Language Contribution to Cultural Diversity: The Case of Fulfulde in the Extreme North in Cameroon

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Abstract:
The capacity to interact efficiently with people of diverse cultures entails awareness of one’s own cultural worldview, attitude towards cultural differences, knowledge of dissimilar cultural practices and cross-cultural skills. That is why many staff development models that address diversity emphasize on the importance of learning culturally specific information including communication patterns, health beliefs and behaviors, religious practices, symbols, and rituals. Before, people’s differences were primarily learned through cultural or racial identities. Examples: African American, Asian and such identities suggest general expectations like religion, communication, career or behaviours. Pragmatically cultural differences have also been noted in the ways in which language is used. Therefore, language has a major adaptive advantage that differentiates Homo sapiens from other species and has been partially responsible for the evolutionary success of humans. Thus, the linguistic doctrine stipulates that no language is superior since all dialects are effective means of communication. The main objective is to stress on how language can affect culture although being part of it, consequently the best way of integration is by speaking the language of that community. In methodology we used participant observation, interviews and essential we have used both descriptive and analytical nature since our survey complement desk research. Models of living and learning could help individuals avoid stereotyping behaviour, adopt mutually acceptable objectives and measures for change. This is by being simple, accepting cross-cultural experiences while making room for improvement.

Keywords: Language, contribution, cultural diversity

1. Introduction
Away from space, time and causality, patterns in language have been shown to shape many other domains of thought. This is in relation to the point of view that when one leaves for example the North West region of Cameroon to journey towards the Extreme North region of the same country, it would not be difficult to see the differentiation. Reason to this is in conjunction to the fact that, prior, difficulties incurred in travelling and associating with other people could be outlined without much difficulty. Therefore, cultural diversity could be view through dressing, language, gestures, and the list continues. Consequently, culture as an integrate part of man and could at time be impinge due to language which is an aspect of it. By this, we are saying that patterns in language offer a window on a culture’s temperaments and priorities. For example, English sentence compositions focus on agents, and in some criminal-justice system, justice has been done when we’ve found the transgressor and punished him or her accordingly (rather than finding the victims and restituting appropriately, an alternative approach to justice). So too is the situation with language since it shapes cultural values, or the influence go the other way, with both.

In one hand, it should be understood that languages, are human design, these are tools we invent and work on to suit our needs. This is indicating the fact that speakers of different languages think in a different way and doesn’t tell us whether the language form the thought or the other way around. To demonstrate the causal role of language what’s needed are studies that directly manipulate language and look for effects in cognition. Of course, just because people talk differently doesn’t necessarily mean they think differently. However, in the past decade, cognitive scientists have begun to measure not just how people talk, but also how they think, asking whether our understanding of even such fundamental domains of experience as space, time and causality could be constructed by language.

While on the other hand, language and culture are also connected by means of perspective. By this we are saying both the linguistic meaning and the extra linguistic context. Hence language contact always takes place in a framework which is representing partly by nature and partly by culture. Therefore, the circumstance takes account of features like the noise level, the physical setting, the temperature, the secular and spatial difference between the communicators, and so on. It equally takes into considerations the different genetic and biological characteristics of the communicators, such as physical loopholes. These factors play a role both for the production and comprehension of linguistic expressions.

2. Methodology
Considering the view that about a third of the world’s languages (spoken in all kinds of physical environments) depend on complete guidelines for legroom, we used the activity patterns to collect our data. This is by participating in the...
different works of the community in which we were studying. With qualitative research method explored, we made ourselves to be included in information about different activities such as chatting, quarreling, negotiating, storytelling, debating, lecturing, consulting, instructing, etc. as they are normally carried out within different social institutions. Documentaries from libraries were sources of our secondary data not leaving out the internet. Interviews coupled with focus groups and free listing was used in data collection. The market which is our main zone of attraction in matters of buying and selling was quite significant. Our reason for this selection is because, though some differentiation could be felt in other fields of life, the market which is considered to be “no man” place was symbolic for our data collection. Why? It is because people come and go in a market place but the seller is only interested in how much profit he/she can make for him/herself. After all, dealing with a buyer ends there. Meanwhile in work places, associations, or neighborhoods, if open discrimination is done it could easily be felt and retaliated. Meanwhile to be certain about our observations and even information received we had to compare the knowledge by asking from our acquaintances and those we have been receiving training on the language and culture of our case of study. Consequently, to maintain objectivity we revised and put away every form of ethnocentrism. For it is simple to know that people think differently about space. Hence! diversity is our point of interest for a better understanding in all fields of life.

