



Harnessing Israelite
and Yoruba
Traditional
Eldership and
Responsibilities for
Moral
Transformation in
Nigeria

Drug Abuse and
Crime among
Youths: the Bane
of South Eastern
Nigeria

Charles Peirce's
Theory of Enquiry:
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Language,
Technology and
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Culture:
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Analysis



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Harnessing Israelite and Yoruba Traditional Eldership Systems and Responsibilities for Moral Transformation in Nigeria

Iyanda Abel Olatoye

Abstract

There has been, in recent times, a considerable upsurge of moral laxity in Nigeria. It is not an exaggeration to say that moral rectitude is now becoming an elusive principle among Nigerian youths. Unfortunately, this dangerous trend is traceable to the deplorable behaviour of today's adults whose attitude and social orientation amount to wanton disregard or abandonment of traditional norms and practices. The actions of many adults today display a preference for liberal and popular culture, especially those reflective of the pervasive individualism and technological excesses of the post-modern Western world. The deeds and manners of many adults today are frequently sacrilegious, aside from other anomalies associated with their lack of cultural consciousness, discipline, self-control, and a sense of responsibility and fairness. Today's adults, generally speaking, appear to be bequeathing an immoral, misleading, and abysmally unstable foundation to Nigerian youths. Towards the reversal of the above undesirable trend, this paper examines the axiological nature of Israelites' and Yoruba traditional moral systems and the altruistic philosophies of their systems of social organisation overseen by elders. In the two traditions, every elderly person was expected to possess the attributes or qualities of a true elder. Besides the virtues and endowment of wisdom and experience acquired along the journey of life, the restraint and wisdom of elders were relied upon to help, guide, control or curtail the exuberance of youths, thereby making the latter to imbibe and display socially acceptable character. This paper explores the implications of harnessing Israelite and traditional Yoruba eldership systems and responsibilities for moral transformation in Nigeria. Using historical-critical method, the paper recommends that moral laxity nowadays should be addressed from eldership perspectives; it should not be blamed on the youths but on the present generation of elders, since the youths are largely offshoots of the cultural and social systems handed down to them by elders.

Keywords: Israelite, Yoruba, Nigeria, traditional, eldership, responsibilities, moral transformation

INTRODUCTION

The most inestimable and incomparable asset in humanity is moral rectitude; though generally disdained, it is rewarding, here on earth and at the eschaton. Morality is a virtue, an uncommon blessing, the beauty of any community, and

a pivot on which all other communal values and obligations are placed. Thus, in the ancient world, moral value inculcation was considered compulsory as it served as effective and pragmatic way by which the elders imparted time-honoured norms, ideas and virtues to the younger members of the community. This traditional enterprise, which is indispensable to the stability of the society, has remained a most neglected practice in Nigerian today. The neglect is now visible as it is reflected in the chaotic nature of the Nigerian society and in its rampant corrupt practices. And the bane of this unfortunate situation is that the present generation of elders has been unduly influenced by the self-centred and consumerist nature of the contemporary political system. Hence, our elderly elites are not enthusiastic about moral value inculcation, but only emphasise academic qualification. In fact, mindful of the consequences of this modern system, Shrivastava (2017) affirmed that ‘Education without value is not only useless but also very harmful.’

Today, moral value inculcation, as observed in the ancient traditions, is imperatively required. This paper’s scope, in contextualising the role of elders as corrective instruments in human society, is the traditional Yoruba society of south-western Nigeria and the ancient/biblical society of the Israelites. Our study of ancient eldership perspectives, and their chronological and sapiential dimensions, will be conducted within the context of traditional Yoruba and Jewish settings, in spite of both traditions’ customary and institutional differences.

ELDERSHIP AND REPONSIBILITIES IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

It is a truism that every society, for its own safeguard and prosperity, needs a well-ordered and recognised leadership. This arrangement is actually seen in every civilised society, and even among barbarous people. In Israel, as among all other ancient peoples, there are groups of men who are known as the elders that are representing their people in various capacities. These elders are not only persons of advanced age, but also men of distinct social grade. The Hebrew word *Zaqen* (‘elder’ or ‘old man’) is equivalent to *Sibum* in Akkadian, *Senator* in Latin, *Geron* in Greek and *Sheikh* in Arabic languages. The elders, in ancient Israel, were the consulting body of the city, nation or king considered as ‘the wise’ (Ezk. 7:26; Jer. 18:18). There were three distinct categories of men in ancient Israel, designated in the Old Testament as ‘elders’. The first category of elders mentioned in the biblical texts, as Willis Timothy observed, is ‘the elders of Israel’, sometimes said to have consisted of seventy men (Exd. 24:1; Num. 11:16), which was a representative body for the Sanhendrin sometimes after the Babylonian exile. The second category of elders is a group of administrative advisers in the royal court called ‘elders of the king’s house’ or simply ‘the elders’ (2Sam. 12:17; Gen. 24:2; 50:7; 1Kings 12:6 - 15). This body faded away after the fall of Jerusalem, but its memory

was preserved in some apocalyptic literatures (2 Enoch 4; Rev. 4:4, 10; 19:4). The third category of elders is the elders of cities who were the institutional ancestors to the elders Paul described in Timothy and Titus.

However, as a social institution, there are various types of elders mentioned under the above stated categories. These include:

- elders of people (Israel, Judah, Moab, Midian, Egypt – Num. 22:4, 7; Gen 50:7)
- elders of an area (Gilead – Judges 11:5-11)
- elders of tribe (each tribe of Israel – Deut. 31: 28)
- elders of the Diaspora (in Babylonian exile – Jer. 29:1)
- elders of the priest – 2 Kings 19:2; Jer. 19:1
- elders of the city – Deut. 19:12; Josh. 20:4-5; Judges 8:14 -16; Ruth 4: 1-12
- elders of the house (palace) – 2 Sam. 12:17

The most prominent of all these groups of elders are the elders of the people (or country) and the elders of the city.

Elders of the City

In ancient Israel, these elders represented their fellow citizens in the local matters. Their functions are best exemplified by the laws of Deuteronomy. They were involved in several cases that dealt with protection of the family and local patriarchal interests.

Qualifications of a City Elder

The following are the qualifications of a city elder:

(1) He is a senior member of a large extended family. The basic family unit is not the nuclear family (husband-wife-children) in this context, but the ‘extended family’ or ‘minimal lineage’. An extended family consists of the oldest surviving member of a family and all his descendants. A minimal lineage consists of one or more extended family, descended from a common ancestor who lived a few generations prior to the families currently living. Such a group may consist of 20 -200 persons. In spite of this size, the minimal lineage often functions as we would expect a nuclear family to function. Members share common economic, emotional, moral and legal responsibilities. When one member is in need, the whole family helps; suffers, the whole family

hurts; sins, the whole family is shamed; is physically threatened, the whole family defends; or is accused of wrong deeds, the whole family equally bears the consequences. So, in Israel, elders arise from the ranks of senior members of the various extended families within these lineages. This qualification (family identity) gives such elders a significant constituency, and also a voice in the entire community.

(2) He is wealthy, but also generous and hospitable. This character demonstrates to his family and the broader community that he has the interest of the community, not just his personal interest, at heart.

(3) His character exemplifies the standards of ethic and morality which the community esteems most highly. A person who is hot-headed or unsociable or that displayed undue favourism would not be selected.

(4) He is well versed in his people's 'secret knowledge' (religious practices, customs, and history). His older age, numerous life experiences, and accumulated wisdom enable him to serve effectively.

(5) He is known in the community for his oratorical skills, especially his skill of persuasion. This knowledge and the oratorical skills will enable him to truly represent his group effectively.

Functions of City Elders

There are fifteen clear references in the Old Testament to the roles and functions of City elders of the Israelites: Deut. 19:12; 21:8; 21:19-20; 22:15-19; 25: 5- 10; 27:1; Josh. 20: 4-5; Judges 8:14-16; 11:5-11; Ruth 4: 1-12; 1 Sam. 11:3; 16:4; 1Kings 21: 8-12; Ezra 10:14; Prov. 32:23. From these texts, it is evident that the city elders can serve in the following capacities:

- (i) blood redemption – Deut. 19:12-13; Num. 35:16-17; Josh. 20:1-5.
- (ii) expiation of murder by an unknown culprit – Deut. 21:1-9
- (iii) punish rebellious or disobedient sons – Deut. 21:18-21
- (iv) inflict penalty for adultery or defamation of a virgin – Deut. 22:13-21
- (v) address non-compliance with the levirate marriage law – Deut. 25:5-10
- (vi) involve in land transactions – Ruth 4:1-12
- (vii) function as representatives of their respective communities – 1Sam. 16:4-5
- (viii) responsible for law enforcement – Deut. 27:1.

In the first responsibility, the elders tend to appease the murdered person's family by delivering the slayer into its hand. In the second instance, the elders see to it that their town atones for a homicide committed within its borders. In the next two instances, the elders protect the family against a rebellious son and against defamation. In the fourth and fifth instances, the elders are concerned with preventing the extinctions of the family in the town. The last two instances centre on the elders representing their people in the community. No professional judgement is necessary in all the cases; elders presided over a case whose consequences are clear. The same applied to Ruth 4:2ff, where the elders only confirmed the act of levirate.

However, 'the judges' in the law of Deuteronomy have functions that are different from those of the elders. The judges act in connection with disputes (Deut. 17:8ff) that can not be solved by the local patriarchal representatives, but need a higher and more objective judicial authority. Disputes and controversies involve thorough investigation (Deut. 19: 18) which can be made only by qualified and professional people. These judges are nominated (Deut. 16:19) in contradistinction to the elders, whose dignity is as a rule hereditary. In only one case in Deuteronomy do the elders act together with the Judges: the case of unknown murder (Deut. 21: 1ff). The elders of the town nearest the spot where the corpse was found have to perform the expiation rite on behalf of their town.

There is little evidence that the structure and functions of Israelites city elders changed much over the centuries. The most significant change came when they were exiled to Assyria and Babylon, and during the subsequent Diaspora. Then, many Jews were transplanted to non-Jewish 'district' or 'quarters' where leading men of the Jewish community served as elders, with the community's religious life now revolving around the synagogue. Though the form of the societal structures of the cities in which they came to dwell were sometimes quite different from those of their past, the people still maintained old customs and beliefs in their new environment.

The Elders of the People or Country

In the city-state, as it existed in Canaan, the elders of the city were identical with the elders of the state. However, in Israel, both before and during the time of monarchy, the elders of the town and those of the people, country and congregation operated separately. Matters that concern the entire confederation or the nation were brought to the elders of the people; and after the division of the kingdom, they were brought to the elders of Israel and Judah, whereas the elders of the town dealt only with the local provincial problems. It is not known how the elders of the country were appointed, but it is possible that they were recruited from the city elders. One might argue that the monarchy had

deprived the elders of their power and authority, but this was not the case. Even as a powerful king, Ahab had to consult ‘the elders of the land’ before proclaiming war (1Kings 20:7). It is unnecessary to dedicate extensive discussion to the important roles that the elders of Israel and Judah played at the time of David (2Sam. 3: 17; 5:3; 17:4, 15). The elders cooperated with Elisha against the king (2 Kings 6: 32), and the elders of the land interfered in the trial of Jeremiah (Jer. 27:17). The ‘people of the land’ or the ‘people of Judah’ who took action when the dynasty was at stake seem to be identical with the elders of Judah.

Functions of the Elders of the People

- They are to represent the people in the sacred covenant and in the proclamation of the law (Ex. 19:7; 24:1, 9; Deut. 27:1; 29:9; 31:9; Josh 8:33; 24:1; cf 2 Kings 23:1)
- They are to appoint a leaders or king 1Sam. 8:4; Judges 11: 4-11
- They are to proclaim war Josh. 8:10; 2 Sam. 17:4-15; cf 1 Kings 20:7
- They are to conduct political negotiations and make agreements Exd. 3:16, 18:29; Num. 16:25; 2Sam. 3:17; 5:3
- They are to perform sacred ceremonies Exd. 12: 21; 18:12; Lev. 9:1; 1Sam. 4:3; 1Kings 8:1, 3; 1Chron. 16:25
- They are to act in times of national crisis Exd. 17:5-7; Josh.7:6; 1Sam. 4:3; 21:16

The elders held their meetings near the city gate (Deut. 21:19; 22:15; 25:7; Ruth 4: 1ff; Lam. 5:14), and more precisely, in the square located next to the gate (Job 29:7-8). In the desert, the assemblies were held ‘at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting’. The place of the assembly had also been called ‘the threshing floor’ (1 Kings 22:10 NIV) because of its smooth, stamped surface and its circular shape.

NATURE AND ROLES OF ELDERS IN YORUBA CONTEXT

There are vast number of considerable parallels between Israelite cultural tradition and that of the Yoruba people. These puzzling, but exciting, affinities had been presupposed and taken for granted by the contemporary readers of the bible. The similarities between Israelites cultural heritage and that of the Yoruba are acknowledged from the perspectives of religion, economics, politics, history, aesthetic, ethic, military and kingship. Thus, the Yoruba indigenous understanding of eldership and its chronological and sapiental roles is uniquely similar to that of the Israelites.

