the wisdom of giving English so much importance in Government and education also began gradually to be questioned. Thus, some people felt, and openly canvassed in parliament for English to be replaced as official language by one of our indigenous languages some twenty years after independence”. He continues by quoting (Osaji 1979: 159) thus “others who were particularly worried by the problem most people in the country actually have in understanding English and communicating well in it, advised that more effort should be put into the teaching of the major indigenous languages to enable them to serve as an alternative to English as official means of communication in Government and business”. The overall effect of suggestions and pressures of this kind was to bring about an important shift in the attitude of the government, particularly at the Federal level to the indigenous languages. The shift took, to begin with, the form of an admission by government of what had long been known to linguists and anthropologists, namely, that a language is simultaneously a vehicle for a people’s culture and a means of maintaining and indefinitely preserving that culture. The implication of this, which government came to see and appreciate, is that we are not ultimately to lose our national identity together with our rich indigenous cultures, then we must begin to pay more attention to the teaching of our indigenous languages. In addition to seeing the relationship between language and culture, the government also came to see the indigenous languages more clearly for what they had all along been, viz, a veritable and practical means of communication, some of which could be very easily be harnessed for effecting national integration, a matter of paramount importance for a country still struggling to consolidate its independence. Government began from the late 1970s onward to take official interest in, and make policy pronouncements on the teaching of the indigenous languages, instead of concerning itself solely with English as hitherto. Thus in an official document first published in 1977, revised in 1981, and titled Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education (NPE). The Federal Government for the first time laid it down as a policy for the whole country that:

- a. In primary school, which lasts six years, each child must study two languages, namely
 - i. His mother-tongue (if available for study) or an indigenous language of wider communication in his area of domicile, and
 - ii. English language
- b. In Junior Secondary School (JSS), which is of three years duration, the child must study three languages, viz:

- i. His mother-tongue (if available for study or an indigenous language of wider communication in his area of domicile.
- ii. English language, and (iii) just any one of the three major indigenous languages in the county, namely, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, provided the language chosen is distinct from the child's mother-tongue
- c. In Senior Secondary School (SSS), which also lasts three years. The child must study two languages, viz
 - i. an indigenous language and (ii) English language

It should be recalled at this juncture that French and Arabic existed under the policy as language options at both the junior and secondary school levels. Government formulated policies regarding education and language teaching. The government's power is placed well beyond doubt or dispute, a brand new subsection was written into that portion of the country's 1989 Constitution dealing with the educational objectives of state policy. The subsection in question, viz: subsection 19(4), says simply that "Government shall encourage the learning of indigenous languages. Each of the languages is by definition a mother tongue, in theory they all qualify to be taught as school subjects under the NPE policy on language education in primary and junior secondary schools. However, because most of them have such small numbers of speakers, it would not appear at all practical to actually teach them as school subjects for precisely this reason. According to Brann (1977:47), the former National Language Centre, now transformed into the current language 1976, suggested that, in addition to the three major languages, viz: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba only the following nine of the remaining 387 or so indigenous languages in the country should be allowed to feature in the country's formal school system: Edo, Fulfulde, Ibibio, Idoma, Igala, Ijo, Kanuri, Nupe, and Tiv.

As regards the teaching of indigenous second languages, Awobuluyi (1998:3/5) states that the National Policy on Education, as indicated earlier, requires each school child at the Junior secondary school level to study one of those three languages in addition to his mother tongue. However, for practical reasons, as also indicated earlier, many school children cannot actually study their mother tongue but must study an indigenous language of wider communication instead in primary school as well as at the junior secondary school. In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process, and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba

Therefore, Language, whether indigenous or foreign, first language (L1) or second Language (L2) is studied and acquired by all for the sake of communication, which eventually is a vital tool for development and its sustainability.

Sustainable Development

Development

Development could be seen as increase in growth, whether physical, economic, academic, environmental, social etc, and in all aspects of life. It has been defined as the process of gradually becoming bigger, stronger or more advanced. It can be seen as the process of increasing business, trade and industrial activity, change that makes a product, plan, idea etc better (Longman Dictionary 1978:463). These and other definitions are used to shed light on the discourse.

Development as a concept has been associated with diverse meanings, interpretations and theories from various scholars. Development is defined as an evolutionary process in which the human capacity increases in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems

adapting to continuous change and striving purposely and creatively to attain new goals, (Poet, 1999 cited in Du Pisani, 2006).