2.1. Area of Study

The Extreme North region is a compressed homogeneity with many ethnics and religions with Islam quite visible. These groups include: the Peuls, Gizia, Mofou, Moundang, Toupouri, Massa, Gidar, and others. It has six Divisions and a number of sub divisions and according to RGPH 1987, the populations of Maroua, its main capital was more than 123,000 and has been on an increase trend. This can be reconstructed to the different dynamics in the socio-cultural infrastructures like the creation of the University besides many primaries, secondary and professional institutions located in the region. The population is highly involved with commerce, animal rearing and farming of millet, maize, cotton, groundnuts and so on. In agriculture, the main food cultivated and consumed here is millet. It is purely a Sahel area with few rivers like the Logone. Touristic activities are very identical in this area with outstanding features of the Kapsiki and Rhumsiki areas. Being an artistic region, one could enjoy many designs of dresses, shoes, bags and are made out of animal skin. Though it is an emerging town with many government projects in view, it has a regional hospital in the capital town of Maroua to serve its increasing population. Many homes still go without food and high birth rates are experienced. Many seek informal health treatment and clandestine methods of services are prevalence. Despite this, there are other private health centres like the CNPS though costly, the population still demands their service which is offered without much delay. Away from this is the sociolinguistic framework and worldview that gives the Big North and the Extreme North in particular its cultural identity.

2.2. Conceptual and Theoretical Frame Work on Culture and Language

Prior to examining the position of culture in language or vice versa, it is essential to label what both concepts are. With this notion in mind, we are using the Anthropological theory of functionalism though other theories could still be felt in order to reach to our objective of the study.

2.2.1. Culture

Culture has many definitions one of such is the "way of life of a people". Though we are going to make allusion of many definitions of the concept of culture, one of the standards and generally accepted definition of culture is that of Tylor Edward an Anthropologist. According to Tylor, culture is a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society.

This definition is quite suitable to any culture which man is found and most striking because the phrase “acquired by man is essential as a member of society. Therefore, it implies that beliefs and behavior could be acquired not necessarily through biological heredity but by growing up in a specific society that exposes a person to that culture. For that reason, enculturation is a process by which a person learns his or her culture. Meaning culture is all around us, in everything we do; yet realizing a comprehensive definition is almost impossible.

The same as Nemni (1992) and Street (1993) suggested, it cannot be easily answered as a question, with regards to the increasingly international world. Some time ago, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1954) found over three hundred definitions of culture in their study, which highlights the difficulty and scope of the issues involved in communicating and teaching about culture. Nonetheless, the development of cultural learnings in language education has led to a current understanding of the role of culture, which could be summarized. On a general level, culture has been referred to as "the ways of a people" (Lado, 1957). This viewpoint incorporates both 'material' manifestations of culture that are easily seen and 'non-material' ones that are more difficult to survey.

Their pragmatic or sociolinguistic sense refers to the background knowledge, social and paralinguistic skills, as well as language code which are necessary for successful communication. While not necessarily all-inclusive or mutually exclusive, these aspects of culture offer more cores to the common definition above and the different dimensions of culture. The different aspects and levels of culture briefly outlined here obviously explain that the role of what culture means in language education is varied. In language teaching and learning, the issue of defining culture is best viewed as a field. This provides the ability to strain diverse dimensions of culture at different points, and allows for major differences in language contexts. For language teachers and learners in varied contexts, different aspects of culture may be more or less important at various levels of language expertise.
2.2.2. Language

Where one sees a community, there is always the tendency that the second element present in every culture is a language. The point is that language could be described as a system of words and symbols used to communicate with other people. Full languages as we usually think of them, such as English, Spanish, French, etc. could be highlighted. But it also includes body language, vernacular, and common phrases that are unique to certain groups of people. For example, even though English is spoken fluently in both America and Britain, we have slang and phrases that mean different things. Mentioned, American French fries are British chips; American cookies are British biscuits, and so on.

Consequently, languages play an important part in meaning by way of different cultures interacting with others. From several perspectives, the medium of social interact is universal and has been passed down for centuries as heritage, thus it is vital that the clarity of it is kept within each framework of custom. Meanwhile, in multicultural societies, it is often the dominant language that represents a country in front of others, and becomes the means of interaction with minority cultures. These minority cultures however, keep their heritage intact and converse with one another through their own language. It is through these minorities that cultures are built, and that’s because of the important they place on the significance of culture. An example of the role of language in different cultures is how primordial people made up of cavemen and women came to comprehend that verbal communication was the only way to move forward. Without a language, they were not able to form a good understanding of one another and as civilizations evolved, there’s need for it gradually progress.

