



THE LEGACY OF SHAYKH AHMAD TIJANI AWELNJE:

IMPACT ON ARABIC AND ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

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ECONOMIC RESOURCE RECIPE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE FOR ECONOMIC RECESSION IN NIGERIA: LANGUAGE EDUCATORS' VIEWS

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Abstract

Economic recession is significant decline in economic activity which spread across the economy lasting more than a few months, normally visible in a real gross domestic product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale retail sales. This research sets to find the view of language educators of the university Ilorin at both faculty of Arts and Education on Arabic as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria. The variables considered are all the language educators. The population for this study was all the language educators at both faculty of Arts and Education which is 45. A purposive sampling technique was used to select this number. There is only a research question, which was answered by using mean and ranking order. The instrument used for the study was a check list which comprises of 15 items. The result shows that all the items are agreed upon by respondents as their views on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria. From the result above, it could be concluded that Arabic Language is a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria and recommended that government should encourage the teaching of Arabic Language in various institution of the nation to encourage it facilitation.

Keywords: Language Educators, Recession, Arabic Language, Nigeria.

Introduction

The National Bureau of Economic Research define a recession as "a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in the real gross domestic product {GDP}, real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale-retail sales'. Economic recession can also be define as a negative real GDP growth rate for two consecutive quarters [say first and second quarters].(Noko,2016) Judging by the above definition, Nigeria is experiencing economic recession currently, since her first and second quarters growth in 2016 are 0.36% and 1.5% although, the second definition a times

might be miss- leading because recession can quietly begin before the quarterly gross domestic product reports are out.

Causes of Economic Recession

The major cause of economic recession in any economy [lesson from great depression, 1981, 1991, 2004, 2008-2009 global economic recessions] may include:

- High inflation, a general or sharp rise in price of commodities leading to low purchasing power.
- Accumulation of debt servicing especially foreign debts.
- Fall in aggregate demand, fall in wages, income.
- Mass unemployment and several loss of confidence on the government due to economic indices
- Leading economic indicators(Noko,2016)

Causes of Economic Recession in Nigeria

1. Poor economic planning

Among the major cause of Nigeria current recession, budget delay, exchange rate policy. The government has proclaimed the usual generalities that every government indulges itself in about:

- a) diversifying the economic
- b) improving manufacturing/ mining sector
- c) raising agricultural output
- d) Encouraging foreign investment, among others strategic plan for growth.

No doubt the government has taken some steps like the elimination of dollar purchase privileges for importers of 40 items such as rice, cement, toothpicks, private- planes, poultry, meats, margarine, wheelbarrows, textiles and soaps. The government has on the other hand, caused serious poverty in the land by herself, i.e. the government through her policy widen the gap between the rich and poor-creating economic hardship. An illustration was when the CBN was selling the dollar at the official rate. This later resulted at the parallel market rate of 480 naira. The question is now to think of how much some of them were making. An individual can make as much as 1 billion naira without doing anything according to the former CBN government (Lamido, 2016).

The people that were profiting from this were telling the government that if it didn't devalue the naira that people would suffer. The poor paid the price of devalued currency and the rich schemed off the profits. Remember Nigeria currency was devalued when crude oil price in the international market was very low and crude oil export was largely affected by the activities of the Niger-Delta militants as such as the policy was useless since Nigeria is a mono-product economy. For instance, should you take dollar for every 1 billion taken from the federation account and sold by the CBN at 200 naira to the dollars, the states were losing 100 billion that could have

been into salaries, agriculture, and healthcare? Yet the states were giving to borrow from the same government on a bail out when the government was selling dollars cheaply to small group of people. This incidence is still on going and the government is doing nothing about it.