According to Reyes (2001:), development is understood as a social condition within a nation, in which the needs of its population are satisfied by the rational and sustainable use of national resource and systems. Todaro and smith(2006:) also define development as a multi-dimensional process that involves major changes in social structures, attitudes and institutions, as well as economic growth reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty” Mensah (2019:4 of 21)

Sustainability

Sustainability, on the other hand, could be seen as a state of maintaining the existing achieved improvement in whatever aspect of life. If something is sustainable, it means maintenance of any positive achievement. The word sustainable means (1) able to continue without causing damage to the environment. (2) able to continue for a long time” (Longman Dictionary 1978: 1780). Literally, sustainability means a capacity to maintain some entity, outcome or process overtime. (Basiago: 1999). However, in development literature, most academics, researchers and practitioners (Gray & Milne 2013, Tjarve & Zemite 2016; Mensah & Enu-kwesi, 2018; Thomas 2015), apply the concept to connote improving and sustaining a healthy economic, ecological and social system for human development. Stoddart (2011) defines sustainability as the efficient and equitable distribution of resources intra-generationally and inter-generationally with the operation of socio-economic activities within the confines of a finite ecosystem. Ben Eli(2015), on the other hand, sees sustainability as a dynamic equilibrium in the process of interaction between the population and the carrying capacity of its environment such that the population develops to express its full potential without producing irreversible adverse effects on the carrying capacity of the environment upon which it depends. From this standpoint (Thomas, 2015) continues that sustainability brings into focus human activities and their ability to satisfy human needs and wants without depleting or exhausting the productive resource of their disposal. This, therefore, provokes thoughts on the manner in which people should lead their economic and social lives drawing on the available ecological resource for human development.

Hak, Janouskova, and Molden (2016) have argued that transforming global society, environment and economy to a sustainable one is one of the most uphill tasks confronting man today since it is to be done within the context of the planet’s carrying capacity. The World Bank (2017) states that this idea calls for innovative approaches to managing realities. In furtherance of this argument, DESA UN (2018) posits that the ultimate objective of the concept of sustainability, in essence, is to ensure appropriate alignment and equilibrium among society, economy and the environment in terms of the regenerative capacity of the planets life-supporting ecosystems, in the view of grossling- goldsmiths (2018) It is this alignment and equilibrium that forms the focus of a meaningful definition of sustainability” in the present discourse.

Sustainable Development

This apt and interesting subject has been a very important discourse in the contemporary time. Olalede (2017: 4) puts it thus, “the term sustainable development only came to the fore in the Brunt land report published in 1987” When development is made, it has to be sustainable. If not sustained, the society wobbles economically, politically, socially, educationally, agricultural etc, and eventually declines in individual expectations/demands. Mensah (2019:5-6 of 21) states that, “sustainable development has become the buzzword in development discourse, having been associated with different definitions, meanings and interpretations. Taken literally, sustainable development would simply mean “development that can be continued either indefinitely or for the given time period (Dernbach, 1998,2003, Lele, 1991; Stddart,2011).

Structurally, the concept can be seen as a phrase consisting of two words, “sustainable” and “development”. Just as each of the two words that combine to form the concept of sustainable development, that is “sustainable” and development”, have been defined variously from various perspectives. The concept of SD has also looked at from various angles, leading to a plethora of definitions of the concept. Although definitions abound with respect to SD, the most often cited definition of the concept is the one proposed by the Brundtland Commission Report (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). The Report defines SD as development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Acknowledging the pervasiveness of WCED’s definition, Cerin (2006) as well as Abubakar (2017) argue that SD is a core concept within global development policy and agenda. It provides a mechanism through which society can interact with the environment while not risking or damaging the resource for the future. Thus, it is a development paradigm as well as a concept that calls for improving living standards without jeopardizing the earth’s ecosystems or causing environmental challenges such as deforestation and water and air pollution that can result in problems such as climate change and extinction of species (Benaim & Raftis, 2008; Browning & Rigoion, 2019). According to Kolk (2016), SD is achievable through the integration of economic, environmental and social concerns in decision-making processes. However, it is common for people to treat sustainability and SD as analogies and synonyms but the two concepts are distinguishable. According to Diesendorf (2000), sustainability is the goal or endpoint of a process called sustainable development, Gray (2010) reinforces the point by arguing that while “Sustainability” refers to a state, SD refers to the process for achieving this state.

