

LANGUAGE DISCOURSE FOR SURVIVAL OF BUSINESS CONCERN

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Abstract

Rewording the assertion of Emily Dickson (a poet), which avers that in the beginning was the language. It implies that language possesses some mystical or magical powers that influence human experience/development. So, language engenders communication which exercises an almost hypnotic fascination in entrepreneurial enterprise for sustainable development. Every emerging entrepreneur or established one has to have a firm grip of the language power to maximize his target objectives, in his business. This enables him to develop some positive attitudes towards language which is an important aspect in his development of human capacity. In short, language education helps the entrepreneur to manipulate the developmental skills of his language style into brilliant patterns of presentations of his market concepts, regardless of the quality of his goods or services, to the target market. Therefore, every business communication is built around the composite communicative skills of language that enables the entrepreneur to look for given concepts and discover novel information activated by new ideas. This paper presents language discourse (education) as the technical approach for the application of entrepreneurial skill, which is the centre-point that accounts for 'what is found', the business development, has to be recorded accordingly through the enabling skills, within the confines of the temporal, psychological, spatial, physical and cultural within the business locale. These determine the communicative strategies that sway the social and psychological world of that target environment for the service.

Introduction

Language manipulates deeply in every human endeavour such as thought, perception, reason, etc. It is the receptacle of the user's culture, worldview or experiences, which are embodied within the integrated (linguistic) or communicative skills. These skills are well laid out in

language education, based on the target needs of entrepreneur must develop language power that is built around the composite linguistic skills, which include listening, reading, writing and speaking. These skills are very necessary for every entrepreneur to develop his business enterprise, to optimal level.

The hypnotic power of language lies on the user's ability to think and influence his environment accordingly. This implies that language is an important element in the development of human capacity, and therefore no meaningful development is achievable in any human society without language. So, being an instrument of communication, it makes it possible for the interactants in any linguistic environment to interact and co-exist to create an enabling situation for continuity of the society (Jiboku 185).

It is a necessary tool for maximum self-realization, self-actualization and self-development, for the growth of entrepreneurship and business survival. According to Jiboku (186), it is the only means of acquiring education in a meaningful way and also there is a close tie between language, education and development.

The springboard of every industrialized nation is the development of entrepreneurial activities. The average developed nation is so developed today, because of the entrepreneurial attitude and concept of its citizenry. The people in those nations are responsible and willing enough not to wait for the government to do everything for them. Rather, the entrepreneurs create a niche for themselves by being creative and innovative optimally to identify, establish and run their business enterprise, despite the environmental constraints. These resilient qualities help to develop the entrepreneurs themselves and their communities by providing jobs for others thereby complementing in development of a nation.

Thus, entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of any individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment, and be able to establish and run a business enterprise successfully, through the identifiable opportunities and communicative skills. The entrepreneur is one who perceives business opportunities and takes advantages of available scarce resources to exploit the opportunities profitably. It is also the process of creating something new with value, on developing the necessary time and efforts assuming the accompanying financial and social risks and receiving the restating reward. The entrepreneur bears the non-insurable risk in his enterprise, and directs the human and material resources in his business objective. To be an entrepreneur is not just enough to be a businessman who manages an enterprise but it is one who has to be an originator of profitable business ideas. It is believed that the single function which constitutes entrepreneurship is innovation, which the business directors is mostly engaged in

managerial activities, which are non- entrepreneurial. The emphasis must be placed in the ability to gain the command of the nuances inherent in the network of linguistic skills and the combination of the factors of production in a new way which will be profitable; to enable the entrepreneur to be prepared to risk and develop his personal energy and financial resources to achieve unpredictable results.

Entrepreneurial Development

The decision to live a career or lifestyle is not an easy one. It takes a great deal of energy and courage to change and do something new and different. Although individuals tend to start business in areas that are unfamiliar; but a strong incentive to overcome the inertia and live a present lifestyle to create something new comes from negative forces (resign, retire or be retrenched). A reasonable number of companies are formed by people who have retired, resigned or retrenched. Kayode (150) states that the number of new business increased by 12 percent during a lay off period.

Thus, entrepreneurial development is conceived as a programme of activities to enhance the knowledge, skills behaviour and attitudes of individuals or groups to assure the role of entrepreneurs as well as efforts to remove all forms of barriers in the path of entrepreneurship. This is anchored on the firm belief that entrepreneurship involves a body of knowledge, skills and attitudes which can be learned and applied by most people who are sufficiently motivated. In contrast to the idea that entrepreneurs are born, entrepreneurship development recognizes that many individuals have latent potentials to fit to the role of entrepreneurs. These programmes are geared towards educating the prospective entrepreneurs who may have difficulty in expressing ideas on paper which means that good concepts may never be fully understood or valued. And also, they are expected to be skilled in the effective report writing, to enable them exchange information, ideas, opinions and decisions between people of all classes, “internally and externally, make vital contributions to organizational success” (Umera-Okeke 67). In addition, most entrepreneurs spend most of their working time writing letters and compelling reports for smooth running of their business enterprise.

