

2.3.2 It is Acquired from Childhood

Another important characteristic of every human language is that it is acquired as the child grows from childhood to adulthood. It is an acquired behaviour from generation to generation, in other words, language behaviours have to be acquired, although researches have proved that humans are born with innate ability to learn any language without being taught. The belief is that nobody is born with the ability to speak a particular language. For example, no child has the ability from birth to learn Hausa language.

2.3.3 Language is Dynamic

Like all other aspects of human culture, language is subject to change. Our material culture like tools, utensils, cloths, does change with time. The non-materials aspects like language will also vary from one generation to another. Change should be seen therefore as a general attribute of all language. In other words, all languages are creative and open-ended. New words come into being and some die out. Thus language indeed is dynamic, this change is sometimes fast or slow, radical or superficial but it goes on all the time.

2.3.4. It is Conventional

All human languages are codified. They have a code, a kind of unspoken or unwritten public agreement by the community which uses the language that certain things should be done in certain ways. In other words, every language has grammar. Grammar here is used to mean the description of the ways in which the language uses patterns of structure to convey meaning. The essence of language is communication, that is, communication cannot take place where everybody insists on using his own arbitrary names for things, objects or ideas. Every language therefore, must have a code that is acceptable and meaningful to all users of that language.

2.3.5 It is Complex and Systematic

Every human language is complex and systematic. Every language has very complicated yet systematic multiple structures to enable it communicate infinite number of messages made up of a small number of vocal signals.

Human language is also unique in the sense that it has its own structure, its own system of organizing its component units, into a meaningful pattern. In other words, there are rules governing the organization of sentences such as rule of tense and concord. Language as a social phenomenon. Thus, it is considered in the social context as the basic ingredient of social interaction, however, the importance of communication to human has however been emphasized by American writer Paul Goodman..... "Speaking is a commitment not only to a human relationship with the one spoken to, but also to the existence of the thing spoken about.

2.4 Multilingualism (Language Diversity)

Multilingualism is taken to mean the same with language diversity. Multilingualism or language diversity is sociolinguistically used to describe situation where two or more languages exist within the bounds of one society. Elugbe Ben (1990) says multilingualism involves balanced, native-like command of all the languages in the repertoire is rather uncommon. It is a purely sociolinguistic and socio-cultural phenomenon in which more than one language exists in society.

The term given to the linguistic situation where two or more languages co-exist within the bounds of one society, or are kept in constant contact by politically and economically determined interest

(p170-176).

In line with the above definition, Akindele Femi and Adegbite Wale (1992) see Nigeria as a typical example of a multilingual and a diverse society. According to them, Nigeria is made up of "more than 250 ethnic groups, with a conservative estimate of languages, each with its culture and behavioural pattern". Despite a recent history of tribal rivalry among some of the ethnic groups, they all continue to exist within the bounds of the country. Based on this argument they conclude that Nigeria is therefore a multilingual and multi-cultural speech community where, apart from the different indigenous languages, there are foreign languages and cultures such as English, French and even Latin (the Catholic Church Hymns).

Since ethnic lines follow linguistic diversity, the great variety of languages in Nigeria tends to suggest that Nigeria is an assembly of ethnic nationalities.

It is in recognition of Nigeria's multilingual and multi-ethnic nature and attendant problems that a veteran Nigeria nationalist, late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, advocated strict federation for Nigeria and highlighted the linguistic factor in shaping the federal structure. (16-17)

Dada (2001) quotes Awolowo further:

"We are not only diverse in language and in racial affinity, but we are also diverse in manner of our political evolution, there was not that political cohesion in our relationship, and there was no relationship of a political type between all the ethnic groups and linguistic groups in the country until the European came." (4)

Scholars and language researchers working within the field of inter-group relations and speech variations have their own opinions' and views about language and ethnicity. Fishman (1977) and Giles (1980) contend very strongly that language plays a dominant role in inter-group and ethnic relation. They assert that it is expected that members of an ethnic-group seeking social and psycholinguistic distinctiveness will invariably accentuate the ethnic markers in their speech by exhibiting remarkable speech "divergence" Instead of "convergence" in a similar VIEW, IfeinKlevian (1979) further confirms the interrelation between language and ethnic identity, He observes that members of any speech community that share one common language usually have a feeling of belonging to a particular ethnic group and all other speech communities with whom direct linguistic communication is not possible are automatically regarded as aliens.