No doubt from the functionalist view, cultures determines the means in which individual’s process and cope with information, as it provides the frame of reference, the concepts and objectives that make a language. Thus, meanings of particular words depend on the historical relation that is ascribed to the object being described. In other terms, verbal and nonverbal communication also affects the way in which culture is shaped. It can express the differences in culture quite clearly, as different groups interpret nonverbal communication differently. This in some cases is expressed in many different ways by media outlets, and is celebrated rather than ridiculed. So, verbal and nonverbal communication can help define the way in which intercultural communication can interact, and is of significance as it allows other individuals to learn the differences existing in various cultures as per their gestures and body language. Hence every language can represent the role of culture through its own reflection of reality it presents. The versions differ as every nation has had to face a different set of problems to arise at their current state. Yet, there are different set of values and beliefs attached to each, and they are all equally important, and as far as language is concerned, it is supposed to be important as it is a reflection of the nation’s identity.

In short terms one could say language is culture. Why? Critically culture and communication are always together since culture not only read aloud who talks to who, about what, and how the communication progress, but it also helps to establish how people predetermine messages. By this one is able to make out the meanings they have for messages and the setting and state of affairs under which different messages may or may not be put forward perceive, or understand. In summary culture is the foundation of communication. As (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981, p. 24) put it.

It should be understood that by speaking the language of a society one is already identifying to that group, therefore, one automatically makes parallel oneself with the culture of the language. To be able to have a good knowledge and mastery of a given language one need to give in to some thinking and choice of words in that language, since there is power in thoughts and what is said because most often than not what people say is what comes into existence. Consequently, a person’s personality has to do with his/her mind which in turn is his/her identity, meaning a piece of few words may probably be poor in spirit especially in a given topic of discussion. Meanwhile one who is eloquent and full of ideas has mastery and so is in issues of language and culture. In Cameroon today Chinese is one of the latest languages taught in schools. Prior it was not so. This in a way is to promote China socio-cultural tides with Cameroon. Many Cameroonians who go into learning the Chinese language could say that they have, in a way, almost taken on a Chinese identity. The more reason one may emphasis on the real meaning and the power of a language in culture. Thus, language is the strength or main pillars of a country and people find it difficult to interact if they cannot express themselves by speaking it. Hence the role of culture in all aspects of a community is quite significant with language as assimilated medium for the deal of that society.

2.3. Connecting Language and Culture

For cultural anthropologist, language studies are very important not just for communication purposes during field work but also because of the relationship between language and culture. Deeper is the ethno linguistics in the domain of linguistic anthropological studying their relationship. Therefore, the role of culture in language and its bearings as per its evolution are highly significant and felt every day in each culture. To that effect it would be very difficult if not impossible to understand a culture without understanding its language. Or even its cultural context. Reason why one need to go beyond eating values, belief pattern, and so on just like Boas the father of Anthropology, the relationship between language and culture since the 19th century has been recognized to be critical thus raising questions which include: did language influence culture or culture influence language? If yes, how did each influence people’s perceptions of worldviews or customs.

2.4. How Culture Influences Language: The Case of Fulfulde

Considerable evidence to area of influence is culture and vocabulary. This cultural concept is known as cultural emphasis. Taking an example of the Nuer society whose occupation is cattle’s rearing in which case the Extreme North falls in the same circle. Working on the Nuer society (Evans Pritchard 1940) uses their vocabulary to describe their cattle. Most
of what is said is around white (bor) black (car), the list could continue as words around the different colour or type of cattle they are mentioning. The same is the context we see among the people of the Extreme North when you find yourself in the market.

In the market, people of different background flood to buy or sell and at times one will not differentiate between a Southerner (gadamayo) and Northerner (wadoj) with the former considered as those below the Benye. The Benyue River is the point of reference as to whether you are a Northerner of a Southerner. However, with cultural interaction this difference is clear only when language comes in since many Southerner when they arrive the Extreme North they are quickly acculturated with dressing, feeding and even behaviors patterns. These could be seen in many social institutions where they are found. Church, weddings, ceremonies and so forth.