2. **High Inflation Rate:** Government banning the importation of certain essential agricultural products like rice without considering gestation period is error. Removal of fuel subsidy shouldn't be simultaneous with the banning of agricultural products. Major causes of inflation speculation in stock market is due to budget delay, rise in domestic oil price due to subsidy removal, fall in the global crude oil price, deteriorating Nigeria exchange Rate, almost the household price skyrocket as seen in the lineage below.
3. **High Interest Rate:** Interest rate is between 26.77-27% is very high for investors. This high interest rate is discouraging investors. The poor investment culminates into high rate of unemployment in the country, reduction in aggregate demand especially from the household.
4. **High Taxation:** it is only in Nigeria that I see government changing high rate during economic recession. Small businesses are slaughtered with high interest and tax rate has lowered Nigeria aggregate demand especially from the households.
5. **Policy Conflict:** The economic policy appears conflicting. How? High interest rate, high taxation and high monetary policy measures. But told the public they are adopting expansionary policy budget deficit. President Buhari Economic Growth Evaluation
 1. Reduction in tax rate
 2. Effective spending
 3. enhanced access to credit
 4. Nigeria government should increase her expenditure on skills
 5. Increase agriculture product and export
 6. Increase manufacturing produce and export

Proposed Solution to Economic Recession

- The Government should invest in energy sector to reduce power outage.
- Engage the Niger-delta militants in a dialogue.
- Reduce the tax rate or regulate same to avoid double taxation.
- Borrows from both domestic and foreign investors to avoid the incidence of capital flight.
- The government should work with the legislative body to endure speed execution to her project.
- Commodity price and raw material should be regulated through consumer protection agency to avoid further inflation.

- The Government should learn from Ethiopia as other developed countries.
- The Government should grow Nigeria economy and should kindly allow the name to be let the force of market control the value of Naira

The Economic and Social Benefits of Language Education

The role of Education in achieving national development in any nation, particularly in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Many writers on the role of Education in nation building strongly believe that no any meaningful development can be attained without giving education the proper and leading role to play. Education is the bedrock and significant to the development of individual, society or a nation, be it undeveloped, developing nations of the world. Farrant [1988] asserted that 'Education is now recognized as a dynamic, evolving process that is an essential element of national development '. In a similar trend, education is indispensable tool for changes and development in any society. In any dynamic society, as being observed by Obiakor [1998], all human activity seems to undergo some form of change. Nigeria, a Country of extreme cultural, social, economic and political diversity is no exception to this rule. National development can be perceived in terms of the absolute structural transformation of the social, economic, political, cultural and academic set up of a nation [Ajayi, 1999].

In order to achieve this development and pave way for national building, the Federal Government of Nigeria set up the National Policy on Education which is the government way of achieving the part of its national objectives using Education as a tool. The document contains a statement of major objectives and values in Education at all levels. (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels) and some means of its implementation.

In Nigeria, there are basically major systems of Education. They are:

- a. Traditional Education
- b. Islamic Education
- c. Western Education.

All various forms of education mentioned above aim improving the lots of Nigerians that engaged in them. There by enabling them to continue their quota to the development of Nigeria as a policy. The importance of education to the development of Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized because it is through the Education that Nigerians are able to better their lot and develop the country to its present state. As a result, the country becomes a force to reckon with in the country of nations, and Nigerians are respected in all fields of human endeavours. The Federal government realizes the importance of the education to the nation building and development and states it in the National Policy on Education (1998) that since education is a dynamic instrument of change, this policy will need to be constantly reviewed to ensure its

adequacy, in fact it is stated on page 7 of the National Policy on Education (1999) that the followings are the main objectives of Nigeria as contained in the second National development plan:

- i. a free and democratic society.
- ii. a just and egalitarian society.
- iii. a united, strong and self-reliant nation.
- iv. a great and dynamic economy.
- v. a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Furthermore, the NPE (1999) states that the aims and objectives of national Education are:

- i. The inculcation of national conscience and national unity
- ii. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigeria society.

