

LANGUAGE, MUSIC AND DANCE AS TOOLS FOR POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE IGALA PEOPLE OF KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

Alhassan Abubakar Musa

Department of Arts Education (English), Faculty of Education Kogi State University, Anyigba

Omada Margaret Onyekunin

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences Kogi State University, Anyigba

Friday Eneojo Ikani

Department of Igala Language, Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa

Sadiq Muhammad

Department of Arts and Social Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

ABSTRACT: *The paper examines the Igala language, music and dance as veritable tools to provide credible platforms for proffering solutions to the problems of humanity. The main objective is to appraise the contributions of language, music and dance to poverty reduction through employment generation, carrier development and job opportunity. Content analysis was adopted which made use of secondary data as the only source of data generation. Findings revealed that the Igala people have very rich culture and traditions which are expressed in language, music and dance. Also, the Igala culture has the ability to communicate instructions to the audience without spoken words and the ability of the hearer to also understand inwardly. The study recommends among others that the art of communicating verbally in language music and dance should be harnessed for carrier development, job creation, employment opportunity in order to reduce poverty scourge in the society.*

KEYWORDS: Language, poverty reduction, music, dance communication.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty and its ravaging effects on its victim is a major problem facing the whole wide world. According to Adah and Taiwo (2017), the endemic poverty situation in Kogi State is deepening and pervasive and that poverty situation in Kogi presents a sight of rural communities that defines poverty all-encompassing in itself. This paper treats language, music and dance and how they create employment and help in poverty reduction among Igala people for sustainable national development with communicative competence as a base for career opportunities. Language is used for communication in human endeavours as a gift from our creator and the instrument that differentiates man from animals. Language is a system of vocal communication that comprises a

circumscribed set of noises resulting from movements of certain organs within the throat and mouth (Funmi, 2013). By means of these movements man is able to impart information, to express feelings and emotions, to influence the activities of others, and comport him/herself with varying degrees of friendliness or hostility towards persons who make use of substantially the same set of noises. This set of noises to compose music and directs steps that make meaning to the senses, thereby creating songs and different ways of dancing that appeal to all social classes. Language, music and dance make sustainable development, which meets the needs of the past without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Hence the need to examine the role of language in music and dance and how it assist in reducing poverty among igalas in Kogi State.

The social relevance of language, music and dance is great. It is not only an abstract art, but as a force which affects the lives' of the people who acquire it. The acquirers are helped to live and contribute positively towards the progress and development of the nation. It is an attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young and old people gain the ability, authority and capacity to make decisions and implement changes in their own lives and lives of other people in the society. Through language, music and dance the youths have been gainfully employed in Kogi State Arts and culture, civil engagement self development through language, music and dance amongst Igala race, have become tools for unity, co-operation, oneness, which forster progress and development if harnessed appropriately.

LANGUAGE

Language is man's greatest endowment which enables him to communicate with others and pass on the age-long heritage from generation to generation. The possession of the powers of manipulating language to suit one's different purposes confers on one ability to fit into many aspects of life where the delicate, accurate and fluent use of language may be needed. Language is an important aspect of human development. It is a strong tool, an instrument, a weapon and equally a solid foundation for achieving human goals, little or no success is recorded in any societal endeavour without the use of language. Language is defined as a vehicle for communicating messages and meanings. Language is a tool that enables human beings to express their thoughts and feelings and gives a sense of belonging and security (Muhd, 2012).

Language is the unique property of human beings. Sustainable development of a man be it intellectual, moral, political, social or economic depends largely on the instrumentality of language. Similarly, language is used for communication in human endeavours. It is purely a non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, thoughts, emotions and feelings by means of voluntarily produced symbols (Muhd, 2012). Language is equally seen as indispensable in the elaboration of thoughts. Of course, when we think, we think in a language, and it has to do with words. Our knowledge of words in a particular language is all that makes it possible for us to understand our friends and associates. The advancement in especially in technology, especially information and communication has turned the world into a global village. This advances the idea expressed by (Okotie, 2010) that communication through language is the basic foundation for all human cooperation, without which no civilization is possible. For human beings, communication is unique because it involves the use of language.

