



## **LANGUAGE AND GLOBALIZATION: A PANACEA FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

In every situation, language and globalization have major roles to play in our daily lives. They grow concurrently with every human society and there is no interactive situation where language is used without the corresponding reference based on its nature. Therefore, this paper tries to investigate if language and globalization could help for national development. The researchers of this work employed the study of published works as to gather facts and extract information from textbooks, journals, festschrift, internet, dictionary, etc for the work. The theory the researchers used for this work were Linguistic Relativity Theory and World-System Theory. Findings showed that a normal human being is believed to spend about 70% of his working hours in communication. Globalization produced new channels, networks and practices which are not dependent on geographical proximity rather on language. Globalization in relation to language portends a global common language which offers unprecedented possibilities for mutual understanding and thus enables us to find fresh opportunities for international cooperation. The paper concludes by proffering some solutions to the problem and maintains that language and globalization are of great importance for national development.

**Keywords:** Language, Globalization and National Development.

### **Introduction**

Language and national development are an examination of language and more of its possibilities in relation to national development. The major function of language in national development is only but to facilitate communication among the citizenry and as well to coordinate the citizens' joint actions and efforts towards the nation's desired goals and objectives. What this means is that the whole world at a time had only one language, the people decided to build a tower that would reach up to heaven, this idea was not pleasing to God who reasoned that because the people had a common language, it was easy for them to join together in doing whatever they wanted. For this reason, in terms of modern political thinking, maybe they could even have attempted a *coup de'tat*, so the Lord decided to confound their language and scatter them all over the world (Fuller 1979: 11).



Put succinctly, this endorses the possibilities of language in national development. Owing to the fact that the people had only one language, they were able to communicate, cooperate and coordinate or channel their efforts towards a desired goal which was to build a tower to heaven. But when they no longer had a common language, communication with one another became very difficult (Genesis 11:1-9).

Therefore, language is the vehicle for the attainment of national goals. Building of physical infrastructures or other phases of national development, language is needed to initiate and make joint actions possible with immediate effect. It is through language that necessary awareness, re-orientation or harmonization of the people's value towards the national objectives is created. There could be no other effective way one could have achieved these feats for, with language we inform, explain, discuss, debate, negotiate, persuade, dialogue and so on agree on issues. Language can facilitate common goals especially when it is used and understood by the generality of the citizenry.

On the other hand, language can impede national development when it is not commonly used or understood by the people. It is not commonly used or understood when about 15% of the population of a nation understand, not only that, it can also be used while about 85% do not use or understand the language as the case may be with many developing countries.

It is pertinent to note that there is a close relationship between the language that is commonly used or identified within a nation and national development of that nation. Considering the importance of that nation, considering the importance of language, it is obvious that no country can possibly exist as a nation, let alone develop, without a commonly used language, a *Lingua franca* or an official language. Worthy of note that a commonly used language in a particular country is tantamount to that country having a common culture, identity and common world view.

Also, without a common language, the country soon lacks social and political cohesion to identify and set common or national goals and objectives which form the bedrock of national development. Without a common language, the country soon degenerates into a collection of mere tribal enclaves each of which is won to pursue its own selfish interests at the expense of the others, which could lead to a breakdown of law and order among participating tribes and eventually culminate into chaos and disintegration of the linguistic entities making up the country.

Any country without a common language is therefore at risk for general insecurity arising from suspicion, distrust and lack of faith among the citizenry. Ndimele (2004:32) suggests that "globalization has reduced transaction costs of international commerce, so that the global economy is becoming more and more integrated. He adds that business now increasingly operates in global markets not only for products, but also for corporate control.

Emenanjo (2006:1) states that language is any system employed in giving, transmitting, receiving, sharing, exchanging or hiding information which can be made up of sounds, signals, signs, symbols, postures, gestures and even silence. It is essentially a communication system.

Language is, today, an inseparable part of human society and human civilization has been possible only through language. Therefore, importance of language cannot be over-emphasized in as much as both humans and animals have their languages in which they communicate, share ideas and solve their personal problems. Though there are different patterns of languages which include written, spoken and sign languages. The focus of this paper is on spoken language only. For the fact that globalization is the free movement of goods, capital, services, people, technology and information. Sometimes, it is only when people are able to move freely from one society to the other and from one nation to the other they will have contact for everything they do. Take for instance the importation of foreign products which are imported to Nigeria, when these products are demanded by the people that are in need of them, communication must have taken place. In other words, whether the language is local or foreign it has taken place between one nation and the other.