Ogbulogo (1991) views language diversity as a result of multiple languages which Nigeria has and he further says that with the diversity of language, it has brought unity to our country, because a Yoruba man, who is from the western part of the country, can be accepted in the eastern part because of his ability of speaking their language. He further says that Nigeria could be a very great country, in any way some persons have described her as the "United States of Africa" This is no exaggeration, but often seems appropriate as a description of her potentials in terms of resources, Nigeria is potentially one of the greatest countries in the world The resources of men, languages, materials and money are sufficient to place her among the top twenty nations of the world. Unfortunately, she is not tapping her potentials. This is because among other problems such as indiscipline, Nigeria has language problems which have dwarfed and drowned her progress. This negative aspect of Nigeria is well brought out by Professor Tamuno,

Tekenathe former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan in his valedictory address; Kayode (1987)

"From one Institution to another, from one sector of our national activities to another, from one community to another, we observe this pathetic phenomenon all things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, Nigeria kills them all,"(1)

On Nigeria multilingual problems, Adejo(2002) in "Journal of faculty of Arts Seminar Series" BSU, Makurdi Vol 1, reviews Adam (2002)..

"God in His infinite Wisdom made our dear country a rain-bow collection of tribes and tongues. The rainbow in the sky is a thing of beauty. But we seem blind to the beauty in our rainbow collection of tribes and tongues. Instead, we find mutual suspicion, hate and fear in other tongue and tribes. Consequently several parts of our country are today convulsed in inter and intra-ethnic conflicts leading to loss of lives as well as the destruction of private and public property. The gun is beginning to rule and ruin our country" (248)

Indeed, the gun is beginning to rule and ruin our country as past and present ethnic crisis have shown, for example, the Nigerian-Biafra War, Plateau and Nasarawa and the subsequent invasion of Benue State by Nigerian Army in 2001. The Udi problem and other ethnic Militias disturbances, Odua Peoples Congress (OPC), Ijaw-Egbesu, and Igbo's Bakass, Boys are all signs of inherent tension in the polity.

2.4.1 Plurality (Origin) There are many myths and theories on the origin of plurality and some are discussed below.

One of the earliest accounts of the origin of language plurality is the Biblical story of the "tower of Babel" According to this myth as captured in Genesis Chapter II, verse I - 9, the whole world at that time had only one language. The people then decided to build a tower that would reach up to heaven, but this did not please the Lord who reasoned that because the people had a common language, it was easy for them to join together to do anything they wanted to. In terms of modern political thinking maybe they could even have attempted a coup d'etat so the Lord decided to confound their language and scatter them all over the face of the earth. Bamgbose, Ayo (1994).

The second account of the origin of language diversity is captured by Karl Marx and Fasold Engels (1949). In their work entitled "The origin of the family, private property and the State", Engels lays down the three stages in the development of man: savagery, barbarism and civilization.(6)

Describing the lower stage in the development of human society vagery (the infancy of the human race), Engels points out that the formation of articulate speech was the main achievement of the period. The era of barbarism followed, when more progress was made in production than in all the previous stages put together. The emergent tribes came within this period.

Under the tribal system, language was closely connected with the tribe, the highest organizational unit of which the members were aware of their mutual kingship. Engels points out that "infact, tribe and dialects are substantially coextensive" and the tribe is identifiable by its peculiar dialect.

At this stage there also came a rapid increase of the population and dense population in small areas. In quest of a living, the tribesmen had to go to other grey able and pasture lands. Those sections that have severed relations with their tribe eventually began to speak a bit different from their former kinsmen This split in tribes led to splits in their languages (9-12).

2.5 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Since Nigeria is a diverse state in terms of language and culture, a language in a diverse society like "Nigeria" also performs both administrative and official needs. Where people working together even though they are not of the same ethnic background, but because of the speaking of other languages which is not their own, they can communicate without using English language.