Ugwu, (2012) defines language as the primary and most highly elaborated form of human symbolic activity. It is made up of symbolic sounds produced by the vocal apparatus arranged in classes and patterns, which make up a complex and symmetrical structure. Every language is model of a culture and its adjustment to the world. It has the ability to create recreate innovations. Funmi, (2013) says language is any set or system of linguistic symbols as used m a more or less uniform fashion by a number of people who are enabled to communicate intelligibly with one another. Language is culture bound. It is both an index and an integral part of culture. Since language is an integral part of culture, each language becomes a model of expressing a culture and a “World View”. In sports, fans from different African countries get together in one location, displaying their different cultures in songs, drumming and dances and expressing their various cultures to the excitement of players and others.

LANGUAGE IN MUSIC

Sounds of music are formed by means of language. Words are coined to compose songs which are combined of different levels in a manner agreeable to the ear. The creativity in music provides human beings opportunities to interact in intimate yet ordered and socially described ways. It deepens understanding. It knows no barriers. It is often said to be an international language, a universal language. A melodious music produced in a particular language can be understood across linguistic barriers. Purely instrumental music can convey messages to all and sundry, irrespective of colour, race or creed, even if it is not necessarily the same message that gets conveyed to all at the same time by the same piece of music by means of language (Sunday, 2013).

The universality of language makes it possible to convey a message of sustainable piece to another African who understands the particular language that conveys the message. Each language is adequate for communication within the culture where it is used. There is no such thing as a primitive language. Each language is just as structured as any other language, otherwise, it would not be a human language, since it would be impossible for any human being to learn it. The social relevant of language and music is profound. Music is a force that affects the lives of people and stimulates creative thought, inspires them, gives them a sense of belonging, beauty, energy, strength and encourages them to enhance other aspects or everyday life. Language in music has as one of its cardinal objectives, the provision of experiences and the enforcement of players in sports. The composer of music is confronted with language of different kinds to send a message across to all and sundry.

DANCE

Dance may range from a social pastime to theoretical performance or from religious rites to fitness-related activity. In one form or another, it appeals to all social classes and widely ranging levels of artist tastes (Kabiru, 2016). Some dances are centuries old; others evolved only yesterday. Dance has become an important part of our cultural, recreational and educational experience. But what is dance? Why does it continue to have a strong appeal on all of us human beings, for both spectator and participant? What essentially is the meaning and purpose of dance in human society? One might consider the meaning and purpose of dance from several viewpoints in terms of the etymological source of the word; or through historical examination how dance was viewed in

earlier societies; or through the eyes of the philosopher, the psychologist, the anthropologist, the dance critic or the dancer. All of these' viewpoints will be helpful in framing the definition and purpose of dance (Sunday, 2013).

Dance is to jump, to hop, to prance, to sway, to tread, to tip 'toe' and to move the feet, hands and body in certain rhythm, measures and movements consisting of jumps, bending the body, straddling, limping, bending the knees, rising on tip-toe, throwing-forward the feet, changes and other movements. Dancing is an art both pleasing and profitable, which confers and preserves health, as adapted for the youthful agreeable to the age and suitable for all. It all depends on music that is composed in a language consisting of words because without the virtue of rhythm, dancing would be meaningless and confused, so much so that it is necessary that the gestures of the limbs should keep time with the musical instruments (Hamilton-Ekeke, 2013). Dancing is the art of composing steps with grace, precisions and facility to the time and bars given in the music just as music itself is simply the art of combining sounds and modulations so that they afford pleasure to the ear, body and soul. Language, music and dance are a symbol whole of complex communication, a vehicle for conceptualization. It is a Para-language, a semiotic system; one cannot succeed without the other.