Language in Use

Language is the vehicle man uses to communicate his ideas or feelings to his outer self. It is this unique attribute that helps him to make inter-personal relationship possible (Nwankwo 109) and manipulates possibilities, to create a unique world of its own. Nwankwo further avers that language is the most highly developed means of human communication and without language there would be limits to human cooperation or human capacity development. In addition, Trudgill (198) posits that language does not only communicate information, but it is also a very

important form of establishing and maintaining relationship with human person and his environment.

Language and communication are inseparable centerpiece of all human development or consciousness. So, language, as the means of communication, is the bedrock of any educational processes. Nwankwo (122) states that whether formal or informal, education is carried out through the means of human language. In fact, it is truly an inter-disciplinary subject that promotes or facilitates the intellectual development of entrepreneurs, for sustainable development in any nation (Nduka 54).

Indeed, it is the medium for externalizing and objectifying the innovative thought processes conceived in human mind for simulative and descriptive purposes in order to develop the environment or society; people develop appropriate language to suit their contextual needs; such language is used as “the medium of communication the transmission of knowledge, culture and values, and for the articulation of their world-view” (Ndianegoo 171). So, it helps to concretize thought in order to explore, discover, extend, and record the experiences in a culture (Akindele & Adegbite 25) or in a socio-cultural context.

Akindele and Adegbite (55) further assert that language is the only available means in which the human social experiences and values of a group of people are perceived (or expressed) and understood. So, for sustained development of any business enterprise, the entrepreneurial expertise must be immersed in language arts which will enable him to manipulate the functional use of language by being creative and productive in his business pursuit, and also, achieve effective communication of ideas through clarity of expression in all situations demanding the use of language (Nduka 52).

So, language is the heart and soul of communication. This can be shown in our experiences which are interpreted and organized through the medium of language (Ugoji 81). A lot of noteworthy achievements have been done in science and technology, arts and crafts by man through his ability to use language; because without the use of it, these achievements would not have been possible. In fact, it is a great tool which has facilitated and still facilitating human civilization (Verghese 89). Therefore, the primacy of language in education is not in contention. It is an interactive process involving language and subject experts. The collaboration between them will result in the proper development of the entrepreneurial communication skills (Ugoji 86). He further states that in an ideal classroom situation, it is expected that all other subject teachers would require the input from language and content. So, anyone who is involved in

importing knowledge should realize the fact that language is persuasive throughout education (Wallwork 74).

Language in Discourse

Man's ability to think and influence his environment is through the mechanism of language. It brings human thought to the forecourt of social development, which facilitates interaction or communication among group or group of people, such as professionals, finding a common ground for understanding of their interests and common realities. It also engenders continuum in the growth of society in all its spheres. In fact, language is the heart and soul of all human endeavours. Essentially, therefore, it is the integral part of our social structure, which defines us as human beings. It is almost impossible for us to engage in meaningful or significant social, intellectual and artistic activities with recourse to language as a means for the extraction for the meaning. It is not only used in saying things, it is also in the performance of actions, that is, doing things.

On this note, the speech act theory of James Austin is premised on this, by asserting that performativity legislates changes in the world. Therefore, the meaning potential of language possessing reflexivity together with performativity was discovered, which "describes and simultaneously, shapes or changes the external world" (Laury 401). In addition, Austin's speech act types are locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. They are highly departmentalized and critical in knowledge or information sharing and communicative situations.

The act of uttering, producing meaningful sounds or words with a particular reference to referent, which takes into cognizance certain grammatical rules or components, which include: phonetic (phonological), phatic (syntactic) and rhetic (both sense and denotation). It is the formal and literal meaning of an utterance (Osisanwo 63) shared by the interlocutors or interactants. The listener or hearer decodes the operational meaning of the speaker's utterance from the shared knowledge of information "which is determined by the real world referred to by the speaker and whether or not the speaker speaks literally or figuratively" (Odebunmi 3).