Eldership among the Yoruba People

The Yoruba word *agba*, which is translated as ‘elder’ is socially and philosophically interpreted from three ends: the ontological-supernatural, the chronological and mental-ethical evaluative. The ontological-supernatural explains the existence of certain people in the Yoruba community who are believed to possess supernatural power and are supersensible, capable of identifying what happens in the metaphysical realm. Adeboye described them as an assemblage of ancestral forces, witches and wizards and other spiritual agents that ruled the Yoruba universe, and whose powers exceeded those of ordinary mortals. These people are referred to as *agba* among the Yoruba, regardless of their chronological age. Because of their extraordinary nature, they could be consulted for solution in times of difficulties. When there is problem, especially the one that defiles all natural solutions, one could be encouraged thus: *To awon agba lo* (Go and consult the elders). Besides, in order to live a secured and a successful life, one could be advised thus: *Fi ori moa won agba leyin* (Walk closely with the elders). In the Yoruba thought system, offending these kinds of *agba* could greatly be consequential and therefore, people are often warned that: *Ma se te aso agba mole* (Don’t step on elder’s garment), meaning that one should not take such *agba* for granted. Being aware of the danger of offending these *agba*, the Yoruba people always say a prayer that: *O ko ni se awon agba* (May you not offend the elders). A young person that is found in this category will be addressed as *agba omo* (an elderly). This means a child that is possessed, having diabolic power. Also, *agba omo* can be used to refer to a young person, with highly mental and ethical abilities. However, this is different from *Omo Odo Agba* (a child of elders).

The second usage of the word *agba* has chronological implication. When the Yoruba people say: *Oju agba to jin o ni ohun to ri* (The sunken eye of an elder must have seen something), emphasis is on chronological age. Other Yoruba proverbs in reference to chronological age include: *B’omode ba laso bi agba, ko lakisia bi agba* (If a child has as many clothes as the elders, he cannot have as much rags); *Owo omode o to pepe t, ’agbalagbao wo keregbe* (The child’s hand does not reach up to the shelf while that of the elder does not enter into the gourd); *Agba to je ajeeweyin ni yoo ru igba re dele* (An elder that fails to leave the left-over (of meal) for the child will himself pack the empty plates), etc. This implies that the Yoruba people use the word *agba* for older people in the society. Similar Yoruba nomenclatures for *agba* are: *agbalagba* (elder), *arugbo* (aged person) and *abewu* (gray-haired).

The third usage of the word *agba* has to do with mental-ethical assessment. This explains the *agba* (elder) who are respected individual, identified by age and other natural qualities, which mark them out of their families,

communities, nations, religions and the world. These are the true elders and are given highest status in the community because they are respected because their lives are in the best tradition of the community. These *agba* are considered indispensable in the Yoruba societies; in line with this observation, some scholars have made a distinction between the ‘elders’ and the ‘older’ person, arguing for the possibility of being an older person but not truly being an elder. This position seems tenable and quite fascinating as it happens even in this contemporary time.

However, it should be noted that in the traditional Yoruba understanding of *agba*, every older person was expected to possess the attributive qualities of true elder. To the Yoruba people, wisdom, knowledge, perspective, discernment, insight and intellectual capabilities are the domains of aged people. Failure to display these qualities is considered abnormal, ridiculous and unwelcomed. That is why such a person will not be respected in the community, and can be ridiculously referred to as *Adagba-ma-gbon* (though aged but not wise), *Adagba-ma-danu* (though aged but matured), *Adagba-ma-kuro-larobo* (though aged but not childish), etc.

The Roles of the Yoruba Elders

Elders, among the Yoruba, are taken to be indispensable and the absence of their wisdom and roles can lead to total moral decay and non-adherence to law and order in the society. Hence, it is said that: *Agba ko si Ilu baje, bale ile ku ile daharo* (Without elderly people, communities and villages will collapse). In the Yoruba society, elders are seen as corrective instruments, as it is said among them that: *Agba kii wa loja ki ori omo titun o wo* (The elder in a market place would not allow a baby’s neck (at the back of the mother) to be wrongly placed). It is also said that: *Bi owo bar u omode loju, a si fun agba ka* (If a child is confused in the act of counting money, he will give it to the elder to count).

In the Yoruba world-view, the virtues and endowment of strength wisdom and experiences attached to the elders, especially the old person, are meant to help, support, guide or control the youths in a way that their exuberance will be judiciously curtailed and acceptable character be extolled through them in the society.

The sapiential roles of elders in traditional Yoruba communities are explicitly stated by Olayinka Ajomale (2007). Traditionally, according to him:

- The elderly persons head the family and the extended clan that dominates the Yoruba communities.
- They represent their families in any Council of Elders’ meetings where

decisions are taken to regulate and promote the general interest of citizens and to manage the affairs of their communities.

- The elders in the society carry out traditional responsibilities of guardians of the ancestral values; they are chief custodians of society's treasures and upholders of history, cultural values, customs, folklores, and wisdom.
- The elders settle disputes and conflicts arising from members of the family, based on their position, knowledge, skill, vision, experience and wisdom.
- They are considered to be custodians of justice and political institutions through which the society's orderliness and progress is sustained.
- Besides, older persons in traditional Yoruba societies have remained traditional orthodox medical and health service delivery agents, especially in the areas where primary health care is non-existent.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that, among the Yoruba people, elders are responsible for continually contemplating the good and the right things to do in the community. In line with their eldership status, they are not or should not be driven by personal desires, gains or individual rewards. They cannot be seduced, tempted or influenced; they eschew favourism, personal desires or selfish interest. In fact, this eldership status places them above any form of manipulation. Their singular goal is to guide and guarantee the corporate good and collective advancement of their communities. The judgement and decisions of elders are always consistent with the community's cultural integrity and directed towards truth and justice. In fact, just like in the Jewish culture (Prov. 15: 9-10), to have elders live with you, and for you to have available their daily guidance, is considered a great blessing and advantage. Being in the presence of an elder is even considered an honour.

ELDERSHIP AND MORALITY IN NIGERIA

The discerning mind will critically be disposed to concede to the fact that many social vices ascribed to the youths today, such as lying, fraud, extortion, sexual assault, cultism, fighting, killings, and other atrocities, are behavioural traits of contemporary adults. This bane of moral laxity in Nigerian societies has been noted by Paul Richard (2020) when he posited that 'Unfortunately, many of the role models of young people are setting bad examples.'

In moral development, parents are the first teachers and role models of their children. In the ancient times, it was the duty of parents to bring up their children ethically and in the knowledge of God. From the beginning, children

were taught to believe in personal success, defined in terms of family and community relationship and also in rewards and punishment. They were taught to report to their parents any kind of gesture by others and to show their parents any gift received. The child is also taught to be honest without being a tattletale. Parents also taught their children discipline, self-denial and deferred gratification.

Then, coming to the community at large, children were prepared to seek group survival through acquiring a sense of belonging and loyalty to the group, thereby consolidating what had been taught at family level. Generally, in traditional African education, high premium was placed on character training, which was seen as the pillar of education. Thus, it was an aberration for an adult member to remain unconcerned about matters relating to moral value inculcation, as such could inflict assault on the value of old-age eldership.

Now, in modern societies, adults are less enthusiastic about this. The attendant effect is that the human value of good life with wisdom behind it, which is an African organisational principle inherent in our values, norms, rules, and ontological cosmology that children are to learn from the adults, is now regarded as being archaic. Age-old self-discipline and self-respect are no more there as parents teach their children to lie at home and in the school; to lie to visitors and to their teachers, especially about their age. Today, elders abuse or insult one another, even in the presence of the young people; there is no more mutual respect at home and in the entire community. In school, teachers insult, castigate or use derogatory words on their contemporaries. Some teachers, particularly single Grade II, NCE, or OND ones, appear before their students indecently dressed.

In terms of discipline, adults today are not communally conscious, probably because the liberal and individualistic nature of their upbringing influence de-emphasised regard for cultural values and recognition of traditional authority and ways of life. Thus, their children mirror their parents by growing without solid home-based moral foundation, the absence of which is reflected in their indiscriminate copying of the standards and actions of Western youngsters, some of whom sue their parents - a taboo in African and biblical culture.

Africans, like ancient Israelites, believe in the potency of blessings and the efficacy of curses issued by a parent or elder; the spiritual implication of both cannot be reversed by any court room. That was why in those days, people tried as much as possible to warn their children against disrespecting an elderly person. But many of today's adults are not bothered, as some even poison the tender hearts of their children with sacrilegious statements or acts; and this partially explains why youths today are morally deficient.

One Yoruba proverb says: *Ogede n baje a ni n pon* (A plantain is decaying while we refer to it as ripe). Whatever mentality we choose to cherish, be it modern, liberal, popular or techno-scientific, Nigerians should realise that the fate of any morally deficient society is doom. Nigerian adults should be self-conscious and self-disciplined; they should be fair and firm, and lead morally upright and transparent lives that would make them good role models for the youths.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper addressed the problem of moral decadence in contemporary Nigeria and the possibility of harnessing a solution using Israelite and Yoruba eldership traditions as a template. The work examined the place, qualifications and functions of elders in ancient Israel, with particular reference to their enviable lifestyles at family and communal levels. The paper also explored the Yoruba indigenous understanding of eldership as well as the traditional roles of elders. It focused on the numerous lessons to learn from studying both cultures.

Based on the study, the work recommends that:

- (i) Issues of moral laxity in contemporary societies should be addressed from eldership perspectives. The problem should not be blamed on the youths, but on the present generation of adults since present-day youths are offshoots of present-day adults and the modern social systems they have put in place.
- (ii) The present generation of elders should be self-conscious and self-respecting. Older persons should try as much as possible to live in such a way that will make them positively influence the younger generation.
- (iii) Older persons should enthusiastically cherish moral value inculcation. Character training requires collective efforts; it must not be left for only the parents of the children but every organ of the society, including schools and communal groups, should play their own roles for the overall good of the society.
- (iv) Truly corrective and character-moulding moral discipline, rather than overzealous and wicked corporal punishment that inflicts indelible physical and psychological marks on the children, should be enforced in the home, schools and other areas that cater to the healthy development of the youths.
- (v) Adults should always bear in mind that in spite of the technological achievements of the modern time, the fate of a morally deficient society is doom. One Yoruba proverb says: *Agba ti o kehunso, yoo ketan sare* (An elder who does not issue a shout of warning will run zigzag when problem comes).

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Drug Abuse and Crime among Youths: The Bane of South Eastern Nigeria

Chinonso Chinaemerem Adikuru & Chibugo Judith Okara

Abstract

Drug abuse and crime among youths are prevalent in South East Nigeria. Drug-related crimes committed in the region include burglary, cultism, murder, armed robbery, arson, rape, kidnapping, vandalism and ritual killing. Social analysts have identified, among others, the general decline in the promotion and observance of high moral and social values, peer pressure, youth unemployment, over-exposure to social media enticements, and sheer idleness, as some of the major reasons why drug abuse and crime among youths are the bane of South Eastern Nigeria. The paper is anchored on the attribution theory developed by Firtz Heider in 1958 and adopted library research as secondary data. The researcher also investigated the factors influencing drug abuse and crime among the youths in the South East. To control the spread of drug abuse among youths in the region, and crimes associated with it, the paper recommends the following: introduction of a massive anti-drug abuse and anti-crime awareness programmes in schools and the media; intensification or introduction of drug education programme in the school system, especially in tertiary institutions, in order to enlighten youths on the adverse effects of drug abuse.

Keywords: drug abuse, crime, youth, South East Nigeria

Introduction

Adolescence and the transition to adulthood are sometimes characterized by the urge to be independent from parents and older adults and the desire to seek close ties with peers and friends. This age range is also typified by the tendency to experiment with new ideas and life styles, and to make choices that may not be conventional or ultimately right. These experimentations, in many cases, lead to uncertain outcomes that lure some youths into the use of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol as means of escaping those situations. The excessive usage of such drugs and addictive substances results into drug abuse.

One of the major problems affecting the whole world today especially the

youths in school and out of school is the issue of drug abuse. It is a problem that affects all races both in the developing and developed nations. It has a number of negative effects on the abusers, and these include disruption of their academic, social, psychological and physiological development, all of which hinder them economically and make them, even as adults, financially dependent on others.

Drug abuse, also called substance abuse, refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain (Ananya, 2021). Drug abuse can also be seen as an illness characterized by a destructive pattern of using a substance that leads to significant problems or distress, including tolerance to or withdrawal from the substance, as well as other problems that use of the substance can cause for the sufferer, either socially or in terms of their work or school performance. The type of drugs abused could be legal drugs, such as alcohol and tobacco, or illegal and more dangerous drugs, such as cannabis, cocaine, crystal meth or methamphetamine, otherwise known as *Mkpurummiri* in the Igbo parlance.