Language diversity brings unity, increase awareness, it foster understanding and encourages partnership

both economically and politically.

The first problem of language diversity is that, it kills indigenous language, it causes regional variations in language, it destroys the tendencies of Lingua Franca and there will be no ethnic unity. When a society has many languages and dialects like the tower of Babel, mutual understanding becomes very difficult. This has been one of the causes of bitterness and suspicion in almost every part of Nigeria, as what one says, is often misinterpreted and misunderstood by his neighbours. It also breeds favouritism, nepotism, tribalism and other social ills which will result to disunity, because many in Nigeria have the propensity to favour their own linguistic group. No wonder, it is a common place to see and hear people greeting an occupant of an office in their native language in an attempt to win favour.

2.6 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DIFFERENT VIEWS)

Recent events across Nigeria's geo-political zones have shown an increase in ethnic agitations, activism and militancy. The ethnic minorities in the multi-ethnic Nigerian nation have suddenly found fresh zeal to express their long standing grievances. National development is one of the improvement in a country, is an umbrella term which is used to mean a situation where we can adequately utilize our diverse resources.

Most times, it could be natural or human resources with the aim of benefiting things. It is a situation where people have the resource at their disposal to have a meaningful development, the people may be from different cultural backgrounds with diverse language and different values. Sentiments are put aside in a bid to work together towards the national development for the betterment and growth of their economy.

Scholars in the field of language have variously defined development, and one of such definitions is that which sees it "as economic growth and social change". Opubor (1985) views development in human society as a many-sided process. At the individual's level, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.

The achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied to the state of the society as a whole. That means national development has much to do with how people are united in a country.

Economic development is an improvement in material welfare, especially for persons with the lowest incomes, the eradication of mass poverty with its correlates of illiteracy. Kindleberger and Herrick, (1977). And in social development, we see how it has improved the social wellbeing of the citizen especially as a nation. Although, national development used to be measured in terms of increase in the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of a country. Emphasis is now placed on the content of the GDP as well as other indicators of the quality of life to see how and whether our economy has increased or decreased such indicators. Manley, (1991), summarizes development as constitutes about development as it has to do with the development of the productive forces. It has to do with the harnessing of those forces to build viable societies. National development ranges from growth in areas of politics, economy, science and technology, education, health and security and also the aspect of language.

Language plays an important role in national development as it fosters understanding, unity and sense of belonging among the various members of the different ethnic and social groups that constitute a nation. Language development is a multi-disciplinary field that has as its central question how is language learnt because language is highly complex yet universally acquired; the answer to this question has profound implications for understanding the essential nature of the human mind.

2.7 NATIONAL LANGUAGE

Writing on the importance of a national language in the educational development of a nation, Umaru .B. Ahmed in his article entitled: "the cultural content in Nigeria Education: The Language Curriculum in Ekeh Peter and Ashiwaju, G. (ed), Panel on Nigeria since independence History Project (1989) quotes SekouToure, the late President of Guinea as saying that:

The use of national language is the most efficient means to make it educationally operative the use of national language makes it possible to extend education to all people. (32)

Similarly, he quotes Babs Fafunwa, a onetime Minister of Education in Nigeria as saying:***It is universally accepted except in most African countries that a child learns best in his mother tongue and that mother tongue is natural to him as the mother's milk. (32)***

It is in line with this belief that the education of the child is meaningless without his mother tongue that the federal government of Nigeria came out with some pronouncements as evidenced in the National Policy on Education. According to (NPE 1989), the government appreciates the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the people's culture. (19)

