

Teachers use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Teaching English language in Senior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

The role of information and communication technology (ICT) in language learning has been acknowledged globally such that the use of ICT in English language teaching has become imperative in today's teaching and learning environment. This is because of the fundamental role it plays in the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge in English language teaching and learning. ICTs play vital roles in facilitating teaching and learning as it has made teaching and learning of English language interactive and collaborative instead of the traditional teaching and learning process where the teacher is the only embodiment of knowledge. This study investigated the availability of ICTs in senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State as well as the rate at which teachers' employ ICT in executing their lessons in the classroom. Teachers' level of proficiency in operating ICT resources such as computers, multimedia system, language laboratory and the internet was also examined.

Keywords: Information and communication technology (ICT), English teachers, language learning, language teaching

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INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) is the digital processing and utilization of information by the use of electronic computers. CT also refers to technologies which are being used for collecting, storing, editing and passing on information in various forms. ICT is of immense help in virtually all areas of teaching and learning. In the field of language education, there is emphasis on incorporating ICT resources

into the curricula, such resources include: computers, language laboratories, Internet facilities, and multimedia systems. The use of these resources will offer language teachers and students new and exciting ways of teaching and learning respectively.

In Nigeria, English language is an official language used for day to day transactions, administration, religion, conducting businesses, education, health, etc. English language is made mandatory in all Nigerian secondary schools.

Since English language is both a compulsory subject and the language of instruction at the secondary school level in Nigeria, thus it is imperative that teachers to come up with innovations and platforms that can improve English language teaching and learning, making the subject to be more interesting and easier for students to understand thereby reducing the problem of mass failure in English language in schools. (Olatunji and Kolawole, 2008), stressed that to enhance the teaching of English language in Nigeria, and prepare Nigerian teachers to match up to their counterparts in the globe, the integration of ICT is a must.

The use of ICT will enhanced teachers' professional knowledge, enabling planning and preparation for teaching to be more efficient and extending curriculum activities. Teachers' exposure to ICT would improve the quality of teaching, cause drastic decline to students' failure, develop and solidify students' communicative competence. The use of ICT in teaching and learning of English language in secondary school will help the teachers and students create and adapt to the new dimensions of teaching and learning in the 21st century with the aim of changing the attitudes, values, and aspiration of the language teachers and learners. English teachers must therefore embrace ICT-mediated language learning as innovation that would enhance students understanding and encourage their participation in classroom. This entails that teachers should acquire the necessary skills in computer operation and other ICT accessories in order to effectively utilize ICT tools for the effective teaching of English language in secondary schools.

The general aim of this study is to determine the availability of ICT and its usage in English language teaching and learning in senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Nigeria. Specifically, the study is intended to focus on the following objectives:

1. To assess the availability of ICT resources in senior secondary schools.
2. To assess the competence of English language teachers' in computer

operational skills for the use of ICT resources in teaching and learning of various concepts in English Language.

Review of literature

The Concept of ICT in Education

The use of ICT offers unprecedented opportunities to the education systems with the capacity of teacher and students to integrate enhance and interact with each other no matter the distance in a meaningful way to achieve the learning objectives. Education around the world is experiencing major paradigm shifts in educational practices of teaching and learning under the umbrella of ICT enabled learning environment. Whereas learning through facts, drill and practices, rules and procedures was more adaptive in earlier days, learning through projects and problems, inquiry and design, discovery and invention, creativity and diversity, action and reflection is perhaps more fitting for the present times through the use of ICT.

Furthermore, ICT is one of the globally acknowledged learning and teaching space today as well as one of the key agents of globalization. Korkut (2012) explains that the use of ICT in language learning not only involves pedagogical changes for teachers, but also involves environmental and pedagogical changes for learners who are traditionally used to face-to-face teaching in classrooms. The recent upsurge ICT in teaching and learning has offered learners the opportunity to confirm whatever they were taught, practice repeatedly what they have learnt and determine the pace at which they learn. ICT challenges traditional concept of teaching and learning, by reconfiguring how teachers and learners gain access to knowledge. Here ICT provides resources that transforms teacher-centered and text-bounds classroom into rich and student-focused learning.