When a hearer listens to an utterance made by the speaker, he (hearer) perceives the speaker to be doing certain things with his (speaker) utterance; his intention is reflected in the utterance: the speaker has performed an act which is called illocutionary act or pragmatic force (Osisanwo 63). In all this, however, the speaker expresses his intention through the use of language to the hearer, yet it is difficult for the hearer to decode the intention of the speaker in the interaction alone, if not for the common non-linguistic knowledge of the contextual features of the utterance, shared by both interlocutors. So, before "we succeed in linguistically communicating when we get the

hearer to recognize what we have said and what attitudes we hold towards the propositional content of the utterance” (Fraser 37).

The effect of an utterance has on the hearer or the listener is called perlocutionary act. It is the result or (end) product of the hearer’s interpretation of the speaker’s utterance intended meaning. This can be intended or unintended result of a reaction to what the speaker has in mind. Therefore, a language user has to exploit maximally the individual, professional and community linguistic peculiarities “in temporal, spatial, cultural, psychological and physical terms” (Levinson 23), to achieving the optimal corresponding effect.

Education and Entrepreneurship

Training of entrepreneurs for skills and technical competencies is an aspect of the educative process, while education is chiefly concerned with all shades of change in human capital development. However, it is equally the only means of acquiring knowledge and skills, but perhaps more importantly with change in attitudes, ideas and orientation. In fact, as education influences the change in behaviour, training is the acquisition of skills for the (emerging) entrepreneur. Indeed, education and training are inseparable to the development of entrepreneurship in a nation, but today in Nigeria more attention is being paid to training whose output is often easily measurable than to education whose output is somewhat difficult to measure (Ukeje 6).

For proper repositioning of entrepreneurship, there must be adequate training programmes, and also effective education systems. To achieve the desired effect, these training programmes must be well organized; they must be infused into the nation’s economic growth, and should often be evaluated and supervised (Ukeje 5). He further avers that these programmes are hardly supervised much less evaluated, especially in schools.

Every curriculum must gear towards incorporating these educational programmes for sustainable development, which must reflect in terms of both the realities of the present and the aspirations of the future. “It is not the question of education for its own sake, but education for development” (Ukeje 5). And therefore, it must be functional for effective development rather than for ornamentation. In addition, the aspirations and the needs of the entrepreneur must be emphasized against the deep-seated traditions and conventions, which must be located in the issues of relevance or social adequacies, especially in regard to higher education. So, institutions of higher learning have to “pay attention to human capacity planning to the issues of the visions of the nation, and the mission of the particular institution to assist in achieving the vision of the nation” (Ukeje 7).

Entrepreneurship and Self-Reliance

To achieve a purposeful and sustainable development, entrepreneurship development programme and processes have to include the notion of self-reliance. Ukeje (4) states that to build a united, strong and self-reliant Nigeria is the one of five chief national objectives. On that note, Babangida administration (1985-1993) made several pronouncements on capacity building which is geared towards achieving an independent, self-reliant nation, and also the promotion and enhancement of a self-reliant society (6). Ukeje, thus, defines self-reliant as “the right, the necessity, the freedom, the capacity and the resolve of a people to define, articulate, programme, and struggle to achieve their own national vision”, their individual set goals, the goals of the community and national development, through their indigenous efforts, institutions and programmes which are designed to operate by the community in question (7). In fact, self-reliance is a state not a process; it is an ideology that is concerned with the political, social, cultural and economic transformation with a particular bias towards intellectual structures in the national growth and development.

An entrepreneur is truly self-reliant, but not in itself self-sufficient, this implies that he is independent but actually exists in interdependence. So, our entrepreneurs must be repositioned to be able to join the global bandwagon of revolutionary transformation or advancement, that is, the prevalent high-tech development. This means that our entrepreneurs can manufacture or produce what we (Nigerians) need in regard to technological demands.

Capacity Building in Language and Entrepreneurship

For functional use of language, the entrepreneur must acquire the necessary sociogrammar which demands high language proficiency enhancement courses. These would enable him use the dynamics of language to manipulate the text, context, rhetoric, stylistic and logistic programming (this is an information technology process mechanism meant to promote language teaching-learning) as well as multilingual text generation (Olaofe 27). However, all this has to be incorporated as the centerpiece of the linguistic content areas across educational levels. The emerging entrepreneur must be exposed to the area of communication studies, language for special purposes and second language learning and development. These areas must be vehemently explored, integrated and utilized for the development of the entrepreneurs.

Olaofe (28) reports that a more unified linguistic programmes are needed that have to tilt towards achieving communicative competence and sustainable development as the primary priority in the capacity building. However, if this programme could be broadened further in Nigeria, more entrepreneurs would emerge and certainly become more marketable, in various applied linguistic

vocational areas, thus, they can become man-machine communicators, specialists in business language, computer, industry and science and technology. More still, they can develop into being assistants to professionals and technocrats in the use of language as medium “for scientific and technological knowledge derivation, utilization, dissemination and transfer” (Olaofe 27). In short, linguistic capacity building has to be harnessed in order to facilitate technological advancement in fast-growing global communication and modern electronic means for development-based data storage, language competitive market enhancing strategies and innovation.