Akinyanju (2007) pointed to the acute shortage of qualified academic in our universities in 2001, NUC claimed an understatement that there was a shortage of about 20,000 academic staff in Nigeria universities. Having reviewed literature on Education as a source of National building, there is the need to shift focus to definition of language. Dabo (2001) in Akaito and Dowyaro (2007) defined language as "a method, or means, a system of sharing of ideas, thought, feelings, experiences, etc using sound, signs or symbols" Minimum standards for Nigeria Certificate in Education (2002) observes that 'modern man can hardly contemplate communal life without the instrument of language'.

Performance, especially spoken language, defines personality. For the teacher, his credibility is almost entirely anchored on his competence in communicating ideas and stimulating learning through his use of language articulate and well-spoken teachers also invariably win the hearts and respect of their students and pupils. Arabic is language of the Arabs. It belongs to Semitic group of languages, other living languages, of this group are Modern Hebrew, Amharic and other spoken language of Ethiopia.

Language is obviously vital tool, Not only is it a means of communication thoughts and ideas but it for just friendships, cultural ties, and economic relationships. History reflects on the importance of languages, for instance, the scholar Benjamin whorf has noted that languages shapes thoughts and emotion, determine ones perception of reality, john Stuart mill said that "Language is the light of mind" lionel Groulx, a Quebec historian, put it is this way: Edward sapir, language is not only a vehicle for the expression of thought, perception sentiments, and value characteristic of a community, it also represents of social identity, sapir; "the mere fact of a common speech as a peculiar potent symbol of the social solidarity of those who

speaking the language " in short language retention helps maintain feeling of Cultural kinship Language, of course, is a knowledge and in our world today, knowledge is one of the key factors in competitiveness.

Brain and knowledge are what create the propensity and growth we tend to take for granted in an advanced industrial society is an increasingly independent world, the knowledge of other languages becomes indispensable, just think of how the advent of the internet has changed our lives few years ago, millions of people across the world, who share common interests, are able to communicate with each other and exchange ideas. Not only are they able to do this due to the various technological advances, but also because they share a common language.

There is of course no denying the fact that the knowledge of English language is one of the most important tools available to our children, it is one of the international languages a tool of communication between communities coeternal groups, various companies and organization, communities and friends. Language, being an importance tool for business people and official seeking to be linked on those ties. As we move toward hemispheric economic integration, the knowledge of other language of the hemisphere is being a highly marketable skill (kilgour, 1999).

Arabic is the second largest most widely used alphabetic writing system in the world (the Latin alphabet is the most widespread). The Arabic script has been adapted to such diverse languages, Persian, Turkish, Spanish and Swahili (Seriki, 2004).

Today Arabic is universally recognized language occupying a position, which is not less in status and rank than such International Language as English, French or German. It has long been adopted by African Union (AU), Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC), United Nations (UN). Arabic also is official language of Non- Aligned Movement (NAM), Confederation of African Football (CAF). Federation of International football Association (FIFA), Amuni (2004) and other Internationally recognized Organizations see it as a tool for political and other diplomatic transactions. It is studied and accorded high status like others in the world.

The Role of Arabic Language in National Development

The role of Arabic language in building a nation of our dream cannot be overemphasized. National Development according to Munasinghe (2004) is a process of improving the range of opportunities that will enable individual humans and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potential over a sustained period of time while maintaining the resilience of economic, social and environmental system. The term 'development' means different things to different people. Therefore, there have been divergent opinions between the economists and social scientists as to what constitutes development. The emphasis that is laid on what constitutes development to Economists is not the same with that of Agriculturists.

For instance, Economists lay much emphasis on increase in agricultural output for measuring development. Development in any human society is a multi-dimensional process having radial implications not only on the economic, but also on the political, socio-cultural and administrative aspects of society. Based on this assertion, we would examine the possible arrears in which Arabic has contributed to development of one kind and others. In the area of religion, Arabic developed Islam in no small measure. Islam, being a complete way of life, affirms God's sovereignty over the entire gamut of man's life. Its teaching cover all fields of human activity, spiritual and material, individual and social, educational and cultural, economic and political, national and international.