There are many artists with thrilling music and dance in Igala land, examples are:

Olele
Sabada
Ogani
Inakw
Abele
Ogba
Alede

The igala music and dance are source of entertainment that relaxes the souls of individuals and also forster peaceful co-existence within the society. The value chain in language, mix, composition of songs as music, dancing steps are all viable job opportunities. Language, music and dance are the food of the soul. This why every occasion of human endavour is laced with musical background for example, whether humans are celebrating or mourning, music is needed. Language, music and dance are nearly a universal behavior with a history probably as old as humanity itself. Since antiquity, paintings friezes, sculptures, myths, oral expressions and then literature have attested to the existence of language, music and dance. Language is the way human beings communicate with one another and music is art and the act of combining sounds of different levels in a manner which is agreeable to the ears of human beings while dance is the making of rhythmical steps and movement for human beings' sake. These three things make life worth living for human beings. Language, music and dance have a strong appeal for human beings. Even when not physically manifest, the concept and vision emerge in our thinking. It is embedded in our being.

EMPLOYMENT THROUGH LANGUAGE, MUSIC AND DANCE

The social relevance of language, music and dance is profound. It is not only an abstract art, but as a force which affects the lives of the people who acquire it. Such experiences help the acquirers

to live and contribute positively towards the progress and development of the society. This is an attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young and old people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement changes in their own lives and the lives of other people in the society.

Through language, music and dance the youths have been gainfully employed. This is regarded as a gateway to intergenerational equity, civic engagement and building democracy. Many local, state, provincial, regional and international government agencies and nonprofit making community based organizations make programmes on “A night of thousand laughs”, engaging youths and other people. Language, music and dance occupy a prominent position in die building of a self-reliant nation through the building of a self-reliant individual (Sunday. 2013). Building a self-reliant person means making him independent in the context of self-reliance through sell employment. Self-employment reduces the incidence of the unemployment syndrome, which is a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of society. This in part may account for the inclusion of music education in our school curriculum because it has the ability to satisfy needs and aspirations of both the individual and society at large.

Music as a comprehensive education system is geared towards a functional and artistic career in the society. As a functional career, therefore, music education has the potential and ability of making or training a learner to be self-reliant on graduation. Sunday, (2013) confirmed the above view when he observed that Music education is highly useful because its occupational content offers learners the opportunity to acquire skills, attitudes, interests and knowledge to perform education, socio-political and economic activities that are beneficial not only to themselves but to the society in general. Such skills and the acquisition of vocational training are useful for the future, and enable a graduate to be self-reliant, thereby alleviating poverty in the country.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY THROUGH LANGUAGE AND MUSIC

Language and Music are by and large regarded as a creative and performance oriented profession. Consequently, students of music education are expected to be creators of the art form, composers and performers on one or more instruments or voice. A few talented student combine the real branches of composition and performance. The university degree in music, in addition to assured form and analysis, orchestration, history, musicology and criticism is taken for granted by anybody who holds B.A (Hons) in Language or Music from any Nigerian University. Many of those who hold university degrees in music are expected to be employed as teachers or lecturers in our secondary schools or tertiary institutions. Music students from the Nigerian universities have not been accorded due recognition they deserved. Hence, they are pushed to the classroom. Others had to establish their own bonds, studies, orchestral or choral groups or get involved in cultural administration, broadcasting stations and other opportunities in the music industry. This is a very important contribution to the society and the nation at large (Ugwu, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Language plays a major role in the life of man on earth. Every human activity revolves around language. The way language is employed, however, will determine the success or otherwise of the

communication process. For any artist to succeed, he must have adequate communicative skills to thrill his audience for sustainable national development and for continuity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussions, the following recommendations are made Teachers should use communicative tasks representing real life situations in interactive classes. These tasks, which must include role-play, should be geared towards artistic skills development.

1. The art of effective communication through language, music and dance should be harnessed holistically for carrier development, job creation, employment opportunity.

2. The rich Igala culture and traditions can further be developed with advancement in ICT in order to make the music and dance more competitive and rewarding.

Teachers should be adequately trained on how to manage communicative language lessons, especially in this era of the explosion in technology. Students should be encouraged to see the power of language and the knowledge of the linguistic and correct usage of words in their contexts. Since everybody in the universe sings and dances, the young and old should be encouraged to use the right words for the composition of songs and direct dancing steps for self development, which will lead to self- empowerment. It goes a long way to aid health hazards like blood pressure, cranks, etc.

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