Also, when these goods arrive in our society, globalization has taken place.

Moreso, for the fact that different cultures and economic systems around the world are becoming connected and similar to each other because of the influence of large multinational companies and of improved communication, globalization could pave way for national development.

In an increasingly interconnected world, language serves as both a bridge and a barrier to globalization and national development. While globalization promotes cross-cultural communication, economic growth and technological advancement, linguistic diversity and language policies often influence a nation's ability to integrate into the global landscape. Many developing nations struggle with balancing local linguistic heritage with the need for a global lingua franca, such as English, to enhance trade, education, and diplomacy. This study seeks to examine how language can be effectively leveraged as a tool for globalization and national development, addressing challenges related to linguistic diversity, policy formulation, and educational frameworks. Additionally, it aims to explore whether language globalization is truly a 'panacea' for national development or if it poses risks of cultural erosion and inequality. This study aims to:

- i. examine the impact of language and globalization: A panacea for national development, identifying key factors influencing outcomes,
- ii. provide recommendations for improving language and globalization: A panacea for national development based on findings, and to enhance effectiveness and applicability.

This work employed a qualitative research approach. Data were collected from textbooks, journals, festschrift, etc. By investigating all these aspects, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on language and globalization: A panacea for national development.

## Conceptual Framework

### Language

Language has series definitions by different scholars. According to Akpamgbo (2016), "language is an essential tool which is derived from everyday vocabulary of the society. She adds that language is a laconic, concise, tight, loaded and vigorous". To that effect, what the researchers observed is that language is strong, active and as well has a rapid growth when often used and as well grows grudgingly when it is not used regularly.

Okere (2018) in her own view sees language as a "symbol system based on pure or arbitrary conventions ... infinitely extendable and modifiable based on the changing needs and condition of the speakers. Moreso, she expands her view on language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group cooperates.

Anagbogu, Mbah and Eme assert that "language is very important to man. They add that it is the only thing that makes man distinct from other animals for he is the only animal that uses language systematically as a means of communication".

### Globalization

An essential aspect of globalization is movement of people, as transportation technology improved travel time and costs decreased dramatically between the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. An instance is drawn where travel across the Atlantic Ocean used to take up to 5 weeks in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but around the time of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it took a mere 8 days. But today, modern aviation has made long distance transportation quick and affordable.

Tourism is travel for pleasure. The developments in technology and transport infrastructure such as jumbo jets, low-cost airlines and more accessible airports have made many types of tourism more affordable. Globalization is referred to as movement of people from one country to the other.



International tourist arrivals surpassed the milestone of one billion tourists globally for the first time in 2012. Visa is also a conditional authorization granted by a country to a foreigner, thereby allowing people to enter and temporarily remain within, or to leave that country. Some countries such as those in the Schengen area have agreements with other countries allowing each other's citizens to travel between them without visas.

Globalization is associated with a dramatic rise in international education. More and more students are seeking higher education in foreign countries and many international students now consider overseas study a stepping-stone to permanent residency within the country. Globalization can be spread by global journalism which provide massive information and rely on internet to interact, makes it into an everyday routine to investigate how people and their actions, practices, problems, life condition, etc. in different parts of the world are interrelated possible to assume that global threats such as climate change precipitate the further establishment of global journalism.

Hornby (2015:665) opines that "globalization is the fact that different cultures and economic systems around the world are becoming connected and similar to each other because of the influence of large multinational companies and of improved communication". Okeke (2011:663) asserts that "globalization is the process of increasing interconnectedness between societies such that effect in one part of the globe have effects on societies far away on the other side. When one talks about a globalized world, economic and social events become interconnected and have more impact. In other words, globalization is a concept that captures the historic process of the widening and deepening of systematic interdependencies amongst nations, civilizations and political communities. No wonder Orubu and Awopegba (2003:663) believe that globalization is the increasing tendency towards integration of countries into the world economy as well as contacts among business, situations and countries across the national boundaries.

Therefore, the researchers of this work view globalization as the free movement of goods, capital, services, people, technology and information. This explains the type of roles language and globalization play for national development.