Computer-Assisted language learning (CALL)

Some of the critical role computers play in English language teaching and learning is best understood in terms of computer assisted language learning (CALL). According to Levy (1997:1) Computer assisted language learning

(CALL) is defined as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". Hoffman (2010) identified the ability to link language learners with other language users as being possibly 'the most compelling appeal of computer networks' because it offers learners 'the exposure' to the culture of the target language. Also in the systematic review of research undertaken by Macaro, Handley and Walter (2012: 15–20), they arrived at a conclusion that "some language learning benefits of computer assisted language learning (CALL) have manifested." These include evidence that CALL helps learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) with listening and writing particularly improvements in the amount of writing, length of texts and discourse features of text.

It is important for language teachers to be full acquainted with the skill needed to use computers in their lesson delivery. According to Carol (1998) there must be complementary relationship between source language research and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) practice to create successful language learning. Krashen (2007) stressed that computer assisted language learning (CALL) is seen as a catalyst which facilitates learning thereby engaging the students in active communication which in turn facilitates the development of second language competence. Computers enable learners to pool their knowledge in effective ways and enhance peer correction and language learning. Moreover as Krashen (2007:27) puts it: "using computers for free voluntary surfing will encourage students to wander through the internet and read what interests them". In fact computer assisted language learning provides language learners with a wide range of options and solutions in facilitating learners' engagement in active communication which in turn facilitates the development of second language competence.

Computers could also be used to evaluate students' performance in their learning of language, Chappelle (1990) noted that one of the greatest strengths of CALL is that the computer evaluates and returns detailed feedback message for every sentences that the student forms. Here

computer avail students the opportunity to review and practice correct forms of grammar, this implies that CALL can go a long way in reducing the problems of poor grammatical performance amongst students in senior secondary school. CALL can also be used to conceptualize grammar and make the learning of grammar more interesting through games, drills and other activities. Murray (2000) with regards to the role of CALL in language education opined that computer technology has facilitated trends already present in pedagogical theories and reposition the teacher as a mentor-coach rather than a provider of received knowledge.

Competence of English Language Teachers in Computer Operational Skills.

In every society, teachers play very important roles. The roles they play in the education process are central to basic education. One of the factors that determine the development and innovation in education is the teachers. This is because the technology does not have an educational value in itself. It becomes important when teachers use it in their learning-teaching process. One of the challenges facing the education system is lack of competent teachers who are literate or proficient in the use of information technology. Information Communication Technology (ICT) proficiency is the ability to use technology tools and networks to define an information need, to access, to manage, integrate and evaluate information. Regardless of the quantity and quality of technology available in classrooms, the key to how ICTs are used are the teachers. Hence it is important that teachers are competent and have the right attitude towards technology.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted to carry out the research. This design enabled the researcher to carry out a survey on teachers' use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching English language in senior secondary schools. A sample of fifty-six (56) English language teachers from twenty-eight (28) senior secondary schools were randomly

selected and used for the study. The selected schools included fourteen (14) public schools and fourteen (14) private schools.

To ensure the successful conduct of this study, a questionnaire was employed to elicit response from English language teachers in the selected Senior Secondary Schools. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A standard reference mean of 2.50 was adopted for the purpose of determining the extent to which English teachers use ICT resources in English language teaching in senior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Results and discussion

Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

Two research questions guided the study and data were analyzed and presented in the following order:

Research Questions

Research Question 1

To what extent are ICT resources available for the teaching and learning of English language in senior secondary schools?

Table 1 shows the mean rating of teachers’ response in both public and private schools. The mean ratings of English language teachers in public schools includes 1.46, 1.00, 1.39, 1.0 0 which are less than the standard reference mean of 2.50 indicates that English language teachers in public senior secondary schools were of the view that; computers and its accessories, multi-media ,internet and language laboratory were not adequately available in senior secondary schools in Uyo L.G.A.