In order words; religion as perfected by Islam laid the basis for unification of humanity. Therefore, the religion, when approached from the Islamic perspective, can bring true happiness to the human race. Since Arabic is the religious language of Islam, early introduction of the Muslim children to the Arabic education helps them to understand the tenets of Islam and the word of the Quran as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad.

Arabic language establishes the fear of God in the minds of the pupils because the courses taught help its pupils to have respect for their elders, teachers, parents and God. It also helps the learners to develop good moral and ethical behaviour in the society. When members of the society imbibe good morals and translate them into positive societal norms, it greatly helps in bringing about the much desired development of a nation. In a nutshell, Arabic, in conjunction with Islam has played this moral role in the past effectively and can still do same if given the needed encouragement (Seriki, 2004).

Education: is said to be coined out of two Latin words, *educere* which means 'to draw out', 'to lead out'. Education is seen by Adesina as a tool for the integration of the individual effectively into a society so that the individual can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote unit and strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological process. Education as a social service is the responsibility of the Government which must not be shirked under any guise. It should constitute the standard upon which a Government may be assessed. Educational development is imperative and urgent. It must not only be treated as a national emergency, second only to war, but must also move with the momentum of a revolution. However, the individual being educated develops physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially.

Arabic as the medium of formal education in the Northern Nigeria had played the above mentioned role effectively before the introduction of English. Though Arabic scholars have emphasized the need for an improved method of teaching Arabic, it can still be argued that Northern Nigeria would have reached what Arabized North African countries attained in their educational development, if it had

been allowed to continue with Arabic medium in her educational pursuit. The average Nigeria Muslims, both in the South and the North, even till today prefer acquisition of Arabic language to English. This is the reason why Arabic schools have continued to spring up and compete favourably with the English ones in terms of encouragement from parents and pupil's enrolment.

In a nutshell, Arabic Language served as the first non-native Language that brought its educational as well as its rich culture to Nigeria. The coming of Islam to this part of globe brought with its literacy and technology of writing. Nigerians use Arabic in writing their Languages. With the help of Arabic characters, they were able to express their mother tongues, read and write in Arabic with ease and this has put them in a kind of intellectual tradition (Abdelali, 2003).

Socio-psychology

Arabs were known to have reached a high level in the use of Arabic Language as an art before the advent of Islam. In other words, Arabic as a language has highly developed literature which is evident in the life of the Arabs, right from the pre-Islamic era to the present day. At the level of Arabic Education, the students learn many Arabic poetic verses that teach social norms such as self-reliance, sincerity, bravery and generosity among others.

Therefore, the learners of Arabic cannot avoid being influenced by the culture, sociology, and psychology portrayed in such literature. Arabic had been used to write many works range from acts to worship, Islamic jurisprudence, Health Education and Ethnics to Sociology, Economic, Public Administration and political science, such works were also taught at schools and discussed at public gathering especially organized for the enlighten of the masses, male and female (Ajape, 2014).

Economy

Arabic had been the language of commerce for centuries. As mentioned earlier, there was commercial link between North Africa and West Africa before the advent of Islam in West Africa. This explains why the historical development of Arabic language was tied to the commercial activities. Moreover, there is a strong commercial link between Nigeria and Arab countries in Asia and Africa. Since Nigerian citizens transact business in Egypt, united Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, among others, the knowledge of Arabic and ability to speak Arabic will assist in boosting Nigerian economy (Ajape, 2014).

The introduction of Arabic in Nigeria also creates a situation of positive economic life because it guaranteed a good source of income for indigenous Arabic scholars. They became employers by establishing Arabic schools and employed Arabic specialists, thereby reducing the rate of unemployment in the country. Also, Nigeria is a strong member of Organization established to ensure the stability of the price of the petroleum in the international market. As many of the most influential

member nations are Arab countries, Arabic language will create opportunities to enter into agreement with them and there will be better interaction between us (Abdelali, 2003).