According to Muanya (2021), the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) launched the War against Drug Abuse (WADA) in order to encourage Nigerians to actively participate in the war against drug abuse, that was taking a frightening dimension in the country. Experts have, at various fora, warned that drug abuse had risen to emergency levels in the country. The abuse of illicit drugs among youths in the country, in particular, has been identified as having diverse and devastating effects on the society. Aside from reports of chronic health conditions of the abusers, experts have also established a nexus between the menace and rising incidences of violent crimes.

Drugs can be found all around us and no country can claim that drugs do not affect their societies (Rogers and McCee, 2003; Mason and Henningfield, 2001). According to Njuki (2004), there are so many issues confronting Africa as a continent that drug abuse is not given the attention it deserves. He further reiterated that both illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse are increasing in the continent. For instance, cannabis, methaqualone, heroin and alcohol are included among drugs used across the African continent which has become the transit zone in international drug trafficking. Kaven (2003) described drug abuse as a global problem. He was of the opinion that drug abuse encourages socio-economic and political instability, undermines sustainable development and hampers efforts to reduce crime and poverty.

Drug abuse reports in Nigeria initially dwelt only on the use of cannabis, popularly called Indian hemp (Oli, 2015). Contrary to popular perception, the concept of drug abuse is not narrowed down to persons injecting themselves

with substances or sniffing cocaine. An individual could be abusing drugs or substances without knowing it. Many people today engage in self prescription, which is, going to the chemist shop to buy drugs without the doctor's prescription. Drug abuse is a common phenomenon in Nigeria. A drug, generally speaking, is any substance of vegetable, animal or mineral origin or any preparation or admixture thereof, which is used for internal and external application to the human body in the treatment of diseases. Drugs are substances used for medicinal purposes either alone or in a mixture (Akindele, 1995). When drugs are used according to their prescriptions, the desired therapeutic response will be elicited. But when the drugs were not prescribed or used according to the prescriptions, they usually have adverse effect on the individual and may even worsen the health condition.

The problem of drug abuse poses a significant threat to the social, health, and economic fabrics of families, societies and nations (Giade, 2012; Oshodi, Aina & Onajole, 2010). Almost every country in the world is affected, with one or more drugs being abused by its citizens (UNODC, 2007). The prevalence of drug abuse globally has brought problems such as increase in violence and crimes, increase in Hepatitis B and C virus, increase in HIV/AIDS diseases, collapse of the abusers' veins and collapse of the social structure (UNODC, 2007; Oshodi, Aina, & Onajole, 2010).

Horrible youthful activities are widespread in Nigeria to the extent that they have been giving a lot of concern to the society, government and other stakeholders in the country. In primary schools, peers engage in organized crimes and disrupt normal academic programmes. In secondary schools and most Nigerian universities, the activities of secret cults are known to be constant sources of threat to lives and property. Outside the campuses, a lot of ritual killings are taking place (Abudu, 2008; Oshodi, Aina, & Onajole, 2010). Drug abuse among Nigerian youths is said to be the result of the moral bankruptcy and corruption of the present "wasted generation" noted for its unprecedented loss of societal values and ideals. The situation now appears to be such that no one can claim to be ignorant of the dangerous trend drug abuse in the country is taking (Abudu, 2008).

Cannabis, which is usually known as marijuana or Indian hemp, is the most abused psychotropic drug in Nigeria and it also has a criminal stigma. The drug problem escalated with the use of other drugs like amphetamines and barbiturates (Akindele, 1994). Research has shown that students take these drugs during examination period; long-distance drivers and labourers began to abuse the use of amphetamines which they usually obtain without medical prescription. Drug abuse problem includes the use of tranquilizers to control emotional problems. Substance use disorders, unfortunately, occur quite commonly in people who also have a severe mental illness. Individuals with

dual diagnoses are also at higher risk of being non-compliant with treatment. Drug abuse has continued to be a strategy adopted by youths to cope with various socio-economic and psychological problems. Considering the fact that youths are a vulnerable population, it is crucial for the international community to address this matter.

Methodology

This study obtained relevant information and resources from secondary data, mainly library research. Articles and studies relevant to this paper were obtained and evaluated.

Literature Review

Prevalence of Drug Abuse and Crime

The age brackets of 18-35 are those mostly involved in drug abuse (Kumar, 2022). This set of young people abuse drugs most, due to impulsive acts associated with this group of individuals. Alcohol (61.5%) and cigarettes (54.5%) are the most commonly overused drugs or substances. This is probably because, despite limitations on usage for children and before driving, these substances are permitted in Nigeria (Olanrewaju et al., 2022). There are some underlying reasons why young people engage in drug abuse. Lack of education and awareness of the effects has led to greater number of adolescents and young adults taking to drug abuse. Most abuss arise out of recreational use of drugs and addictive substances. The majority of young people who use drugs do so due to peer pressure, incompetent monitoring by parents and teachers, and poor family upbringing (Lumun & Joshua, 2022). Due to its impact on the youth and the country as a whole, drug abuse has gained international attention. Although young people are meant to be the driving force behind development and change, drug usage has left some of them irreparably damaged (Okafor, 2019). Adolescents need to be properly educated about risks associated with drug abuse (Ofiaeli, Udigwe, Ndukwu & Emelumadu 2022). The problem is most prevalent among young individuals, who frequently lack knowledge of the inherent dangers of the abused substance. Many of them engaged in drug usage due to disappointment, poverty, lack of parental supervision, peer pressure, and other factors (So, 2020).

Drug Abuse and Crime

The relationship between drug abuse and violent crimes, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, and cult activities, has exacerbated the already fragile

security situation in South East Nigeria. Drug abuse and drug-related crimes have detrimental consequences on the public's health, safety, and economic stability. Numerous health hazards, such as overdose, infectious diseases, and mental health issues, are issues faced by people who are addicted. Families experience psychological distress, financial strain, and social censure. Communities struggle with rising crime rate, overburdened healthcare infrastructure, and a decline in production. Drugs are abused on the streets and in university campuses. Students of secondary schools and those of tertiary institutions in Nigeria use drugs; it is not just limited to street youths (Chikere & Mayowa, 2011). Drug addicts frequently steal, commit robberies, and participate in other criminal activities as a means of funding their addiction, thereby endangering the safety of the general public and the community. Drug abuse is the root of most criminal activities, including armed robberies, kidnappings, banditry, terrorist attacks, and even public looting (Anyanwu, Eneushike, & Owa-Onibiyo, 2022). Drug abuse and crimes have taken root and spread throughout South East Nigeria, posing a serious danger to the social cohesion, economic stability, and general well-being of the area.

Drug abuse and crime are intertwined, and this leads to negative effects, causing instability and loss of civic values. This menace has a significant impact on not only individuals but also families and the society at large. Drug addiction is a significant issue in terms of social, personal, and public health, and its international nature has made it a major problem across the world.

Theoretical Framework

This paper applies Attribution theory as a framework. Attribution theory was propounded by psychologist Fritz Heider in 1958. Later, Jones et al (1972) and Weiner (1974) focused his attribution theory on achievement. The theory examines the cognitive and social processes underlying the attributional process and its impact on the individual's perception, judgments and subsequent behaviours. This theoretical framework aims to elucidate the factors that influence attributional processes and the consequences of these attributions. Attribution theory reflects how individuals decode events and happenings around them and how it affects their behaviour and thinking. Attribution theory tries to give reasons why people do certain things or actions. It assumes a motivation force for an individual action. It is about attributing reason or causes to an action.

Heider's ideas emphasized two main types of attributions: dispositional (internal causes) and situational (external causes) attributions.

1. **Dispositional Attribution:** This type of attribution assigns the cause of behavior to some internal characteristic or trait of a person. When explaining the behavior of others, we tend to attribute it to enduring internal factors, such as personality traits. This tendency is known as the fundamental attribution error.

2. **Situational Attribution:** Situational attribution involves assigning the cause of behavior to external factors or circumstances beyond a person's control. When explaining our own behaviour, we often make external attributions, considering situational or environmental factors. Situational attributions take into account the influence of the context or situation on behaviour.

Jones and Davis developed the Correspondent Inference Theory, which helps explain the process of making internal attributions. According to this theory, we are more likely to make internal attributions when we see a correspondence between someone's behavior and their motives.

Going by attribution theory, there is need to acknowledge the causes of drug abuse and related crimes. Attribution theory gives reasons why individuals indulge in a particular behaviour and actions; it enquires into the causes of these in our society. Attribution theory suggests that drug abuse can be attributed to multiple factors, including individual characteristics, social influence such as peer pressure and environmental factors. Individual characteristics such as low socio-economic status in cases of unemployment or low income earners, low educational background, and poor coping skills are associated with an increased risk of drug abuse. These factors can contribute to a sense of hopelessness and limited opportunities, leading individuals to turn to drugs as a means of escape or pleasure.

Conclusion

Epidemiological studies have revealed that drug abuse is a significant public health concern in Nigeria. The prevalence of drug abuse among students and youths is alarming, with various substances being commonly abused. The availability of drugs from different sources contributes to the widespread problem. Poor socio-economic factors and low educational background are identified as risk factors. Despite the presence of drug laws, policies, and strategies, the burden of drug abuse persists. To address this issue, it is crucial to involve the community, government, and religious bodies in preventive measures that target high-risk populations and sources of drugs. Continued research and comprehensive interventions are necessary to combat drug abuse and related crimes in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The recommendations here are as follows:

- Addressing this challenge requires collaborative efforts from the community, government, religious bodies, and other stakeholders.
- Prevention measures should specifically target youths, students, identified sources of drugs, reasons for drug abuse, and associated risk factors. Implementing effective preventive interventions and increasing public awareness about the consequences of drug abuse are crucial steps toward reducing the burden.
- Control of the spread of drug abuse among youths through awareness programmes in the media should be intensified.
- Drug education should be introduced in the school system, especially the tertiary institutions, in order to enlighten youths on the adverse effects of drug abuse.

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Charles Peirce's Theory of Enquiry: An Epistemological Analysis

Innocent Ngangah

Abstract

This epistemological analysis posits that Charles Peirce's pragmatism is not confined to the "determination of the meaning of terms" but is also, and more fundamentally, a theory and tool of enquiry. To substantiate this view and distinguish pragmatism from some dominant antithetical viewpoints that predate it, the paper broadly explores the origin, unique features, and practical relevance of Peirce's classical brand. The study concludes by pointing out the inherent contradictions in the views of John Dewey, Peirce's contemporary and the first notable philosopher to query the heuristic value of Peirce's pragmatism.

Keywords: Charles Peirce, pragmatism, epistemology, meaning

1. Genesis of Pragmatism

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914) is generally regarded as the father of pragmatism although William James, his contemporary and one of the major philosophers he influenced, was the first to use the term in print. A polymathic sage, Peirce's interests, thoughts and practical engagements cut across the fields of science, mathematics, semiotics, and philosophy. He enriched philosophy, especially logic, with the principles he derived from science. So influential were his contributions to philosophy that, although he held very brief academic employment and largely lived a reclusive life, he was universally credited with founding the United States only home-spurn philosophical tradition, the pragmatic movement.

Peirce wrote and published many scientific articles, including the two seminal works of his "Illustrations of the Logic of Science" series, namely, "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear". James regarded these two publications as the foundational pillars of pragmatism. Peirce published no book during his lifetime. These two theoretical foundations, upon which James,

Dewey and other proponents of the movement have built, form our primary texts of reference in this dissertation. Hundreds of his manuscripts were unpublished at the time of his death in 1914, and these have been gathered into six volumes by Harvard University and published as *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Hartshorne and Weiss 1974), thenceforth the *Collected Papers* or simply CP. The fifth volume is dedicated to his papers on pragmatism.

Pragmatism was first proposed by Peirce as a principle and account of meaning in 1870 but his formulation was published later in his earlier-mentioned article, “How to Make Your Ideas Clear”. The key point of this article is that action validates concept – there must be a practical end to any concept or mental object before it can become meaningful. Otherwise, such an object or concept is meaningless. In other words, the extent to which a proposition or ideology can satisfactorily work in practice is the extent of its theoretical validity. In effect, impractical ideas should not be accepted as valid ideas.

Peirce’s thesis spurred a cross-continental movement after his more visible contemporary and Harvard professor, William James, took the idea to the centre stage of scholarly discourse in an address he delivered at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1894. In that paper, “Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results,” James became the first person to use the term “pragmatism” in print but insisted that the term had been coined decades earlier by his close friend and reclusive philosopher, Charles Peirce.