Discourse and Entrepreneurship

Discourse is the art of language that concerns with the understanding of the nature and importance of language as a vehicle of communication, and it also provides the insight into the theoretical orientation of language development. This is done through the development of language skills and language techniques for proper understanding of the pedagogical methods, competencies and problems in the language acquisition process (Ugoji 90). These techniques or skills are the factors that affect the success or failure in language learning and teaching and they equally account for the difference among the learners (entrepreneurs) which influence the teaching output (Nwankwo 124)

Primarily in Nigeria, language education has to do with learning a second or foreign language, but in Nigeria the entrepreneurs’ (learners) native language is included (Nwankwo 123, Ugoji 94). This helps the emerging entrepreneurs (learner) to develop linguistic skills thereby promoting educational development of the entrepreneurs who (may still be in school), as well as social and personal development of the entrepreneurs outside school. With regard to this, language policy in Nigeria incorporated bilingualism, that is, why literacy is taught in Nigeria school system with first and second language of the learners, which complement each other. Thus, “literacy, in whichever language, should inculcate the language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)... language in education really means the application of these skills to impart knowledge in mathematics, chemistry... (Ugoji 89).

Language discourse is aimed at develop the entrepreneur’s communicative competence, which will guide him to know the rules of the target language nuances, so as to enable him have practical command of the language. This implicates that entrepreneurs must have adequate knowledge of socially realistic (linguistic) rules (Labov 80), because knowing a language perfectly subsumes knowing how andn when to perform and without these skills the entrepreneur would be (Lawal 70) “a cultural monster” (Hymes 168). The objective of language education is to find out the relationship between linguistic form and social structure, in so far as human

utterances are chosen “to suit situations, text and context are therefore related parts of a whole” (Lawal 70).

Communicative Strategies

When we communicate, we should recognize a certain set of discourse events which are common in our social milieu, which equally shape our social structures (strata) in our environment; which essentially help to facilitate the target persuasive communication of preferred models of social events. Knowledge of these influence, in discourse, “how recipients will understand and especially how they will evaluate such events, for instance as a function of the interests of the participants” (van Dijk 208). Similarly, Ochs avers that the social and psychological world influences the language user’s, however, minimal he is, “beliefs and assumptions about temporal, spatial and social settings; prior, on going (sic) and future actions and the state of knowledge and attentiveness of these participating in the social interaction at hand” (29).

We do not consciously learn these unspoken rules or conventions of conversation; they come as sociocultural and ‘psychosocial’ frames for affective communication embedded in the worldviews of the participants, professionally, individually and communally. So, for a language user to interact effectively with the participants, he has to be sensitive to certain cues that are manifest in the entirety of that given language community, either professionally, individualistically or communally: they are the archive of the linguistic community. In truth, it is the context that gives the inkling to the background from which meaning of an utterance is generated. In all, purposeful communication is being driven “strictly on the operational tracks of the tokens selected and the amount of social dimensions programmed into their use” (Odeunmi 2-3).

All these communicative strategies in discourse are *linguocultural* dimensions which are handed down from one generation to another. Such concern as appropriate linguistic behavior usually differs from one social group to the other. As they differ in their *sociocentric* peculiarities, which are the discourse factors that enhance the desired or appropriate language control and influence, language power and linguistic choice. They manipulate and also sway the communicative discourse of the moment. These strategies enable the business captain to acquire the requisite communicative power or competence which is beyond purely acquiring or learning grammatical competence of that given language. This, therefore, does not occur in isolation, rather in a social context that reflects social purposes, other than the linguistic purposes. As a result, the interactant “knows when and when not to speak, what to talk about, with whom, when, where, and in what manner” (Hymes 277)

Conclusion

Knowing the right language discourse is the heart and soul for the optimal achievement of sustainable business concern. However, for any business to hold sway, it must be schooled in certain rhetorical dexterities which are the common linguistic strategies that assume persuasive use of language, to stimulate factor behind exchange or trade. Therefore, for any country to achieve meaningful entrepreneurial development or business concern, the entrepreneur should have considerable persuasive skill relevant to economic behaviour. Because, it is the skill that enables him in convincing his prospective buyer/investor to perform a determined task or rather to convincing the buyer/investor that the task at hand is for his own (buyer/investor) interest.

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