But then when one observed the market (lumore) considered as noman place, the price is given to individuals who would speak for themselves. At times with the difficult terrain, the Southerner (gadamayo) who may already know some few words in the Fulfulde language will be seen as not belonging to the culture even if he/she dresses in loin or gadura respectively of sex. Noy noy (how much?) as the story will begin nogas, tiapan-tati, tiapan-nay, tiapan diow or boro meaning a hundred, two hundred one fifty, two hundred, two fifty respectively or one thousand and so on as the prices indicate me nanata Fulfulde will be the response of the gadamayo who now know a few words in Fulfulde. Meaning I don’t speak Fulfulde when the Northerner (wadoj) realizes that his expressions ends only at the point of how much? He will reply in the Fulfulde language you don’t speak Fulfulde! You have to learn to speak the language. It would soon be made as an official language. The wadoj says as if imposing. There, either an interpreter will come in to make the price bargain in which case the gadamayo will pay higher than if it were a wadoj who expresses his/her self in the Fulfulde language.

At times, if two Southerners are discussing in either English or French without the Fulfulde accent as they end most of their talking with wai, it is obvious that the Southerner will have a very high price in the item he/she request to buy. Consequently, Southerners either used their friends or hire those who are Northerners or Southerners who already know and express themselves very well in Fulfulde to buy for them. Why do we choose the market? This is because when these possibilities are combined with terminology based on norm patterns, there potentially the ways of describing cattle with considerable precision among the Nuer are like the items sold in the Fulfulde language in the market.

2.5. Language Influence Culture

Language is more symbolic, meaning our inventory of experience and the physical world actually shapes our thoughts and perception- the way we see the world. Linguistic styles equally matter in a language, because in case of an irony or a metaphor, a person who does not have a mastery of a language may find it difficult interacting with the natives. Take an example of linguistic styles as silence, laughing or an exclamation which can lead to a cross cultural understanding. Keith Basso (1970) stipulates that silence among the Apache of Arizona is a way of dealing with some category of people. Usually, strangers during critical stages in courtship as well as children coming home after a long absence with people who cuss them out people who are sad and those concern in curing ceremonies. Whereas, silence sometimes means paying serious attention or ignoring such as like in many Cameroonian communities. Therefore, the three cultural content which include: literature, folklore, music, art and artifacts as products; leisure, customs, habits, dress, and food considered as behavior as well as beliefs, values and institutions supposed to be as ideas is a model account to as achieved culture. As put forward by Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) in reference to Robinson's model (1985) this present a model of culture.

Meanwhile more recently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2002) described culture as follows: ‘... culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to arts and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs’. They emerge through the interactions between individuals. Hence the anthropological approach that refers to knowledge linked to the diversity in ways of living and thinking is centered on human beings and their way of coping with different situations in different contexts. This type of knowledge refers to the daily life or as culture often referred to as behavioral culture. In Education Canadienne et Internationale Vol. 40 no 2 - September 2011 51 encompasses similarities and distinctive differences between one’s own world and other cultures. These includes habits and customs, institutions and norms, expectations, moral and legal codes, stereotypes, expressions of folk-wisdom, politeness conventions, register differences, dialects and accents, etc. That's why this gives room for one to see diversity as a pattern in life.

2.6. Why Do We Discuss Language as a Critical Issue in Diversity?

Many have always had it in mind that to maintain contacts among cultural groups helps to bring mutual or promote indulgent (Boechner, 1982). This perception points out that, it rather creates opposing views, thus intergroup acquaintances does not necessarily reduce tensions and prejudices between groups. In support to this, Lusier (1984), on learning the effects of intercultural and interlinguistic exchange programs cited two critical circumstances: these include:

- The planning of such programs must bring students to live together in significant situations which make them use the other language informally, in diverse contexts outside the classroom,
- The quality of the various contacts and of pluricultural experiences, as lived through such exchanges, are an essential key to success. In fact, students need to integrate language and culture.

Currently, Kramsch (1998) further stress that 'culture has its distinction, while inconsistency is always a possible source of conflict when one culture enters in contact with another.' In that perspective, a third condition should be considered. People therefore should be acquainted with the intercultural group they will socialize with by having a
firsthand reliable information, video or internet before participating in an exchange program or interaction. Our study indicates or contributes to the confirmation of the fact that language, thought and culture are paired to one another, not mutually dependent as many would always think.

What we are trying to bring out here is that for many people, or learners whatever their category or capacity, the kinds of behaviors required in school, sitting in one’s seat and only speaking when called on and the types of discourse talking to a teacher or mate contrast with home cultural and linguistic practices. To increase student success, it is imperative that teachers help students bridge this discontinuity between home and school (Allen & Boykin, 1992). Moreover, a culturally responsive instructional environment minimizes the students’ alienation as they attempt to adjust to the different “world” of school (Heath, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 1994). This briefly defines culturally responsive pedagogy and explains how it might be used effectively to address the instructional needs of a diverse student or people.