Table 1: Availability of ICT Resources for Teaching English language in senior Secondary Schools

Available ICT resources,	Teachers’ response in public schools				Mean \bar{x}	Std.dev	No of teachers in public sch	Teachers’ response in private schools				Mean \bar{x}	Std.dev	No of teachers in private sch
	4	3	2	1				4	3	2	1			
Computers	0	2	9	17	1.46	0.54	28	3	6	13	6	2.21		28
multimedia	0	0	0	28	1.00	0.00	28	3	5	10	10	2.04		28
Internet	0	0	7	21	1.39	0.46	28	0	2	18	8	1.79		28
Language laboratory	0	0	0	28	1.00	0.00	28	0	9	11	8	2.04		28

Standard reference mean \bar{x} = 2.50

Also , the mean rating from English language teachers in private senior secondary schools includes 2.21, 2.04, 1.79 and 2.04 indicates that ICT resources such as computers and its accessories, multi-media, the internet and language laboratory were not adequately available in private senior secondary schools in Uyo L.G.A of Akwa Ibom State

Research Questions 2

To what extent are English language teachers competent in computer operational skills for the use of ICT resources in teaching and learning of various concepts in English Language?

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of both male and female teachers from the sampled schools in Uyo

.L.G.A of Akwa Ibom State. The mean ratings from male teachers included 2.33, 1.32, 1.67, 1.33 and 2.00 while the mean ratings from female teachers included 2.45, 1.52, 1.52, 1.83 and 2.34.

The mean ratings below indicates that both male and female teachers were of the view that they are not competent in carrying out the following computer operational skills; Microsoft word (typing), Corel draw, scanning images, recording sounds and power point.

Discussion of Findings

In research question 1, the study found out that computer, multi-media system, internet and language laboratories are not adequately available in both public and private senior secondary schools in Uyo L.G.A of Akwa Ibom state.

In research question 2, the study concluded that both male and female English language teachers in the sampled schools were incompetent in carrying out the following computer operational skills; Microsoft word processing (typing), coral draw, scanning images, recording sounds and power point presentation.

Table 2: Competence of English Language Teachers in Computer Operational Skills in the Use of ICT Resources.

Computer operational skills	male Teachers' response				Mean \bar{x}	Std dev	Total No.of male teachers	Female teachers' response				Mean \bar{x}	Std.dev	Total no of female
	4	3	2	1				4	3	2	1			
Microsoft word (typing)	4	7	10	6	2.33	0.98	27	7	4	13	5	2.45	1.04	29
Corel draw	0	2	6	19	1.37	0.62	27	0	2	11	16	1.52	0.62	29
Scanning images	0	5	8	14	1.67	0.77	27	3	1	6	17	1.52	0.96	29
Recording sounds	0	1	7	19	1.33	0.55	27	0	4	16	9	1.83	0.65	29
Power point presentation	2	5	11	9	2.00	0.90	27	2	12	9	6	2.34	0.88	29

Standard

reference

mean \bar{x} =

2.50

Conclusion

These findings should act as a clarion call for government and other relevant agencies to act swiftly in the area of providing the need information and communication technology (ICT) resources and training of English language teachers on the use of these resources for the teaching and learning of English language, in

line with the best practices in other parts of the world and to provide students with new and exciting ways of learning.

Considering the prestigious role English language plays in our society; as the language of instructions in schools and the official language of Nigeria, government must invest in ICT as an alternative platform in which English language

teachers and students can use to teach and learn respectively.

Also, the world is going digital; hence the English language teachers especially those referred to as “computer immigrants” must strive to upgrade their teaching skills by acquiring the necessary ICT skills needed for lesson delivery.

Recommendations

Recommendations based on the study, included the following:

Government should ensure that ICT policy statements are translated into reality. An ICT policy implementation commission should be created. This commission should be funded and given the power to provide ICT facilities in the schools as well as monitor their use.

State level ministries of education should collaborate with the National Information Technology Development Agency to develop an ICT based Curriculum that is relevant for keeping in pace with technological development and the changing competencies required of the 21st century teacher.

School administrations should endeavour to sponsor teachers for regular seminars, symposia and workshops that focus on classroom application of ICT

Schools can source funds through public/private partnership and through donor agencies to fund school ICT projects as some of these projects are capital-intensive projects in order to augment the inadequate ICT facilities for language teaching noted in the schools.

Schools should deploy ICT in language classrooms and teachers should be encouraged to use presentation software like Microsoft PowerPoint to teach.

Computer/ICT education should be made compulsory for all secondary school students the *National Policy on Education*, 4th ed., has made computer education an elective course in high schools. This means only those who elect to take it will have computer education in senior secondary school.

Finally, the school library should include relevant books on ICT literacy in its collection development on a quarterly or yearly basis and the timetable should be flexible for teachers to utilize such books.

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