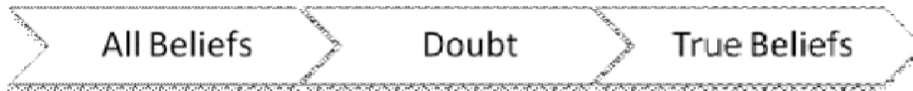
Etymologically, “pragmatism” is traced to the Greek words, *πρᾶγμα*, which stands for *pragma* (“a thing, a fact”), and to *πράσσω* or *prassō* (“to pass over, to practise, to achieve”). In view of Peirce’s elevation of practice as the validating end of theory, “pragmatism” is a very apt term for his formulation, and it is perhaps this linkage which has made “pragmaticism,” his later-preferred term, very rarely used by others.

2. Real Doubt versus Cartesian Doubt

The nucleus of Peirce’s pragmatic philosophy and its primary distinguishing factor is his position regarding the role and nature of doubt as a trigger of philosophical, and indeed all, enquiries. He was not the first to assign a philosophical role to doubt. Earlier philosophers, notably René Descartes (1596-1650), had recognized doubt or doubting as a mental pre-requisite for a systematic investigation of truth. The fundamental difference Peirce made was his anti-Cartesian re-definition of the nature of doubt.

Cartesian doubt, as a methodological process, questions already-held beliefs in order to arrive at beliefs one could be certain about. In other words, Descartes’ position is that one should be skeptical about one’s beliefs, thoughts and ideas

as a systematic route towards determining which of them may be accepted as genuine truth. Cartesian skepticism amounts to a universal questioning of all beliefs. To help us distinguish Cartesian from Peircian doubt (discussed below), let us compress Descartes' four-step technique into the following basic Chevron process:



Note that "true beliefs," sifted after systematic doubting of "all beliefs," are still arrowed towards further enquiry. In the Cartesian model, there is no absolute truth. Descartes' methodological skepticism questions all beliefs in order to arrive at basic or true beliefs which themselves are subject to further doubt in the service of further knowledge.

This model dominated Western philosophical thought before Peirce's seminal articles, "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" made the distinction between verbal or hyperbolic doubt and real doubt and placed belief at the end of every enquiry rather than at its beginning. Peirce argued that enquiry should depend on real doubt, not on verbal disputations over belief. As he put it, "the action of thought is excited by the irritation of doubt, and ceases when belief is attained; so that the production of belief is the sole function of thought." (Peirce 1878:286-302) For Peirce, belief and doubt do not necessarily have religious connotation; rather, he uses both terms "to designate the starting of any question, no matter how small or how great, and the resolution of it." (Peirce 1878:286-302)

While Descartes sees belief as the instigator of doubt, Peirce sees doubt as the producer of belief. This Peircean view is energized by these three properties Peirce ascribes to belief:

First, it is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say for short, a habit. As it appeases the irritation of doubt, which is the motive for thinking, thought relaxes, and comes to rest for a moment when belief is reached. (Peirce 1878:286-302)

Putting Peirce's position in comparative relief, we may represent his methodological process of enquiry with the same Chevron illustration we had earlier used in relation to Descartes. From the foregoing, we may represent Peirce's own Chevron graphic thus:



Although Peirce avers that "the action of thought is excited by the irritation of

doubt, and ceases when belief is attained,” (Peirce 1878:286-302) this cessation is only temporal, as belief sways future thinking, and not a permanent state of rest. His “thought at rest” is thus, in a sense, thought on recess. Peirce’s explanation:

since belief is a rule for action, the application of which involves further doubt and further thought, at the same time that it is a stopping-place, it is also a new starting-place for thought. That is why I have permitted myself to call it thought at rest, although thought is essentially an action. (Peirce 1878:286-302)

Compare this with the Cartesian endless questioning of all beliefs and it would appear that both methodologies regard thought as a continuous exercise. However, there is a remarkable difference here. For Peirce, “The final upshot of thinking is the exercise of volition” (Peirce 1878:286-302) while for Descartes, it is the exercise of doubt.

This brings us to the distinction between Cartesian doubt and Peircean doubt. Descartes’ view is that all beliefs which cannot be justified by logic should be subject to doubt. Of interest here is his use of himself to illustrate this view. In his *Principles of Philosophy* (first published in Latin in 1644), he subjected himself to doubt, thereby doubting his very existence, but arrived at his well-known philosophical proposition, “*Cogito ergo sum*,” Latin for “I think, therefore I am.” In other words, according to Descartes, we “cannot doubt of our existence while we doubt...” (Stehr and Grundmann, 2005)

Doubt for Descartes is an exploratory mental exercise, an intangible game of logic. For Peirce, doubt is a living reality: “...the mere putting of a proposition into the interrogative form does not stimulate the mind to any struggle after belief. There must be a real and living doubt, and without this all discussion is idle.” (Peirce 1878:286-302)

Peirce, thus, brought doubt down to earth. Doubt in Peirce’s philosophy is thought that generates a distinct belief or cause of action; it is conceptually result-driven and, in effect, tangible or real. As Peirce put it, “...every stimulus to action is derived from perception; ...every purpose of action is to produce some sensible result. Thus, we come down to what is tangible and conceivably practical, as the root of every real distinction of thought...” (Peirce 1878:286-302) If two doubts cannot be distinguished in this respect, the presumed differences between them are only verbal or sophistic and in practical terms non-existent. According to Peirce, “Our idea of anything is our idea of its sensible effects; and if we fancy that we have any other we deceive ourselves and mistake a mere sensation accompanying the thought for a part of the thought itself.” (Peirce 1878:286-302)

For Descartes, the immediate use of thinking is logic; for Peirce, the immediate use of thinking is to generate a practical effect or a cause of action. Herein lies the fundamental difference between both philosophers. Peirce's action-oriented doubt gave rise to his pragmatism, which, in part, resulted from his further thinking on the thoughts of Alexander Bain.

3. Influence of Alexander Bain on Peirce's Pragmatism

Charles Peirce's most significant remote influence was his father, Benjamin Peirce, an eminent Harvard mathematics professor and astronomer, a man who contributed immensely to the development of American sciences in the 19th century. Charles Peirce was also influenced by earlier philosophers, notably Whately and Kant. However, Alexander Bain was the man who exerted the single most significant immediate influence on Peirce as far as his pragmatic philosophy is concerned. Peirce never met Alexander Bain (1818-1903), the Scottish philosopher, psychologist, mathematician and scientist, but was greatly awed by his ideas, particularly his definition of belief as "that upon which a man is prepared to act." When Peirce encountered this definition through Nicholas St. John Green, a fellow member of The Metaphysical Club, it illuminated his, as at then, crystallizing thoughts on the nature of doubt and belief.

Peirce openly acknowledged Bain's powerful influence and its direct role in the formulation of pragmatism. Understanding what Bain had said, which Peirce found so influential, is critical in understanding Peirce's pragmatism. The core of Peirce's pragmatism is that action is an inseparable component of belief. In other words, what you are not disposed to act upon is what you do not believe, for belief is a disposition to act. This idea came from Bain, the founder of the influential journal, *Mind*, and the European philosopher Green and the others often talked about during the meetings of The Metaphysical Club.

In particular, he [Nicholas St. John Green] often urged the importance of applying Bain's definition of belief, as "that upon which a man is prepared to act." From this definition, pragmatism is scarce more than a corollary; so that I am disposed to think of him as the grandfather of pragmatism. (Peirce 1907)

Within the context of his time, Bain's definition was revolutionary. Even today, that definition remains practically relevant. In his *Emotions and the Will*, Bain expatiated further on this view of belief Peirce found so thrilling:

It remains to consider the line of demarcation between belief and mere conceptions involving no belief – there being instances where the one seems to shade into the other. It seems to me impossible to draw this line without referring to action, as the only test, and the essential import of the state of conviction even in cases the farthest removed in appearance from

any actions of ours, there is no other criterion. (Bain 1859:595)

Before Bain and Peirce, belief was generally regarded as an “occurent” thing – a 14th century notion that regarded it as something that occurs in the mind without a necessary relationship with or validation in reality. Hume’s definition of belief was typical of this. According to Engel, Hume defined belief as “the particular vividness of an idea in the mind”. (Engel 2016) Cardinal Newman also shared the view that belief was a mere mental affirmation. This remained a dominant view whose decline could partly be traced to Alexander Bain’s 1859 treatise on the subject. Exploring from his background in physiology and psychology, Bain sowed the seed of correlation between thought and action when he wrote:

It will be readily admitted that the state of mind called belief is, in many cases, a concomittant of our activity. But I mean to go farther than this, and to affirm that belief has no meaning except in reference to our actions; the essence, or import of it is such as to place it under the region of the will. (Bain 1859:568)

Bain’s powerful insights, such as “belief has no meaning except in reference to our actions” and belief is “that which a man is prepared to act upon” became mental catalysts that stirred Peirce’s genius and led him to formulate pragmatism in 1873.

4. Peirce’s Theory of Enquiry

Charles Peirce’s theory of enquiry is sketched out in his *The Fixation of Belief*, the first of his two major texts about the topic. Here, we shall extrapolate four key areas of that work which altogether give a fair picture of Peirce’s theory and process of enquiry.

To lead up to what the role of enquiry should be, in Peirce’s point of view, we will be examining the object of reasoning, the place of doubt and belief in enquiry, and methods of fixing belief. The latter is uniquely important since Peirce holds that the aim of all enquiry is the fixation of belief.

a. Object of Reasoning

Peirce began his *The Fixation of Belief* by giving us an overview of the march of knowledge from the medieval times when whoever was in authority defined knowledge or imposed his own brand of reasoning on everyone under his dominion. That knowledge emanated from subjective experience was the taunted notion but Francis Bacon in his *Novum Organum* argued that experience should be subjected to open verification.

Even “scientists” who were mostly chemists relied on interior experience. The

chemist, Lavoisier, broke away from this, and ushered in a tradition that relied on calculated findings:

The old chemist's maxim had been, "Lege, lege, lege, labora, ora, et relegere." (Latin for "Read, read, read, work, pray, and read again.") Lavoisier's method was not to read and pray, but to dream that some long and complicated chemical process would have a certain effect, to put it into practice with dull patience, after its inevitable failure, to dream that with some modification it would have another result, and to end by publishing the last dream as a fact: his way was to carry his mind into his laboratory. (Peirce 1877:1-15, brackets mine)

Lavoisier shifted the emphasis from the manipulation of words to the manipulation of substances. Lavoisier's physical experimentation wetted the ground for Charles Darwin's studies in molecular movements, which he used to clarify his biological variation theory.

Against this historical background, Peirce urges that we should not form beliefs that cannot be logically defended, even when we feel such beliefs to be valid. Valid reasoning is determined via validly-reasoned principles. According to him,

The object of reasoning is to find out, from the consideration of what we already know, something else which we do not know. Consequently, reasoning is good if it be such as to give a true conclusion from true premises, and not otherwise. Thus, the question of validity is purely one of fact and not of thinking. A being the facts stated in the premises and B being that concluded, the question is, whether these facts are really so related that if A were B would generally be. If so, the inference is valid; if not, not. It is not in the least the question whether, when the premises are accepted by the mind, we feel an impulse to accept the conclusion also. (Peirce 1877)

b. The Place of Doubt and Belief in Enquiry

According to Peirce, doubt is the driving force of enquiry while belief is its destination. Doubt and belief are, thus, beneficial but differ in three respects. One, "our beliefs guide our desires and shape our actions." (Peirce 1877) Our doubts don't. Two, the sensation of belief establishes habit: the sensation of doubt questions habit, thereby triggering enquiry. Three, doubt dissatisfies while belief satisfies:

Doubt is an uneasy and dissatisfied state from which we struggle to free ourselves and pass into the state of belief; while the latter is a calm and satisfactory state which we do not wish to avoid, or to change to a belief in anything else. On the contrary, we cling tenaciously, not merely to believing, but to believing just what we do believe. (Peirce 1877).

And the proof of what we do believe is the action it leads us to take, for “the whole function of thought is to produce habits of action.” (Peirce 1878) In this context, not only present habits matter, would-be habits also matter: “...the identity of a habit depends on how it might lead us to act, not merely under such circumstances as are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be.” (Peirce 1878)

In other words, practice distinguishes meaning, whether such practice takes place in the present or the future. Once there is a possibility or potential of difference in practice, two ideas, no matter how seemingly similar, amount to separate ideas. If there is no clear distinction in the practice they produce, no two ideas, even if so regarded, are really different.

Insisting that “the settlement of opinion” is the “sole object” of enquiry, Peirce posits that as soon as a firm belief is reached we are entirely satisfied irrespective of the veracity of the opinion.