Diplomatic Relationship

Diplomacy can be defined as practices institutions by which nations conduct their relations with one another. It means that countries all over the world move closer to one another for many benefits such as economic, political, scientific and or technological gains. Since Nigeria has diplomatic relations with some Arab countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Libya, Egypt and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, among others, she, therefore, needs Arabic scholars to ensure mutual understanding and exchanging of ideas between them.

Besides, Arabic is one of the official languages of the United Nations Organization (UNO) of which Nigeria is a member, others being English, French, Italian and Russian. It also constitutes the strength behind the solidarity and harmony found among the members of African Union (AU) because it is one of its three official working languages alongside with French and English (Abdelali, 2003).

Security

Security, according to 'Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary', means safety, freedom from danger or anxiety. Security is sometimes as the whole range of measures affecting the economic and social welfare of a population, as well as protection against internal or external aggressions. In the world today, the security of nations, societies and individuals is of great concern to all, as criminals have resorted to modern scientific methods in executing their crimes against humanity. It has been established that there are many Arabic scholars, using Arabic as their medium of expression in Nigeria today, the Government at all levels should, therefore, take the security of their citizens seriously by encouraging the learning of Arabic to help them in the security services. The government should employ Arabic scholars to assist in the security of Nigeria. They will be able to report any issue of security interest from Arabic schools or gathering where Arabic is the medium to the Government (Abdelali, 2003).

Arabic had reached its peak of glory in the Northern Nigeria and was adopted as the official language after the Jihad activities of Uthman bin Fudi, which began in 1804. This Jihad served as a catalyst for the spread and reformation of Islam. It also served as a booster for the spread of Islamic Education and contributed to efflorescence of Arabic scholarship in Nigeria. The advent of the British in Nigeria, however, opened a new chapter in the history of Arabic language. In a nutshell, Arabic became the language used in schools, religious gatherings, courts and communication, among others. But unlike the royal patronage accorded the western education by the British, Arabic education was a matter of private affairs.

Statement of the problem

Nigeria has been in the state of economic mess over a long period of time and the country has been trying to get herself out of it which has been difficult due to political and nation insecurity from agitated individuals; economy meltdown, immorality, social vices such as kidnapping, bribery, corruption, embezzlement, fornication, adultery, lack of adequate fund to finance development, revenue, corrupt leaders among the governor, senators, representative and bad governance. The government has been trying in one way or the other to get this nation out of this economic recession but still the country is wallowing in the state of serious pandemonium. The researcher therefore want to identify weather language, especially Arabic because of the significant roles its plays in the world in term of development, economic, political, culture and civilization etc.(Lawal, 2006), can serve as toll to liberate or prevent Nigeria from this economic instability.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine whether Arabic as a language can serve as a tool through the views of language educators at the University of Ilorin, for combating economic recession in Nigeria. Specifically, the study find out:

- a. the general views of language educators on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria

Research Question

1. What are the general views of language educators on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria?

Research Design

This study is descriptive survey in nature. It describes how Arabic language serves as a tool to combat economic recession in Nigeria using Arabic checklist to elicit responses from various language experts from both faculty of art and education. Daramola (2006) defined descriptive survey as a research type that makes collection of information from various sources easier. The researcher collect information from all the language educators at the University of Ilorin from where he draws inferences on the information gathered. The survey is the systematic collection of data from the population of language educators. The justification for this is based on the view of Gay (2006) who opines that descriptive research is a process of describing and reporting the educational phenomenon the way it is. This research describes and reports how Arabic serves as a tool to curb economic recession in Nigeria.

Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection was a checklist of fifteen questions item on economic recession as regard Arabic language. Each of the statement in the item has four options of strongly agree which attracts four marks, agree attracts three

marks, disagree attracts two marks and strongly disagree attracts one mark. The respondents are to tick the option that best represent their views. The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by two Arabic language experts and two language educators' expert at the University of Ilorin, while the reliability of the instrument was assessed within a time interval of about three weeks using Pearson correlation co-efficient to correlate the score of the first and second administration of the instrument. The value of the correlation was 0.73.