A nation without a language of its own will lose its self-respect in the eye of the world. If this is anything to go by, then Nigeria should be the most respected country in the world, because of her many languages for a nation to function properly she has to choose a national language, this is what Nigeria has failed to do since independence because of her multilingual and multi-ethnic composition. The mechanisms for implementing national policy on education are only sound, their successes are unrealistic in the face of multiple languages to choose, secondly, the use of all the languages simultaneously is not possible, thirdly, if the choice is easy to make in the rural areas, it is

not possible to do that in urban centers because of the multilingual nature of the society that reflects in the society that reflects in the urban schools population. In the face of this dilemma, coupled with the reflection of colonial English, many Nigerians have proposed Pidgin English as an alternative, but pidgin has its own problems. For one, it lacks standardization ordinarily, the pidgin spoken in Lagos has a Yoruba flavour, while that of Enugu differs from that of Kaduna according to Akinyele, R. F. (2000), DejiOlaiya's love for "pidgin English" once compelled him to compile and publish "A Dictionary of Broken English in 1995. But while reviewing it, TaiwoAmodu, the reviewer said "the text, though enduring, generates some linguistic puzzles". Also in 1982, one Mr. Alex Igbineweka of the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) Lagos, invented an artificial language called GUOSA and hastily recommended it for Nigeria in his belief, that GUOSA could redeem the nation from oppression, tribalism, sectionalism and hatred, Punch 22nd October, 1982. But an expert opinion suggest that the energy expended on "GUOSA" was misdirected, Bamgbose (1985). The observation is thatGUOSA is an amalgamation of words of existing language and that the author fails to indicate that each time we want to form new sentence or pronounce words, we have to run helter skelter, looking for Mr. Igbineweka, the language originator.

In the language debate of 1977, Wole Soyinka also suggested "Swahili" as the lingua franca for Africa during the festival of Arts and Culture for Black Africa (FESTAC). His argument was that since "Swahili" is not associated with any ethnic group in Nigeria, the danger of ethnic domination is automatically eliminated Bamgbose, (1985) has observed that the superimposition of the proposal is not compatible with the idea of policy of education in mother tongue (100). It is also in the belief that Nigeria would not make any meaningful strides without adoption of an indigenous language, or national official language that calls .have also been made by more Nigerians to adopt one. In the National House of Assembly, debate of 21

November, 1961 M. Al-batanYerima, called on the federal government to introduce Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo and other languages into institutions of learning with a view to adopting one of them as a national official language. The motion was seconded by Mr. G. D. O. Eneh who stressed the role of a national language in promoting harmony in "multilingualand multicultural society". The same consideration encouraged M D. N. Orosanye and Baba Shehu Ibrahim to propose the adoption of Hausa as a language of unity. But these parliamentarians had hardly finished the proposal when opposition reared its ugly head. The minority ethnic members of the House feared that the majority ethnic groups were planning to dominate the country. Chief Anthony Enahoro, a minority champion vehemently condemned the majority of the proposal extolled the value of English language as a unifying factor.

2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

In linguistics, different approaches are used in the study of language. Those approaches include the functional approach, systemic approach, traditional approach and the socio-linguistic approach.

We believe that no one framework can be ideal to a study such as this. Thus, much as we may want to adopt an eclectic approach to this research, we are however better placed to accommodate or use the ethnography of communication theory whose main proponent is Dell Hymes (Babatunde and Adeyanju, n.d.) According to Dell Hymes (in Babatunde and Adeyanju, n.d. the ethnography of communication theory is: *how the conventions of language use relate to other aspects of social behaviour. It refers to a speaker's knowledge of what variety of language to use in what situation, how to vary style with the audience addressed, when to speak or remain silent, when and what kinds of gesture are required with what speech. P(32)*

Furthermore, looking at the theory, we would see that language and culture are inseparable, they are interwoven. This of course, is the major preoccupation of this field of sociolinguistic, to which this theory is one among others that are used to discuss sociolinguistic findings (see Babatunde Shola and Adeyanju, Dele(ed)(527 —534).

According to Babatunde Shola andAdeyanju Dele(ed): (2002) the ethnography of communication theory revolves around the various factors that affect speaking a language in an ethno-linguistically diverse society like Nigeria. Therefore, the theory is encapsulated into the word **SPEAKING** which is seen as an acronym for the following:

- S - Setting of a speech event, i.e. the time and place of the communicative event.
- P - Participants in the communicative content i.e. speakers and hearers (interlocutors).
- E - Ends i.e. the conventionally recognized outcome of a linguistic exchange as well as the goals of interlocutors in a particular communicative context.

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