The important point being made here is that belief is not necessarily about something being true but about its acceptance as truth with the evidence of practical effect on those who so believe:

...the sole object of inquiry is the settlement of opinion. We may fancy that this is not enough for us, and that we seek, not merely an opinion, but a true opinion. But put this fancy to the test, and it proves groundless; for as soon as a firm belief is reached we are entirely satisfied, whether the belief be true or false. And it is clear that nothing out of the sphere of our knowledge can be our object, for nothing which does not affect the mind can be the motive for mental effort. The most that can be maintained is, that we seek for a belief that we shall think to be true... That the settlement of opinion is the sole end of inquiry is a very important proposition. It sweeps away, at once, various vague and erroneous conceptions of proof. (Peirce 1877:1-15)

Doubt cannot deliver such conclusive satisfaction. “The irritation of doubt” triggers a “struggle to attain belief.” It is this struggle that Peirce terms enquiry. So, summarily, enquiry is the struggle to move from the irritation of doubt to the satisfying state of belief. As mentioned above, the end of enquiry may be true or false but remains the end as long as we have arrived at a settled opinion; for we are not motivated by the truth since the proof that an opinion is true or false lies outside the mind and, therefore, cannot affect the mind.

Peirce asserts that this position renders false three conceptions of proof, namely, (i) the argument that enquiry begins with someone posing any question he likes, (ii) the theory that enquiry is about the search for certainty even regarding issues over which no doubt is cast, and (iii) the theory that once everyone is convinced about a matter, enquiry about that matter may continue.

(Peirce 1877:1-15)

c. Methods of Fixing Belief

Peirce concludes “The Fixation of Belief” by examining four methods of fixing belief with a view to determining which of them is the most effective. The first method he considers is the “method of tenacity” (Peirce 1877). Here, he argues that our instinctive distaste for an undecided state of mind makes us default to views we already hold, particularly those we find agreeable. Belief, however, cannot be successfully fixed through such tenacious hold on already-held beliefs as we can be pressurized by the opinions of others to change our mind. Thus, the method of tenacity is effectual for fixing belief.

The second method Peirce examined is the “method of authority.” (Peirce 1877). The method of authority, as a means of fixing belief, swings attention from the individual to the beliefs of social institutions. Commonly-held beliefs, in spite of being socially imposed or regulated, have proved to be more lasting than beliefs fixed through the method of tenacity. The downside of this method is that not all beliefs can be socially fixed and people may change their mind when they discover that beliefs communally-held elsewhere are different or better than those of their own communities.

The third method of fixing belief is the “a priori method” (Peirce 1877). This is an inductive method that is based largely on sentiment. Though superior to the two earlier methods, the a priori method of fixing belief is subject to change when the taste or sentiment of the individual changes. It is thus very unreliable. Moreover, when individuals change environments and are exposed to intuitions different from their earlier ones, they may doubt their previously-held assumptions and, to resolve that doubt, there might be an abandonment of earlier beliefs in preference for new ones. So, the a priori method is not a satisfactory method of fixing belief.

It is relevant to note that the above three methods relied, in different ways, on thinking, and yet proved ineffective for fixing belief. It is, therefore, necessary that a method hinged on “some external permanency,” on “something upon which our thinking has no effect” (Peirce 1877) should be found as a more objective and effective way of fixing belief. For this desirable method to be objective, it must be such that any individual can adopt it and replicate the same result. This is the method Peirce calls “the scientific method” (Peirce 1877). Through experimentation and experience, it effectively erases our doubts by investigating external data that cannot be falsified by human emotion. The scientific method is superior to the other three methods and the impressive successes human beings have recorded over the years via the scientific method affirms its superiority as a method of fixing belief. In

addition, the scientific method, unlike the three methods earlier considered, has the capacity to prove itself right or wrong, to detect in its process or outcome bad reasoning or good reasoning. The scientific method of fixing belief, though, is not superior to others in every respect.

d. Peirce's Pragmatic Epistemology

The foundations, scope, and validity of Peirce's pragmatism are laid out in his writings, "The Fixation of Belief" and "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." Much of the foundational propositions are made in the former while the latter publication amplified and expatiated upon the core issues to crystallize Peirce's three grades of clarity. Having earlier examined Peirce's thesis as presented in "The Fixation of Belief," our focus here shall be on those sections of "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" that we have not yet touched on but which are essential in building the central argument of this study.

e. Of Clearness and Obscurity

Peirce takes on the issue of clearness, distinctness or obscurity of ideas in the first section of "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." Of this he says:

A clear idea is defined as one which is so apprehended that it will be recognized wherever it is met with, and so that no other will be mistaken for it. If it fails of this clearness, it is said to be obscure... A distinct idea is defined as one which contains nothing which is not clear. (Peirce 1878)

To distinctly understand an idea, he says, there is need to define it, for "an idea is distinctly apprehended...when we can give a precise definition of it, in abstract terms" (Peirce 1878). While definitions may teach us nothing new, they enable us to set our ideas and beliefs apart – to clarify them. An unclear idea breeds confusion, when not highly misleading. Clarity of thought, therefore, is a much higher goal than distinctness of thought.

Dwelling further on the subject of obscurity, Peirce points out two forms of deceptions obscurity could give rise to. One is the tendency to mistake the sensation arising from our mental clutter for a character of the object we are thinking about, with the possible effect of wrongfully attributing mysterious qualities to the object. Another form of deception is in mistaking a mere difference in the way the same ideas are expressed as a basis for treating them as different ideas. Grammatical vagueness does not amount to inconsistency in the nature or quality of an object.

f. Peirce's Concept of Reality

Peirce describes reality as "those characteristics that are independent of what anybody may think them to be" (Peirce 1878). In his view, only

experimentation and experience can distinguish and prove such characteristics. But certain experiences cannot be replicated via experiment. Would that make them unreal? Such considerations might have led Peirce to clarify his tentative definition:

...we may define the real as that whose characters are independent of what anybody may think them to be. But, however satisfactory such a definition may be found, it would be a great mistake to suppose that it makes the idea of reality perfectly clear. Here, then, let us apply our rules. According to them, reality, like every other quality, consists in the peculiar sensible effects which things partaking of it produce. The only effect which real things have is to cause belief, for all the sensations which they excite emerge into consciousness in the form of beliefs. (Peirce 1878)

If belief is the experiential end of reality, are all the things people believe in, therefore, real? Are real things the only things that cause belief? If not, there is need to be more specific in isolating the key element(s) or factor(s) that prequalify a thing as real. Peirce, below, brings in that missing element – the imperative of investigative knowledge – in his, one might say, final definition of reality. As he puts it,

The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real. That is the way I would explain reality. (Peirce 1878)

Of critical importance is the observation that “reality is independent, not necessarily of thought in general, but only of what you or I or any finite number of men may think about it” (Peirce 1878). In other words, what anyone outside the bracket of “all who investigate” thinks about the reality or otherwise of an object amounts to dispensable opinion. Notice should be taken that shallow investigation is not the intendment of Peirce here; rather, he insists on “investigation carried sufficiently far” (Peirce 1878).

g. Peirce’s Calibration of Belief

In Peirce’s concept of reality, discussed above, we noted that belief is the experiential end of reality. In other words, belief, when based on reality, is synonymous with reality. It is within this context that Peirce’s gradation of belief, stated below, also amounts to his calibration of reality. Peirce:

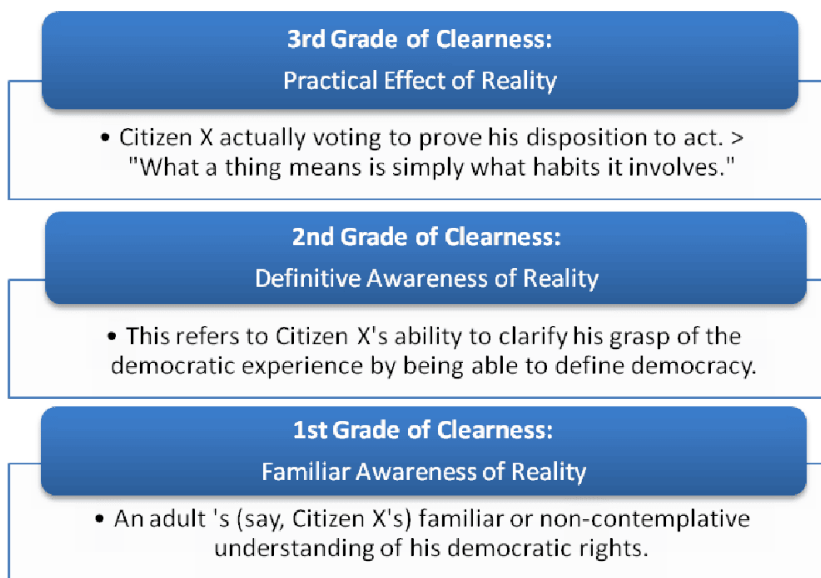
And what, then, is belief? ...We have seen that it has just three properties: First, it is something that we are aware of; second, it appeases the irritation of doubt; and, third, it involves the establishment in our nature of a rule of action, or, say for short, a habit. (Peirce 1878)

For Peirce, the basis for every real differentiation of thought is its tangible and practical effect (its resultant habit or rule of action). Habit is the end of a trichotomous process in Peirce’s “grades of clearness” of conception of reality that begins with awareness, scales up to definition, before being externalized as action or habit. In a sense, this trichotomy is reflective of some aspects of the cenopythagorean categories of Peirce’s phenomenological paper, “On a New List of Categories,” (Peirce 1867) particularly the triadic features discussed under “As universe of experience,” “As quantity,” and “Technical definition” (Peirce 1867).

Peirce’s three grades of clearness of conception of reality are as follows:

1. Clearness of familiarity of reality – this refers to the ordinary, unanalyzed understanding of the reality of a given object or concept.
2. Clearness of abstract definition of reality – here the object or concept is brought into distinctive relief via definition.
3. Clearness of the object’s practical effects or implication – what actions or habit are the practical effects of this object or concept?

To further simplify this three-tier gradation, we can illustrate the triadic progression as follows:



So, we are firstly made aware of something, secondly we are prompted by doubt to clarify or define it, and thirdly the effect of what we perceive and distinctly know is expressed in the actions we take.

5. Pragmatic Maxim: A Heuristic and Method of Reflection

Peirce introduced what he later called the pragmatic maxim in 1878 as “the

rule for attaining the third grade of clearness of apprehension” (Peirce 1878). A heuristic approach to problem-solving, the pragmatic maxim is at the centre of the universal popularity of pragmatism. Although Peirce had more than once revised the wording of the maxim, its 1886 original, the version stated in his “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” and reproduced below, is usually preferred. The pragmatic maxim:

Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object. (Peirce 1902)

This was the version Peirce himself included in his 1902 definition of “Pragmatic and Pragmatism” in the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*.

The import of the maxim is that the real meaning of any thought or idea rests upon the practical effects of that thought or idea. This makes the pragmatic maxim a useful guide to the apprehension of mental conceptions, a self-applicable system for sifting thoughts of practical relevance from mere verbiage or mental clutter. As an encapsulation of Peirce’s pragmatic doctrine, the maxim is a tool for ensuring that every concept has a matching or corresponding relevance in practice.

But the pragmatic maxim is more than a call to action. It is also a method of reflection. It could be argued, and Peirce would seem to agree, that action or habit (as inhered in the maxim) is the doing part of a reflective end. In other words, we progress from perception to doubt, and from doubt to belief. Belief then predisposes us to act. The question is: is our action an end in itself or a means to an end? And if a means to some end, is that end included in or anticipated by the pragmatic maxim? To the author of the pragmatic maxim, Peirce himself, we now return for answers:

The study of philosophy consists, therefore, in reflexion, and *pragmatism* is that method of reflexion which is guided by constantly holding in view its purpose and the purpose of the ideas it analyzes, whether these ends be of the nature and uses of action or of thought... It will be seen that *pragmatism* is not a *Weltanschauung* but is a method of reflexion having for its purpose to render ideas clear. (Peirce 1902)

What one could decipher from Peirce clarification, made about two decades after the drafting of the maxim, is that “whether these ends be of the nature and uses of action or of thought” they are in the service of a higher end “to render ideas clear”. So, reflective clarity is the ultimate trigger of pragmatic action. Simply put, pragmatic action is embedded in pragmatic thought.

John Dewey, one of the classical pragmatists, in an article published in *Journal of Philosophy*, criticized the application of Peirce’s pragmatism as a tool of

enquiry, arguing that Peirce proposed it to be a mere explanatory term. Quoting Peirce's assertion that "the most striking feature of the new theory was its recognition of an inseparable connection between rational cognition and human purpose" (Peirce 1905:163), Dewey claims:

Peirce confined the significance of the term to the determination of the meaning of terms, or better, propositions; the theory was not, of itself, a theory of the test, or the truth, of propositions. Hence the title of his original article: "How to Make Ideas Clear." (Dewey 1916:710)

However, when comparing Peirce's pragmatism with that of William James, Dewey notes an interesting distinction. He says that while James emphasizes that the "effective meaning of any philosophic proposition can always be brought down to some particular consequence...whether active or passive" (William 1904:673), Peirce "puts more emphasis upon practice (or conduct) and less upon the particular; in fact, he transfers the emphasis to the general." (Dewey 1916:711)

This distinction, by implication, enlarges Dewey's view of Peircean pragmatism beyond "determination of the meaning of terms." In reviewing Peirce's complementary work, "The Fixation of Belief," Dewey could not but note that "pragmatism identifies meaning with formation of a habit, or way of acting..." (Dewey 1916:711) This statement identifies a given "habit or way of acting" as a test or indicator of the truth of a given proposition. Its applicability as a test or tool of enquiry, therefore, is an integral aspect of the pragmatism of Charles Peirce.