Data Analysis and Results

Analysis of Demographic Information of the Respondents

This section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents in percentages. The variables were gender, faculty and department.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Per cent
Male	37	82.2
Female	8	17.8
Total	45	100.0

From table 1, result shows that the male respondents are 82.2% (37) while the female respondents are 17.8% (8) which makes the total number of respondents to be 45. The result implies that the male respondents who participated in this study are more than the female respondents.

Table 2: Faculty Distribution of the Respondents

Faculty	Frequency	Per cent
Arts	35	77.8
Education	10	22.2
Total	45	100.0

From table 2, result shows that the respondents from faculty of Arts are 77.8% (35) while the respondents from faculty of education are 22.2% (10) which makes the total number of respondents to be 45. The result implies that there were more respondents from faculty of Arts than faculty of Education.

A research question was raised in this study and was answered using mean rating and rank order.

Research Question One: *What are the general views of language educators on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria?*

Table 3: Mean and Rank order on the general views of language educators on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria

S/N	Views	Mean	Rank
1	For centuries, Arabic has served as a language of commerce in Nigeria	3.09	6 th
2	Communication in Arabic language created the communication link between Nigeria and Arab countries	2.91	10 th
3	Ability to speak Arabic will help to maintain diplomatic relation with Arab countries.	3.42	1 st
4	Arabic will help to creation a situation of positive economic activities.	2.91	10 th
5	Arabic language will help to maintain stability in the price of petroleum in international market.	2.87	12 th
6	Arabic language will create opportunities to enter into agreement with Arab nations	3.29	2 nd
7	Arabic language will help to great job opportunities for Arabic Scholars.	3.29	2 nd
8	Arabic language tied to commercial activities will help to solve economic problems.	2.98	8 th
9	Arabic language will help to solve economic recession in the country.	2.76	14 th
10	Arabic education will help the county to gain so numerous opportunities economically.	3.18	4 th
11	Investment in Arabic education will lead several job opportunities in Nigeria.	3.16	5 th
12	Strategizing for learning Arabic can move Nigeria out of recession.	2.80	13 th
13	Skill acquisition will reduce economic recession in Nigeria.	3.07	7 th
14	Learning from Arab countries will help to solve the problem of economic recession in Nigeria.	2.93	9 th
15	Arabic language will make Nigeria grow economically.	2.67	15 th

Table 3 shows the response on the general views of language educators on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria. With a benchmark mean of 2.5, any item that is less than the benchmark mean is considered not to be one of their views and any variable that is greater than the benchmark mean is considered to be one of their views. However, from the table, it can be seen that all the items are agreed by the respondents as their views on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria. Also, ranked 1st as one of their views is

that "ability to speak Arabic will assist in maintaining diplomatic relation with Arab countries". In addition, ranked last, (15th) as one of their views is that "making Arabic language a compulsory subject for learners will make Nigeria grow economically".

Summary of Findings

The following are the findings from this study:

It was found that all the items are agreed by the respondents as their views on Arabic language as a tool for combating economic recession in Nigeria. Also, ranked 1st as one of their views is that "ability to speak Arabic will assist in maintaining diplomatic relation with Arab countries". In addition, ranked last, (15th) as one of their views is that "making Arabic language a compulsory subject for learners will make Nigeria grow economically".

Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study would encourage the facilitation of teaching of Arabic language in the various institute of the nation. It will strengthen diplomatic and economic relations between Nigeria and the Arab Nation. It is hoped that Nigeria economy will be out of economic recession if Arabic language is properly understand by its learning as it would empower the learners to solve problems relenting to language of transactions between Nigeria and Arab Nations. Also, it status would be emancipated from elective to compulsory

The local scholars who were knowledgeable in Arabic enjoyed some socio-political privileges in the society which ordinary people could not enjoy. This greatly motivated the people to learn Arabic. Arabic, therefore, successfully competed with local languages such as Kanuri, Fulfude, Hausa and Yoruba. In other words, Arabic language enriched these indigenous languages with hundreds of religious, political and commercial words and expressions.

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