Consequently, the material to be included under the different concepts could take the form of accounts of the statistical distribution of certain values and attitudes in a community. But perhaps more interesting would be a more reasoned account along the lines of Max Weber’s ideal types showing the historical and ideological roots of certain common attitudes and values in a particular community. Cf Weber 1951, Runciman 1972, and Allwood 1982.

3. Recommendations

Taking an example, the concept of cultural awareness needs to be highly put in place since Cultural awareness is the promotion of understanding of and respect for other cultures, the ability to see all cultures, one’s own and foreign, as the historically transmitted result of a community’s history, mentality and living conditions (Menecke 1993) put it clear. It means the progress of understanding and awareness to others and other cultures. The language medium can be either L1 and/or L2. According to Cushman and Brislin (1996), it is the ability to go beyond one’s predetermined expectations and be open to new experiences. By so doing, this permit people in different communities to know that language is a cultural component and serves as weapon to social thought as an express.

We should and do teach our students the language culture in our classes when our goal is communicative competence. Not only is culture part and parcel of the process, but also the educational cost of it within language education is great, as Byram (1988) argues. When a person chooses to learn French, for example, he or she is not merely interested in the linguistics of the language, but everything to do with French and France. What he or she is taking in includes all the preconceptions about the French language. That is, it is romantic, it is beautiful, that it is spoken along the Seine, and so on. It seems that to better understand another culture as a different culture it becomes important to take into consideration the discovery of the cultural specificity of the ‘Other’. It becomes unthinkable to approach the cultural dimension without considering interculturalism.

Much experience with the teaching of skills (and linguistic competence is to a large extent a skill) shows that the best results probably can be achieved if some kind of “learning by doing” can be employed. It also reveals what is common to all participants; their ethnic identity. Further, it emphasizes the role of positive cultural representations which lead to openness to other cultures (racism) and the need for educators to consider education as an essential entry to social interrelations and interculturalism. Languages come with some cultural associations attached of education and languages are at the core of promoting global harmony and peace.

Therefore, people should be able to look at others with a sense of critical appropriation. Critical appropriation is concerned with the perception of the self-culture and other cultures. It is being able to accept and interpret self-knowledge and self-identity, with respect for values held by other cultures and individuals from different beliefs. It concerns the internal culture, the values, thoughts and patterns implicitly learned (Weaver, 1986). It implies an analysis of the knowledge previously learned (Bloom, 1956). It supposes a positive response from the learner and the placing of value on other cultures (Krathwolh, Bloom and Masia, 1964). It aims at preventing overgeneralization, and allows for consultation, negotiation, presentation of nuanced points of view and tactful discussions of different and similar cultural customs. It leads to critical pedagogy (Guilherme- Durate (2000: 37) since it refers to the process by which the teachers and learners negotiate and produce meaning. It seems to be an important tool for demystifying surface and social expressions. It reaches for thick cultural representations and for mutual understanding through argumentation and justification (Guilherme-Durate, 2000: 131). The confrontation and the argumentation with another culture in the person of foreign interlocutors require a re-ordering of perceptions at a level of socialization.

4. Conclusion

According to the linguistic relativity principle, the way in which we think about the world is directly influenced by the language we use to talk about it. “The real world is, to a large extent, unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever so similar that they represent the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct, not merely the same with a different label attached” (Edward Sapir, 1929). Therefore, to speak is to assume a culture, and to know a culture is like knowing a language. Language and culture are homologous mental realities. Cultural products are representations and interpretations of the world that must be communicated in order to be lived.

The problem lies in what happens when cross-cultural interactions take place, i.e., when message producer and message receiver are from different cultures. Contact among cultures is increasing and intercultural communication is imperative for anyone wanting to get along with and understand those whose beliefs and backgrounds may be vastly different from their own. Thus, language always carries meanings and references beyond itself: The meanings of a particular language represent the culture of a particular social group. To interact with a language means to do so with the
culture which is its reference point. It could be difficult to understand a culture without having direct access to its language because of their intimate connection since a particular language points to the culture of a particular social group. Besides, learning a language, therefore, is not only learning the alphabet, the meaning, the grammar rules and the arrangement of words, but it is also learning the behavior of the society and its cultural customs. So; language teaching should always contain some explicit reference to the culture, the whole from which the particular language is extracted. For, language can mark the cultural identity, but it is also used to refer to other phenomena and refer beyond itself, especially when a particular speaker uses it to explain intentions. A particular language points to the culture of a particular social group. We can therefore presume that language learning is cultural learning, as well as language teaching is cultural teaching due to the interdependence of language and cultural learning.

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