Some scholars interested in development studies have highlighted the pillars of sustainable development. As a visionary and forward-looking development paradigm, SD emphasizes a positive transformation trajectory anchored essentially on social, economic and environmental factors. According to Taylor (2016) the three main issues of sustainable development are economic growth, environmental protection and social equality. Based on this, it can be argued that the concept of SD rests fundamentally on three conceptual pillars. These pillars are “economic sustainability”, social sustainability” and “environmental sustainability”

Economic Sustainability: Economic Sustainability implies a system of production that satisfies present consumption levels without compromising future needs (Lobo, Pietriga & Appert, 2015). Traditionally, economists assuming that the supply of natural resource was unlimited placed undue emphasis on the capacity of the market to allocate resource efficiently, (Du & Kang, 2016). It is also believed that the economic growth would be accompanied by the technological advancement to replenish natural resources destroyed in the production process. Economics consist of markets where transactions occur. According to Dernbach (1993), there are guiding frameworks by which transactions are evaluated and decision about economic activities are made. Three main activities that are carried out in an economy are production, distribution and consumption, but the accounting framework used to guide and evaluate the economy with regard to these activities grossly distorts values and this does not augur well for society and the environment.

Social Sustainability; social sustainability encompasses notions of equity, empowerment, accessibility, participation, cultural identity and institutional stability (Daly, 1992). The concept implies that the people matter since development is about people. Basically, social sustainability connotes a system of social organization that alleviates poverty (Littig & Griebler, 2005). However, in a more fundamental sense, “Social sustainability” relates to the nexus between social conditions such as poverty and environmental degradation (Farazmard, 2016). At the social level, sustainability entails fostering the development of people, communities and cultures to help achieve meaningful life, drawing on proper health care across the globe. According to Kolk (2006), social sustainability is not about ensuring that everyone’s

needs are met, rather, its aim at providing enabling conditions for everyone to have the capacity to realize their needs, if they so desire. Anything that impedes this capacity is considered a barrier, and needs to be addressed in order for individual, organization or community to make progress towards social sustainability (Brodhag & Taliere, 2006; Pieroban, 2019)

Environmental sustainability; the concept of environmental sustainability is about the natural environment and how it remain productive and resilient to support human life. Environmental sustainability relates to ecosystem integrity and carrying capacity of natural environment (Brodhag & Taliere, 2006). This indicates that sustaining environment and its natural resources is an important aspect of human development.

Adding her opinion to the discourse Olalade (2017:2) cites Durphy et al (2000) that sustainable development recognizes that both the economy and society depend on the biosphere and the environmental processes taking place within it. Hence, the main goal of a sustainable development process is sustainability which ultimately leads to improved quality of life (Schaltegger et al, 2003). She then mentions development goals thus, “sustainability development can only be achieved in a society if there is political stability, social coherence and opportunities for economic development which are still lacking in most developing countries. The concept will thrive in a society where human rights and inequality has been decreased (Huber,2013). According to a UN (2013) report, “Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development” are the primary objective and vital requirements for sustainable development, which eventually leads to the protection of the environment. The UN millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) report, *Living beyond our means*, states that “development policies aimed at reducing poverty that ignore the impact of our current behaviour on the natural environment may well be doomed to failure”. There is also a need to institute and build the capacity of national and regional institutions in most developing countries, so that they are capable of implementing, monitoring and evaluating sustainable development goals. Financial support and technical adaptation and transfer from developed countries would also strengthen institutional capacities in developing countries (DESA, 2013).

The Impact of Language Education on Sustainable Development

In actual fact, for developing and its sustainability to thrive in our nation, there is the need for language teaching, learning and acquisition. It is with language that communication is made possible among the citizens of this great country. Amadi (2014:1) quotes (Abdulkarim, 2008) thus: “Language is the vehicle of communication and expression used in all human interactional situation, political, commerce, Education and culture. Language is a tool for communication and a means for creative expression and ability. Language education gives the individual skills to assimilate and synthesize information about events and life. Amadi (2014:2-3) also quotes Ogu, (1992) in affirmation that the role of English language is so pervading and total that one may begin to battle in his/her mind whether English is still a foreign language in Nigeria. This is because English language has been adopted and appropriated by Nigerians, used as the language of education and has been made to fill the roles reserved for the native language. Without language skills, it will be impossible for an instructor to transmit instructional knowledge and train certain skills. When instruction of language, the learner is filled with joy and this motivates him/her to acquire both mechanical and technical manpower. The mastery assures an individual of being productive in other spheres of life. It equips on individual for a better tomorrow.