### **National Development**

National development according to Ike (2007:223) is the growth of a country educationally, economically, socially, culturally, etc. On the other hand, the people's cultural values are not left out in national development. A good political leadership ensures the projection and dissemination of the people's cultural ideals and values and ensures in turn that necessary moral and ethical values rooted in the culture are preserved, inculcated and promoted within the country and beyond.

Nonetheless, what the layman usually have in mind at the mention of national development is in no way far from the above. National development involves a lot more than physical infrastructures. Owing to its very positive sense, it involves a change in the individual, a reorientation towards national goals and the harnessing of resources for the development of the nation and the welfare of its citizens. In other words, infrastructures are not enough to ensure a nation's development, the attitudes of the citizenry towards national development.

National development therefore can be said to comprise two important components which are physical and non-physical components. Physical component consists of physical infrastructures of development whereas the other component consists of the ideals, values and desired attitudes that not only ensure unity, peace and tranquility but also the attainment of the national goals and objectives.



### Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt the Linguistic Relativity Theory by Sapir-Whorf (1920 - 1930). The main aim of the theory was language influences, thought and perception which means that linguistic structures really affect how an individual and society understand and interact with the world. The theory suggests that the language a particular people speak influences their thought and worldview. Therefore, in globalization and national development context, linguistic relativity simply means that language shapes how a particular society engages with global trends, technology and economic opportunities. This theory maintains that; any country that embraces multilingualism and global languages such as English, Mandarin and French, can integrate better into the global economy. More so, it fosters development through international trade, diplomacy and cultural exchange.

Another theory adequate to this research is the World-System Theory proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein (1974). This theory is emphasizing that, the world is divided into core developed, semi-peripheral and peripheral developing nations with economic and political power concentrated in core nations. Language plays a vital role on how countries integrate into global economy, thereby influencing national development in our society today. In other words, this theory explains globalization as a system of interdependent economies where core nations i.e. developed countries dominate peripheral and semi-peripheral nations i.e. developing countries. It is concerned with the role language plays in this dynamic, as countries that adopt global languages and communication networks can move up the economic ladder by attracting foreign investments, improving education and enhancing workforce competitiveness. To this effect, it supports national development by creating access to global markets and knowledge.

### The Role of Language and Globalization for National Development Communication

Language and globalization have had far-reaching effects on our lifestyle. It has led to faster access to technology, improved communication and innovation. Apart from playing an important role in bringing people of different cultures together, it has ushered in a new era in the economic prosperity and has opened up vast channels of development. However, language and globalization have also created some areas of concern and prominent among these is the impact that they have had on the environment. Language and globalization have featured extensively in the debates of environmentalism and green activists where they have highlighted its far-reaching effects. Let us know about the impact of language and globalization in our environment.

Activists have pointed out that language and globalization have made an input in the consumption of products, which has impacted the ecological cycle. Increased consumption leads to an increase in the production of goods and services. Language and globalization have also helped in the production of foreign products used in Africa by the masses, such products like rice, canned foods, stock fish, frozen foods such as turkey, chicken, fish, etc.

### Movement of People

In various parts of the world, mountains were being cut to make way for a passing tunnel or a highway. One of the essential aspects of globalization is movement of people.

#### Political

In general, multi-level governance gives expression to the idea that there are many interacting authority structures at work in the emergent global political economy. Without language, it will be difficult for politicians to pass messages across both locally and internationally. This is because, it is through the *Lingua Franc* that people understand one another. In politics today, the language in which politicians reach out to the people helps for national development.





If there is no language, people are bound to lose their votes due to communication gap. Because it is when you speak to people that they will understand you before requesting something from them.

### **Movement of Information**

In **ages** past, to pass an important information was difficult. Nowadays, globalization has made it easier. Before electronic communications, long-distance communications relied on mail which may likely take almost one month before it gets to the owner. Speed of global communications was limited by the maximum speed of courier services especially horses and ships until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The electric telegraph was the first method of instant long-distance communication. For instance, before the first transatlantic cable, communications between **Europeans** and the Americans took weeks because ships had to carry mail across the ocean. The first transatlantic cable reduced communication time considerably, allowing a message and a response in the same day. Lasting transatlantic telegraph connections were achieved in the 1865- 1866. The first wireless telegraph transmitters were developed in 1895. But now, the internet has been instrumental in connecting people across geographical boundaries.