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Language, Technology and Democratic Culture: A Sociological Analysis

Bukar Usman

Abstract

This paper examines the interplay of language and technology and their collective role in the development of a democratic society, such as Nigeria. The paper argues that language, as a conveyor of meaning, is what enables democracy and technology to make sociological sense, in conceptual and practical terms. It posits that without language, there will be no social understanding and, therefore, no stable environment within which technological innovation and democratic processes can take place. This is because language is the foundation of any socialization process and it takes a largely enlightened population, much more than technological processes, to drive and entrench a democratic culture. Drawing examples from China and Singapore, two of the notable countries that deliver education and development to their people using their local languages, the paper affirms that the more indigenous the language of a social setting, the greater change it delivers. The paper concludes that what makes a developed society work is not necessarily its advanced technology or “advanced” democracy but, essentially, its culturally enlightened and cohesive population.

Keywords: language, technology, democracy, culture

Introduction

It is easy to see the link between language and any sphere of human activity. This is because language is the conveyor of meaning, be it technological or democratic meaning. In its theoretical and practical dimensions, and even in its utilitarian functions, technology uses the vehicle of language – technical and everyday language. And, of course, technology is created to serve humanity within given social settings, the most self-governing and accountable of such settings being, in popular opinion, the democratic setting. Freedom of speech and of the press is a defining characteristic of a democratic setting and this, recently, has been boosted in many nations by the adoption of freedom of information as a democratic right. All these rights and even the democratic process itself make sense to the people (for whom the parties and the elections are ideally organized) through the use of language.

So, both technology and democracy communicate meaning through the vehicle of language. It is difficult to advance technology and democracy without a corresponding advancement of language. Indeed, without language there will be no social understanding and, therefore, no stable environment within which technological innovation and democratic processes can take place. It takes language to aggregate and express group interests, negotiate political stakes and express political choices. It takes technology to advance these goals by, for example, using technological gadgets to effect biometric capture of eligible voters and digitalization of the voting and counting processes, among several other technological enhancements.

Such technical balloting system is usually effectively deployed in advanced social settings. What makes democracy work in such settings: their technology, their democracy or their people? The point we should note is that what makes such settings advanced is not necessarily their advanced technologies nor their “advanced” democracies but, essentially, their advanced population. A democracy is as good as the quality of the electorate and the quality of the electorate is determined by the kind and level of information available to the people. And information is conveyed through language.

It is the view of this paper that much of the success politicians have recorded in continually taking the people for a ride has deep roots in the average citizen’s ignorance of the realities of his social environment and the politician’s exploitation of this ignorance through manipulative use of language. To put a stop to this, or at least minimize it, we must as a people make the education of every citizen of Nigeria a national priority. We cannot build a sustainable accountable system upon an unenlightened population. Education increases the quality of the educated, opens them up to wider information, and makes them less susceptible to social manipulation.

Language and Democratic Culture

While not contesting Jack M. Balkin’s well-known position that “digital technologies alter the social conditions of speech,” (Balkin 2004) this paper asserts that it takes a largely enlightened population, much more than technological processes, to drive and entrench a democratic culture. For our democracy to deliver peace and prosperity, it must transcend the current trend where it is merely a four-year event to a possible future where it becomes a culture – our own home-grown democratic culture. And we need to pin down what this democratic culture really amounts to.

What is a democratic culture? The concept can be defined as follows:

A democratic culture is a culture in which individuals have a fair opportunity to participate in the forms of meaning-making that constitute

them as individuals. Democratic culture is about individual liberty as well as collective self-governance; it concerns each individual's ability to participate in the production and distribution of culture. (Balkin 2004)

This definition is notable because it is individual-oriented and places key emphasis on meaning-making. Language is about meaning-making. Unless we develop the capacity of the average citizen to make sense out of our currently elitist approach to technology and democracy, we will continue to face grave challenges in these areas. Currently, our indigenous languages are hardly deployed in meaningful communication that galvanizes our people's potential for fruitful participation in nation-building programmes and processes. Yet, attempts are being made to involve them in technology-driven civic engagements, such as voter registration and the current nationwide national ID card registration exercises.

This paper is not opposed to technology. Technology has delivered some very useful inventions, such as the internet and the mobile phone. The internet in particular has proved very useful in making information available to all in the quickest possible time. Google's role in this regard is remarkable. But there are negative impacts of this development that indicate that unless we secure the "nature of man," his capacity for meaning-making and meaning-internalization, he may become a robotic victim of technology. Lee Siegel, a celebrated social critic, thinks that

All this boosterism and herd-like affirmation is bizarre because the internet is a new mode of convenience, nothing more, nothing less. It has not made society more egalitarian, it has not made modern democratic politics more 'transparent', it has not made us happier. Rather, it has made our appetites more impatient to be satisfied, devised new, speedier ways of satisfying them, and created more sophisticated methods of monitoring and controlling our private lives. (Siegel 2017)

To change the negative impact of the internet, as painted above, what we need to change is not the internet but the meaning-making nature of the internet-user. Language is a very vital driver of change; the more meaningful the language, the greater change it delivers. No language conveys meaning to our people more than their indigenous languages. We can employ indigenous languages as weapons of change; we can use it to stimulate our technological and democratic development.

Indigenous Languages as Drivers of Technological Growth

Given the foregoing, the connection between language and technological development is in general terms self-evident. Technology is invention through thought. Thinking is done and articulated through language. Therefore, thought, language and technology are inextricably linked. It is through

language that we express feelings, and conceive and impart information – even scientific and technological information.

Language is a major means for human communication and is central to training, effective management, and the provision of services. Language could either be a barrier or a facilitator of economic activities. It can be a barrier even in language-based vocations e.g. translation, interpretation, the media, tourism and teaching. In fact, there is no domain of economic activity in which language does not play a role. The degree is only determined by the linguistic character of the community (Webb 2003:61-84). It is therefore paramount for every society to ensure its indigenous language is developed enough to drive technological growth.

To do this successfully, an indigenous language must be fully codified. Linguistic development is partly the attainment of proper codification of a given language. In addition, the language must be in constant use by its speakers. Unfortunately, most Nigerian languages are yet to be fully codified. They lack systematic description and are not documented. It is therefore pertinent for speakers of non-codified languages to note that gone are the days such duties are left solely for government. It is now the responsibility of speech communities to sponsor the codification of their languages. The codification will facilitate development on various fronts. It is only fully codified languages that are taught in schools due to availability of orthographies.

By learning to write their indigenous languages, speakers of such languages can put down their thoughts, including innovative thoughts, on paper and this can be the seed of some technological product. Who knows how many technological initiatives have died unexpressed because of the non-literate status of indigenous inventors? That someone cannot speak a foreign language does not mean he cannot think creatively. We need to develop our indigenous languages to the point where it can be used in introducing our students to science and technology.

Many scientific and technological ideas did not originate in China; yet, through learning those concepts in their native Mandarin language, the Chinese have made enviable scientific and technological strides. Their frontline scientists do not speak English, French or German. Whatever made them successful scientists they learnt and practised using Mandarin. This shows that linguistic development is necessary for any meaningful and desirable development. If someone thinks China succeeded because of its huge population, what about Singapore, a country of 5.399 million people that has successfully deployed its national language, Malay, in its technological development. There are many Nigerian languages that are spoken by over 5 million people. Are there any Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry or Biology textbooks written in those

languages? This writer is not aware of any.

Scientific or technological development cannot be attained by a people who have not developed linguistically. Suffice it to say that all technologically developed nations and societies must have attained linguistic development prior to their scientific or technological development (Amfani 1999).

The relationship between language and technology differs from place to place. Relationship in terms of the effect of one on the other also varies from language to language. The differences correspond to the level of technological sophistication of the society and the level of codification of the language. The failure of most African governments to develop robustly their local languages for use in generating wealth and technological development has led such countries to failure and stagnation in many areas.

Sustaining Our Local Languages

For the rest of this paper, I will dwell largely on sub-themes related to the need to sustain our local languages, as it is only when a language is in existence that one could relate it to technology, democratic and other cultural expressions.

The current state of our indigenous languages is captured by this remark:

In spite of the strong emphasis linguists, oral folklorists, writers and experts place on the need for parents to transmit their mother tongues to their children through active usage at home, many people across the world are yet to heed this call. In nowhere else is this negligent attitude more glaring than in parts of Africa, especially among small ethnic groups with minority languages. These minority languages are battling the onslaught of majority languages fostered on them by a multitude of factors not least is rampaging globalization that is fast assimilating and annihilating secure traditional lifestyles and modes of living. (Ajeluron 2015)

This writer hails from one of the most linguistically diverse parts of Nigeria and, as such, attaches great importance to the fortunes and misfortunes of indigenous languages. Troubled by the fate of minority languages in Nigeria, I wrote a book (Usman 2014) drawing attention to current issues about language disappearance with particular reference to the linguistic groups of Biu, Borno State, North-Eastern Nigeria. In so doing I thought I could join linguists and other stakeholders to sensitize and urge all concerned to take urgent steps to save our endangered indigenous languages, especially the many minority languages currently threatened with extinction.

Among Nigerian linguists, the most worrisome question currently is: how many languages do we have? For many years now, nobody seems to know

(Emenanjo 2003). According to *Ethnologue* (2009) Nigeria has a total number of 527 languages. Out of this number, 514 are living languages; 2 (English and Pidgin) are second languages without mother tongue speakers while eleven (Ashagana, Auyokawa, Bassa-Kwantagora, Fali of Baissa, Kpati, Lufu, Shirawa, Taura, Ajanci, Basa-Gumwa and Teshenawa) are languages with no known speakers.

It is important to note that Nigerian languages vary in terms of numerical strength and social influence. The determination of the numerical strength of languages in Nigeria presents a peculiar problem under the current National Census Policy. As I observed in my book:

...so long as the current policy on population census which excludes reference to an individual's 'ethnic' and other statistical indices subsist, it will be impossible for interest groups to evaluate the 'growth' or 'demise' of any particular language group on the basis of its 'absolute' population and 'proportion' of its speakers in relation to the total population or any given segment of the total population. (Usman 2014)

I went on to argue that while on grounds of overriding public policy:

...the exclusion of 'ethnicity' may be desirable and defensible on the basis of the promotion of national unity in diversity; it is an obvious constraint in the evaluation of the fate of ethnic languages at present and in the future. (Usman 2014)

It is perhaps pertinent at this stage to state briefly how I initially came about taking interest in language matters. This interest is linked to my literary career which bloomed after my retirement from the federal public service in 1999. When I embarked on writing *A History of Biu*, a book centred on my community, I came across a statement by one of the pioneer foreign missionaries who came to my area in 1923. He was an American named Albert D. Helser. He narrated how, within two to three years of their arrival in Biu, he and his colleagues had proficiently learnt Bura as a working language. At that time, Bura language was not well documented; the precarious situation of the language made him to express fears regarding its possible disappearance. His words:

So far as I could learn, no white man had ever spoken Bura when Mr Kulp and I came into Buraland. The natives were blissfully ignorant of any such thing as writing. Mr Palmer a government clerk and a native of Sierra Leone, had learned Bura and had compiled for government uses a brief grammar of Bura done in English. This was now our starter. After three years, St. Marks Gospel, "first" and "second" readers, an Old Testament story book and life of Christ have been printed in Bura. A dictionary-grammar, a translation of the Acts of the Apostles, a book on

hygiene and sanitation and a song-book are now (1926) in preparation.
(Helser 1926:8)

For that reason, he ominously predicted that “*During the next half-century, the Bura language may possibly give way to Hausa or English*, but for present and for some years to come, most of our work must be conducted in Bura tongue.” (Helser 1926:8, italicized portions my emphasis)

I must say that that prophetic statement about the possible disappearance of Bura language initially frightened me, but after barely seven decades it is turning out to be a true prediction – unless something is urgently done to stop it! I will talk more about Bura language because I believe the case of Bura symbolizes the fate of many minority languages of Nigeria. All of them, like Bura, are threatened.

Kanuri language was the first threat to local languages in Bui area but Hausa has overtaken it as the major threat to all local languages of the area. Like a catfish eating up smaller fishes, Hausa’s dominance in Bui area’s linguistic stream seemed unchallenged but English, for long warming up behind the scene, now poses almost the same threat as Hausa. Right now, most people in Bui area, including the young and the old, can hardly read and write in any indigenous language or converse fluently without interjecting Hausa or English. Today, almost all speakers of Bura are bilingual. It is difficult to meet someone who speaks only Bura but there are many Bura/Hausa, Bura/English and Bura/Kanuri speakers. The few adults who still speak Bura with passable level of proficiency surprisingly blissfully hope that the Bura language cannot disappear. Yet, the threat of Bura being swallowed up in the future by any of those three languages is foreseeable.