Language Education is very paramount in the development of an individual and eventually the nation is developed by the same individual. It is the language learned and acquired that will help in this situation. Amadi Corroborates this thus, “Language education is a quintessence for national development. Any curriculum geared toward producing manpower needed for national development is functional education. Skills are inculcated through language. Language education trains one in literacy skills for life-long education. Without language, it will be impossible for an instructor to transmit instructional knowledge further on this, language is the

engine of all human information dissemination. No doubt, it serves a crucial role in all human life, its knowledge and how to effectively use it to achieve individual and national objective is a necessity the role and the impact of language education in development and its sustainability. Maintenance of whatever that is established is very paramount in the nation. Language is not an aim in itself but an instrument of communication and cognition and is acquired best when used this way. Engaging in activities where the target language is not the purpose but a medium of obtaining information related to one's personal interests (arts, science, technology, business, international affairs, travelling, sport, hobbies etc), can be highly motivating, rewarding and productive.

A look at the different pillars of sustainability development and how language education can be applied to ensuring its realization is crucial. To this end, we state and emphasize the pillars of sustainable development, which include the following:

1. **Economic Sustainability:** a system of production that satisfies present consumption levels without compromising future needs: In the chain of economic distribution, there are Producers – Wholesalers – Retailers then to Customers. A proper observation will inform one that, for all these economic entities to exist, develop and get sustained, languages that is acquired through learning is inevitable. Producers communicate with one another in order to fulfill their objectives, likewise the wholesalers, Retailer and the consumers. Those that are interpreting and analyzing the economy, especially the Nigerian economy need to communicate with the use of language. For all Nigerians to develop and sustain the economy, Language is vital.

2. **Social Sustainability:** Social Sustainability was opined by scholars to encompass notions of equity, empowerment, accessibility, participation, cultural identity and institutional stability. The concept implies that the people matter since development is about people (Benaim & Raftis, 2008:). Basically, social science sustainability connotes a system of social organization that alleviates poverty “(Littig & Griebl 2005) when we mention social and sociological aspect, we talk about humans in their interactions, how people relate with one another. Of course, the relationship that exists between nations (international diplomacy) states communication which is done using acquired and learned language. Policies cannot be formulated and executed without language. It is through speaking that human beings socialize. Laws are enacted with its strategies and skills of development and maintenance are conveyed/transmitted through language.

3. **Environmental sustainability:** the concept of environmental sustainability is about the natural environment and how it remains productive and resilient to support human life. Environmental sustainability relates to ecosystem integrity and carrying capacity of natural environment (Brodhag & Talioere, 2006:). As earlier stated, economy and society depend on the biosphere and the environment processes taking place within it. Human beings are involved in the whole process of activities carried out in the ecosystem. The productive and resilient abilities found in the environment is always coordinated and controlled by humans who do that using the language of the environment which is acquired through learning. People develop and plan developmental strategies that are achievable and sustainable with the use of acquired and learned language as a means of communication.

From the foregoing discourse, it is clearly evident that language is an indispensable tool in the actualization or attainment of sustainable development. This is because the major role of language in a society is to facilitate communication among the citizens. It is only when meaningful communication takes place that individuals are able to galvanize human and material resources for the realization of set national development goals. For example, language teaching and learning provide the only avenue through which worthwhile ideas, abilities, competences, technical and vocational skills, value systems and cultures of a society are transmitted to learners. This explicates the crucial role of language in education since citizens of a given society would be able to contribute to sustainable development only when they are adequately exposed to meaningful and worthwhile education. Thus, economic, social and environmental sustainability (which scholars consider as indicators of development) cannot be

fully achieved in the absence of language, through which citizens of a given society interact, cross-breed ideas, galvanize human resources, plan and execute their conceived development agenda for sustainable growth and development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It has been established that an individual is taught a language of the environment, whether first language (L1) which is regarded as mother tongue or second Language (L2), which is either another language used by other tribes in the society, seen as indigenous language, especially Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba in Nigeria, or foreign Language like French. English language is a foreign language that has been accepted by Nigerians as Lingua Franca (Language for communication, interaction, integration and pedagogical activities in schools in Nigeria). This language is taught to enable an individual use the skills for development; personal development and that of the nation. Language learning/acquisition builds manpower, the workforce responsible for developing the environment, social, economic, and other aspects of development and the sustainability of all these. The citizens of the nation cannot be developed and be used to develop the nation without language. Developments cannot be sustained outside language learning and acquisition. Hence, the need to prioritize the teaching, learning and acquisition of language for development and its sustainability. The paper concludes by recommending the following: (i) for developments to be made and sustained, government should make provision for training of qualified and certified manpower/workforce by making available instruments (equipment) that help in language teaching, especially equipping language laboratories. (ii) ensure that language teaching is prioritized in schools and in vocational training centres.

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