Globalization can be spread by global journalism which provide massive information and rely on internet to interact. This makes it into an everyday routine to investigate how people and their actions, practices, problems, life conditions, etc. in different parts of the world are interrelated possible to assume that global threats such as climate change precipitate the further establishment of global journalism.

### **Movement of Goods and Services**

Economic globalization is the increasing economic interdependence of national economies across the world through a rapid increase in cross-border movement of goods, services, technology and capital whereas the globalization of business is centered around the diminution of international trade regulations as well as tariffs, taxes and as well other impediment that suppresses global trade. Economic globalization is the process of increasing economic integration between countries, leading to the emergence of a global market place or a single world market. Depending on the paradigm, economic globalization can be viewed as either a positive or a negative phenomenon. Economic globalization comprises the globalization of production, markets, competition, technology and corporations and industries. Current globalization trends can be largely accounted for by developed economies integrating with less developed economies by means of foreign direct investment.

International standards have made trade in goods and services more efficient. An example of such standard is the intermodal container. Containerization dramatically reduced transport of its costs, supported the post-war boom, in international trade, and was a major element in globalization. International standard setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations. If trade facilitation can look into how procedures and controls governing the movement of goods across national borders, then things can improve to reduce associated cost burdens and maximize efficiency while safeguarding legitimate regulatory objectives.

In fact, global trade in services is also significant. Let us draw instance from India, business process outsourcing has been described as the primary engine of the country's development over the next few decades. No wonder Robinson's theoretical approach to globalization is a critique of Wallerstein's world systems theory. He believes that the global capital experienced today is due to a new and distinct form of globalization which began in the 1980s.



Robinson argues not only that economic activities expanded across national boundaries but also there is a transnational fragmentation of these activities. One important aspect of his globalization theory is that production of goods is increasingly global.

### **Cultural Globalization**

This refers to the transmission of ideas, meanings and values around the world in such a way as to extend and intensify social relations. This process is marked by the common consumption of cultures that have been diffused by the internet, popular culture media and international travel. This has added to processes of commodity exchange and colonization which have a longer history of carrying cultural meaning around the globe. The circulation of cultures enables individuals to partake in extended social relations that cross national and regional borders. Cultural globalization involves the formation of shared norms and knowledge with which people associate their individual and collective cultural identities. It brings increasing interconnectedness among different populations and cultures. Cultural globalization has a link with language which means they are interwoven and cannot be separable. This means without language, there will not be culture.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Having reviewed some related literature on language and globalization, we discovered that language and globalization are really a veritable tool for national development which cannot be overemphasized. The researchers found out that, without language, the world will be a flux of confused states due to the fact that it will be impossible to, in the process of thinking out something positive which moves things to greater level to achieve expected goals for national development. This is why Mbah (2018:37) posits that “language is the barrier that fries our thought process into ideas. In other words, globalization on its own has made so many positive changes in our lives that reversing it is impossible. The researchers are of the opinion that one of the ways to achieve national development is globalization which lends support to building a better structure which is economically feasible and environment-friendly.

Succinctly, language and globalization have changed the way we lived and think. The way we look at life and human rights, the internet websites such as YouTube, Facebook or just internet connect people across the planet demonstrating huge similarity in the materialistic aspirations of people across the globe from furnishing of living spaces to design of apartments, education has also become global, scientific researchers is more widely available and supported even the way we follow religion has also changes as most of us are no longer forced to remain in boundaries of our culture and religion. Therefore, if there is no language, there will be no communication.

### **Suggestion**

The writers of this work suggest that language and globalization are a veritable tool for national development. As people of different ethnic groups communicate and know what is needed by another country for life to continue, and for the global world we live in to forge ahead, there are roles needed by people, governments, etc. Therefore, we suggest that people should not abuse this opportunity either by fraud or other means for the sustenance of national development. Because no nation would like to come last rather, they would want to grow by reaching the greater height. The youths in particular should avoid fraudulent act for Nigeria to achieve what they want.



The governments on their own should try as much as possible to provide some necessary amenities such as security in the states, electricity, water supply, quality education, implementation of policies, employment opportunities especially for the youths to avoid ending up being fraudsters, kidnappers etc.

Therefore, we say that language and globalization are the pioneer for national development. When there is communication gap in all our dealings, there may be chances of crises. If all said here are pinned down, definitely there will be a positive change for national development to talk effect.

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