Even in the educational sector, Bura is suffering intense neglect. The Bura primers produced by the missionaries are no longer in circulation. I am not sure Bura literature is taught in any educational institution – primary, secondary or tertiary – in the whole of Borno State nor am I aware that any informal class in Bura-language resuscitation and sustenance is being conducted. But the reversal of this trend is possible. Unfortunately, many minority speech communities appear satisfied with the current state of affairs even when it amounts to their approving the death sentence of their indigenous languages. Urgent action is required to save Bura language and other threatened minority languages of Nigeria. And this is basically not a programme for government; it is the primary responsibility of the owners of the indigenous languages. The United Nations and UNESCO have warned that the rate at which languages are disappearing across the globe is alarming, and that unless the trend is reversed, the loss in unique cultural values that accompany language disappearance will make the world a culturally poorer place.

It must be mentioned here that one of the major functions of Departments of Languages & Linguistics and the Language Institutes and Centres of Nigeria should be to facilitate the codification of local languages. Speech communities in Nigeria should therefore engage such institutions for this valuable service.

Using Nigerian Languages to Drive Technology

Pasquali (1997:33) has emphasized the importance of using Nigerian languages to drive technological development. And this paper would like to share in detail some of his thoughts on this issue. He says that

... people must find their own language to articulate the world in their own language and to transform reality in search of their own dreams.

This means that technology must be acquired or domesticated through acceptable integration of Nigerian languages. Such languages especially the 3 big sisters, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba have been used by Microsoft in conjunction with African Languages Technology Initiative (Alt-I), Ibadan to produce a translation of most computer terminologies in them (Amfani Ms). Despite this positive development there are many other languages with millions of speakers where nothing of this sort exist; even with the big 3 sisters, they still need to be developed for an all-round technological development. That means an appropriate technology must take root in the language of the soil and we must see technology as defined by UNCTAD (1977) cited in Adiele (2002:6).

Adiele quoted UNCTAD as saying that technology:

...involves not merely the systematic application of scientific or other knowledge to practical tasks, but also the social and economic atmosphere within which such application has to take place...Even the attitudes and values of people are, in a sense, part of technology since they affect the capabilities of a nation.

Currently, Information Communications Technology (ICT) has brought about not only new ways of doing things but also the development of its own language which only the initiated could understand. Terms such as text, uploading, downloading, online, tweet etc no longer carry their ordinary English meanings. There are other new terms such as chatting, email, e-commerce, e-banking and some queer expressions such as BRB (be right back), LOL (laugh out loud).

Technological dynamics have brought changes in the culture of doing things. Ositadimma Nebo, professor of engineering and former Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, as well as former Minister of Power (February 2013 to May 2015) recently acknowledged this. Explaining his reluctance to go back to teaching after his ministerial appointment, he said:

...I have been teaching engineering in the university for a good part of my life, and I think going back now to teach students of the i-Generation – people who now use iPhone, i-everything and with engineering so dynamic – I have to go for a refresher course. Otherwise, I will end up being taught by the students I'm claiming to teach. So I would rather do other more practical things that I believe I can do. (Vanguard 2015:17)

Some encouraging technological approaches are making impact outside the classroom and in remote parts of Nigeria. A Nigeria police officer Mahmood Mohammed Dahuwa was reported to have earned promotion to the rank of an Assistant Superintendent of Police for using a wide range of technologies to identify and track down criminals. Using his technology, he has helped in bringing down the crime rate in Karimlamido local government area of Taraba State. (Nation 2015:31)

The change in vocabulary comes so rapidly nowadays that even compilers of dictionaries could hardly keep pace. Publishers of English dictionaries are said to wait for about a period of five years for the new words or expressions to firm up before they could include them in up-dated dictionaries. Hausa language has not been spared the effect of technology in its development too. For example, Hausa has coined new terms to keep up with the digital world. Hence *yanar gizo* (spider web) is the name given to the internet while *na'ura mai k'wak'walwa* means computer. Several other languages might have crafted such descriptive terms.

Below, I would like to briefly situate culture in terms of its specific relationship to technology, language and human rights.

Culture and Technology

Transfer and transmission of science and technology is one of the ways of ascertaining the realization of human potential. In the transfer process, we often ignore the fact that science and technology are cultural phenomena. They are the superstructure culture while language is the base. This is precisely why the transfer of science and technology in Nigeria often achieves peripheral results. Bamgbose (1994) aptly submitted that “unless there is technology culture, the seed of transferred technology will fall on barren ground and it will not germinate.” (Obafemi 2012)

As expressed above, there has always been a connection between technology and culture with one having an influence over the other. This influence has been more significant since the advent of the 19th century. Technological development has changed culture positively and in some ways negatively. Positively, culture drives technological development for higher achievement. (Vanguard 2015:17) There is no gainsaying the fact that undeveloped

traditional societies have limited capacity to develop technologically. The negative aspects of technology on culture can be seen in the breakdown of family values in the lives of rural dwellers that flock to the urban centers to work in industries and other establishments using current technologies.

Culture and Language

It is said that there are up to two to three hundred and even more definitions of culture. Culture embraces the totality of inherited and innate ideas, attitudes, beliefs, values, and knowledge, comprising or forming the shared foundations of social actions. (Mahdi and Jafari, 2015) The numerous definitions of culture suggest that there is no single all-embracing definition. To me, culture is simply the totality of the way of life of a community or society developed over time.

Language is often seen as the flip side of culture. Culture and language are like the two sides of a coin. Viewed in another sense, language is a vehicle of culture. To vividly drive home the relationship, those familiar with temperate climate compare culture to the iceberg while language is the tip of the iceberg. Remarkably, so intimate is the relationship between language and culture that in the event of the death of a language, culture and nearly all that are associated with it also vanish. What may be spared are the more permanent features (materials) of a culture such as the more enduring artefacts (nowadays preserved in museums). Fortunate to survive also may be societal practices (including non materials) that are preserved in writing or by digital means.

Quite significantly, another vivid example of the relationship of language and culture can be seen in expressions of different languages. For example, the expressions of native Hausa speakers will convey Hausa culture while the expressions of Yoruba and Igbo speakers will invariably convey the cultures of the speakers of those languages. It is also noteworthy that though a society may speak the same language, the speakers may not necessarily share the same culture as they may be living in different environments. This explains the slight differences that are easily noticeable among the Hausa of Nigeria and the Hausa of Mali or even our close neighbour, Niger Republic. As is often the case, a person who grows up away from his place of birth and does not speak the mother tongue is said to have lost the original culture. This is particularly so in the case of a child. If one takes away a child from its place of birth, the child easily forgets the mother tongue and learns the language of the new environment. It is only when a person relocates as an adult that the person tends to resist new cultural influences, having already been formed in character and other cultural practices in his original environment.

Culture and Human Rights

The reference to democratic culture in the topic of this paper introduces ideological connotations in some societies, in the sense of the freedom of individuals to freely express themselves in their languages. In this sense, human right issues bordering on democracy are embedded in the topic. Human rights, including democratic freedoms, are not absolute. Often, many societies consider it needful to impose some restrictions, be they administrative, judicial or technological restrictions, to limit certain excesses in order to protect the overall health of the society. (Balkin 2004) It should be clear that this democratic slant does not in any way mean that people living in non-democratic societies have no culture or rights of their own.

Current thinking in democratic Europe on preservation and promotion of “individual” and “collective” rights, some of which are already contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), centres around five inalienable “personal rights” pertaining to languages. These rights include: right to be recognised as a member of a language community; right to have the freedom to use one’s own language both in private and in public; right to use one’s own name; right to interrelate and associate freely with other members of one’s language community of origin; and right to maintain and develop one’s own culture. The “collective rights” of language groups are four. They include: right of groups to have their own language and culture taught; right of access to cultural services; right of equitable presence of their language and culture in the communications media; and right to receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in socio-economic relations. (Starkey)

Undoubtedly the rights as outlined, or the ingredients of them, exist in varying degrees in nearly every society. Only that some nations that embrace and raise these ideals to a higher level, to the point of making it part of their culture, go all out to propagate them as an ideology and that, arguably, is the cause of disagreements in many troubled spots of the world today. Indeed, over the last two decades, such propagators have introduced issues of human rights into almost all facets of human endeavour.

Language and Learning

There is a growing realism amongst scholars, especially language experts that linguistic attributes can influence learning. Language is looked at as human capital and the language skills of an individual are interpreted as a source of educational and economic advantage. A reader of a review of my book emailed his experience to me, thus:

I understand that the more languages one speaks the bigger ones brain. This is largely because one would have access to more words and therefore a richer vocabulary. If this is combined with an art of communication it is an extreme wealth.

I recall reading somewhere that the best diplomats are great linguists and communicators. Today code and logarithm writers are predominantly white Caucasians, male and Western. There is a good percentage of Asian-Chinese, Japanese. And these are the people that control global trade. (Oklobia 2015)

Individuals and nations who are not able to use their languages for all main transactions of their daily lives, are doomed to life of dependency in the shadow of the languages of the colonizer, Djite (1993) and Prah (1996). What this means in reality is that the enforced use of the foreign (European) languages bring about, among other things, a deadly decrease and even total loss of creativity.

This, perhaps, is one of the reasons Nigeria has documented its language policy and policy directions. These largely positive official positions can be found in

- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979, revised 1989 and 1999).
- The National Policy on Education (1977, revised 1981, 1998 and 2004).
- The Cultural Policy for Nigeria (1988)
- The Nigerian Broadcasting Code (1993, revised 2006), and 2014 – 9 Year Basic Education Curriculum

Unfortunately, the language policy pronouncements contained in these documents, especially those relating to local languages, have remained largely unimplemented due to the stakeholders' lack of interest.

Language Education Policy

As a result of Nigeria's diversity and the need to foster national unity, Nigeria's language education policy was anchored on the foundation laid during the colonial period. That policy states that

...medium of instruction at the lower primary (the first three years) should be in the indigenous language of the child or the language of his/her immediate environment while at the upper primary school, English should be the medium of teaching and the major indigenous languages of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, should be taught as school subjects. (Musa 2012)

The above policy must have stemmed from the report of the Phelps-Stokes Commission to Africa (1920-1921) that, inter alia, recommended that the "tribal language" be used in the lower primary classes while the "language of the European nation in control" should be used in the upper classes (Lewis 1962). The colonial governments, including the one in Nigeria, started

implementing this as a policy. This policy was further reinforced by the UNESCO Meeting of Specialists (UNESCO 1953:47-8) that recommended that “pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue” and that “the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible.”

This policy has been implemented mostly in breach. That policy was there before I was enrolled into primary school in the early 1950s. I was taught in Hausa (a language of the wider community) during my first two years of schooling in Biu rather than in Babur/Bura (my mother tongue and the language of the immediate community). When I moved on to King’s College, Lagos, for my higher school education in the mid 1960s, the college rule discouraged students from speaking local languages. Anyone caught doing so was liable to punishment. With over 500 languages, Nigeria presents peculiar difficulties for educational authorities who are faced with the dilemma of choosing one language of instruction out of several options.

For long there was no authentic educational policy to guide the authorities. It was only 38 years after independence that a National Policy on Education (1977, revised 1981, and henceforth NPE) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was promulgated and a National Education Implementation Task Force set up to ensure compliance with the NPE’s objectives. For the purpose of unification of the various ethnic groups in the country, the language section of the NPE clearly required that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages (Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba) other than his own mother tongue (NPE 1981:19).

Incidentally, NPE contains the directive on language use in education which states that at the pre-primary level “the medium of instruction will principally be the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community” (NPE 1981:10, section 2:11(3)). At the Primary level...the medium...is initially the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community, and at a later stage, English” (NPE 1981:13, section 3:15(4)).

The latest revision of the NPE on Nigerian languages as produced by the NERDC is contained in the 2014 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum. The document states that from primaries 1-6 to JSS 1-3, only one Nigerian language is recommended to be taught. The innovation here is that each school was allowed to freely choose which language to teach. By implication in all the villages and communities, the language of the area has a chance to be taught. However, the choice of any particular language is not an easy one in a multilingual-community and cosmopolitan society.

Looking at it closely, the NPE recognizes five categories of languages, namely:

- The mother tongue (i.e. a child's first language).
- A language of the immediate community (i.e. a language spoken by a wider community, and generally learnt and used as a second language by those whose mother tongue is a minor language).
- A major Nigerian language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba).
- English – the official language.
- A foreign language (i.e. French and Arabic), (Bamgbose 2000:70).

The country's language policy, thus, favours multilingual learning, and every Nigerian language is a possible candidate for use as a medium of instruction. However, we must also take into account that both pre-primary and primary schools are not all under the direct control of government. Pre-primary schools are in the hands of private institutions and non-governmental organizations. Parents send their children to these schools to have them introduced to English quite early.

Maryam Adenike Abimbola, a linguist and Dean, School of Languages, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, had identified, among the problems threatening Nigerian languages, parents' complicity "in hindering the propagation of our indigenous languages by preferring to speak foreign languages, especially English, even in the homes." (Tribune 2015:10)

With respect to role of families in language transmission, there is an obvious dilemma among children of cross-cultural marriages. The experience of a couple illustrates this: the man, whose mother is from another ethnic group in Plateau State, is married to a woman whose parents are from distinct ethnic groups (her father is from Nasarawa State while her mother is from Kaduna State). The man is too busy to teach his children his own indigenous language though they can "pick" some words. (Saturday Sun 2015:20) As an ostensible bail-out from this linguistic complexity, this family's children speak mostly English. But come to think of it, the man has the option of letting his wife teach their children her own language. After all, that is their *mother* tongue. So, even in linguistically mixed families, no excuse should hinder intergenerational transmission of mother tongues to children.

Another couple narrated a similar experience:

We have a challenging problem. Personally I am part of the problem because my son does not speak Idoma – my dialect nor Esan – my wife's dialect. He speaks only English.

Now, if he spoke the three languages-English, Idoma and Esan (and pidgin English) and assuming he becomes a computer code writer the

power at his disposal would be enormous.

My point...if our languages become extinct a major chunk of our existence would have died too...you may have discussed only Biu, but you are raising a very fundamental issue about our future as a people-Nigerians and Africans, and not as Euro-composed. (Oklobia 2015)

The promotion of Nigerian languages in the educational system can only be a recommendation and individual families take the final decision on how to implement the recommendations for using the local languages as a medium of instruction in nursery and primary schools.

National Language Policy

Although Nigeria has a National Language Education Policy, there is no national language policy. This is quite understandable. Given Nigeria's diversity and the need to promote national unity, government appears to be wary of giving preferential promotion of one language over the other. This perhaps explains the non-adoption of the 1976 Constitution Drafting Committee's recommendation to the effect that English or any other language may be used in legislative deliberations as the National or State Assembly may by resolution decide. It thus appears that Nigerian languages are left to themselves to survive or die.

However on July 13, 2012, a technical committee made up of representatives from relevant ministries, language institutes, French and Arabic Language Villages, departments of languages and linguistics of tertiary institutions, parastatals, the six geo-political zones, experts and other critical stakeholders, was inaugurated under the chairmanship of Professor Ahmed Haliru Amfani, the former President of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria and a former member of the Governing Board of the Nigerian Educational Research and Documentation Centre, Abuja. One of the committee's terms of reference was to produce a blueprint of a new National Language Policy for Nigeria. The committee is yet to finish its job.

Institutional Contributions

Perhaps it will not be out of place to present to you an overview of some of the principal players that are obtainable in the field in terms of language development and promotion. This overview is by no means exhaustive:

Notable among the tertiary institutions that are in the forefront in the teaching and development of Nigerian languages are the University of Ibadan, Bayero University Kano, University of Jos, University of Maiduguri and Usman Dan Fodio University, to mention only a few. University of Ibadan that has for a long time established linguistic department has also established a Yoruba Language Centre in 2010 to

offer studies in Yoruba language and culture. Similarly, Bayero University Kano has established a Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages.

There is also in existence at Aba, Abia State, the National Institute of Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) that offers diploma courses in linguistics and Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba). The Nigerian Army established the Nigerian Army Language Institute (NALI) in Ovim, also in Abia State, with a limited objective of teaching its personnel foreign languages (principally French) to meet the challenges faced by the Nigerian Army in international peacekeeping operations. The Army had earlier established a College of Education in Ilorin (Sobi-Barracks). Run by the Nigerian Army Education Corps, the college had existed for over 20 years teaching languages to army personnel.

The following government institutions, according to a 1996 listing by Elugbe, are concerned with language development:

- University departments of Linguistics and Nigerian/African languages joined by similar departments of Colleges of Education
- Teachers Resource Centres
- A National Committee to advise Government on the production of textbooks
- Federal and State Ministries of Education
- Nigeria Educational Research Development Council (NERDC)
- State Mass Literacy Boards
- National Commission for Nomadic Education
- National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non- Formal Education
- National Institute for Nigerian Languages
- National Primary Education Commission
- Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages, Kano

Added to this list is:

- Ministry of Culture and Ijaw National Affairs, Bayelsa State (Ohiri-Aniche 2013 forthcoming).

Ohiri-Aniche (2013) and Haruna (2014) also listed some communities and

individuals involved in language perseveration and promotion to include:

- Kay Williamson Educational Foundation
- The Jos Linguistic Circle
- CəLela Promoters and Trainers
- Kambari Language Project
- Urhobo Resource and Language Learning Centre (URLL), Lagos
- Centre for Igbo Arts and Culture, Abuja
- Yoruba Folktales through the Net

The Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN) remains committed to not only sensitizing people to the potential extinction of some languages but also assisting communities and stakeholders to arrest the looming danger. LAN has also been advocating a language policy summit to be held along the lines of such countries as South Africa and India to come out with comprehensive and practical recommendations to safeguard our languages and ensure that every one language flourishes. However, a positive response to that effect is being expected from educational and cultural authorities and from the various legislative houses.

Meanwhile, LAN has been prominent in encouraging and working with different speech communities to preserve their languages. In the last three years, LAN has collaborated with the NERDC, the Urhobo (Delta State), the Ijaw (Bayelsa State), and the Jukun (Taraba State) to produce their orthographies and curricula for their primary schools. The efforts made have all been presented at the Joint Consultative Council (JCC) and the National Council on Education. In addition, the orthography for Cl'ela in Kebbi State has also been completed and is due for presentation at the next JCC. Beyond all these achievements, LAN constantly does advocacy work with communities and State Houses of Assembly to urge them to start supporting the production of their orthographies, curricula and primers for use in schools.

Globalisation

In the current state of growing social interaction in the world, it is worthwhile to situate language issues in the context of globalisation. While the UN is making effort to encourage minority language groups not to give up on their own languages, the world body is guilty of entrenching certain major languages over others in its official policy, especially in its policy of making only six out of the over 7,000 languages in the world the official languages to be used during its sessions. As globalization permeates many countries, communities

and clans, there's a growing tendency for many speakers of indigenous languages to abandon them for more prestigious and economically useful majority languages.

In one of my books (Usman 2014), the disappearance of African and other languages was traced to the official policies and practices of imperial powers and the subjugation of languages of smaller groups by speakers of the leading major language. I argued that while the linguistic dominance of colonial powers stems from military supremacy, the dominion of a language over others in the same country is usually due to its speakers' huge population and the prestige and privileges that come from speaking that language. Adequate measures need to be taken at the communal level to prevent the extinction of minority languages.

Strangely, even the major languages do not have the chance of surviving in their original forms. As time goes on, they would be subject to infusion and dilution as they influence and are influenced by other languages. For instance, there is a noticeable trend in Nigeria relating to English language. Farooq Kperogi, an Assistant Professor of Journalism in the Department of Communication at Kennesaw State University in Georgia, USA, has identified a developing brand of English tagged "Nigerian English" (as opposed to "British" and "American" English). Kperogi has found the trend serious enough to write a book recently on this subject. A review of his book titled *Glocal English* reveals the characteristics of the Nigerian variety of English as:

...the fastest-growing non-native variety of English popularized by the Nigerian (English Language) movie industry and the Black Atlantic Diaspora...the book isolates the peculiar structural, grammatical, and stylistic characteristics of Nigerian English and shows its similarities as well as its often humorous differences with British and American English...and demonstrates true comparisons with American and British English with its distinct vocabularies and rules of usage." (Kperogi 2015:41)

In terms of spelling, the original (British) English is gradually giving way to American English and this is likely to continue as most computer programmed languages carry the American spellings. In fact currently if one uses computer that has American applications it would underline spellings in British English as wrong spellings. Some examples, with American spellings on the right, would include: centre/center, colour/color, labour/labor organise/organize, honour/honor, endeavour/endeavor, and sensitise/sensitize.

This constraint notwithstanding, globalisation has its beneficial effects as remarked by *Transpanish*:

Although the future admittedly looks grim for some minority languages, globalization doesn't necessarily spell the end for all of them. Indeed, globalization can bring to the forefront the plight of some of these endangered languages, sparking attempts to revive them... (Transpanish 2015)

New Developments

There are some encouraging developments as there are today a few newspapers and magazines published in local languages for mass circulation on a limited scale. Among these are *Aminiya*, *Leadership Hausa*, *Rariya*, *Mujallar Muryar Arewa*, *Mujallar FIM*, *Mujallar Manoma*, *Mujallar Gambiza*, *Kakakin Harisawa*, *Ido Mudu* which are published in Hausa in the North while *Irohin* is published in Yoruba in the Western part of the country. Apparently, there are no similar publications in the East. The brief news in some local languages aired by some electronic media establishments across the country cannot be relied upon for any effective language development.

The commercial production of home videos in some major languages, largely through private efforts, is a good development. These have helped in no small measure in generating and sustaining interest in the languages of the productions. Such endeavours should be greatly intensified while speakers of minority languages would do well to replicate such efforts in their local languages.

Another welcome development is a recent action taken by the Lagos State House of Assembly which expressed concern at the threat of extinction of the Yoruba language and passed a resolution urging the state government to direct the State Ministry of Education to ensure the teaching and learning of Yoruba language in the state's public and private schools. (Nigerian Pilot 2015:22)

Similarly, concerned at what it perceives as a pitiable deficiency in effective communication in Izon language among the various age groups in Bayelsa State, the state government embarked on measures that would ensure that all Ijaws become competent speakers of Izon. In so doing, the state government urged parents and guardians to do their best to ensure that their children and wards could speak Izon fluently. The state government had also made wide consultations following which several books had been written in Izon and were being distributed to public libraries. (Punch 2015:4)

Another encouraging development is that, there is now a competent computer keyboard for typing Nigerian languages. It is the Koinyin Nigeria Multilingual Keyboard, produced by LANCOR Management based in Lagos.

On the international level, the government of Pakistan has introduced a bill that seeks to replace English with the native Urdu language as the official language.

(Propakistani 2015)

Conclusion

The effect of technology on language cannot be subject to regulation by any authority as change in language is simply a natural response to advancement in technology that is either being promoted by the society that develops it or accepted by the society that sees the new technology as contributing to the enhancement of its living standard.

Cultural influence can hamper the speedy growth of technology in a given society but not to the extent of stopping such growth. Technological influence, as it permeates, can break cultural barriers and effect changes in a people's way of doing things.

As technology affects a given culture, it affects all aspects of that culture, including its language. Generally, every society has its culture while a democratic society has more clearly defined rights which every member of that society is expected to live by. It is the attempt to propagate such ideals in another society with a different culture that tends to provoke conflicts. In that sense, although it is only proper for culture to evolve naturally and change or sustain itself, this is becoming practically impossible due to globalisation.

Given the government's dilemma in language promotion, the greater initiative would seem to lie with the speech communities and interest groups who would need to take steps to safeguard their languages from extinction. They should endeavour to engage the services of experts to analyse their languages and come up with orthographies of their languages. They should thereafter produce attractive publications that would sustain the interest of their native speakers especially the young ones. That also requires securing the services of trained native language teachers.

It is the responsibility of science and technology, and indeed all of us, including the family, community and special schools, linguists, and policy makers, to be inspired enough to take up these challenges against the erosive forces of language disappearance.

We must have language-specific programmers who would help us to tap into the benefits of relevant technological developments. We must invalidate the myth that our local languages are not competent and appropriate for scientific and technological purposes. What we need to do, as a matter of conscious national policy, is to establish Language Technology Centres to serve as language laboratories, where findings of technological and scientific research, can be codified into suitable language concepts. Terminologies, modes of expression and vocabularies (in lexical and structural terms) can be in the local

languages, chosen from among, in the first instance, the major languages in which the inventions and findings had been carried out. Relevant softwares to support such inventions should be developed.

UNESCO has pointed out certain steps that can be taken to avoid language extinction. They include:

preparatory work in form of socio-linguistic surveys defining the current situation of the language to be studied and determining the safeguarding measures to be adopted, data collection to study the phonology, morphology and syntax of the language and thirdly preparing language materials (orthography guides, reading and writing manuals, teacher guides, word lists, small dictionaries, grammars). (Usman 2014:65-66)

It is clear that no matter the degree of endangerment of any indigenous language, its speakers, if determined, at family and communal levels, can stop the disappearance of its linguistic heritage largely by ensuring that intergenerational transmission of their mother tongue is implemented in every household. An example of this is the nomadic Fulani who have used this method to preserve Fulfulde for several generations. This is the bottom line. It is the most basic and effective measure. Intergenerational transmission should therefore be considered to be the bloodline of language preservation. Only when an indigenous language is preserved and flourishing can it be an effective vehicle for the growth and development of technology and democratic culture.

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