

Integrating Ict in the Teaching and Learning of the English Language in Nigeria Schools

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Abstract: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a welcomed development in Nigeria and the world at large. In the area of education, ICT has contributed immensely and is still contributing to teaching and learning. There is universal recognition of the need to use ICT Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education as we enter the era of globalization where the free flow of information through satellite and the internet hold sway in global dissemination of knowledge. This paper reviewed amongst other things the place of ICT in Nigeria educational system, the extent to which ICT aids teaching and learning, challenges of using ICT and the way forward.

Key words: ICT • Education • Teaching and Learning

INTRODUCTION

ICT “is an electronic based system of information transmission, reception, processing and retrieval which has drastically changed the way we think, the way we live and the environment in which we live” [1]. ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application encompassing radio television, cellular phones, computer network, satellite system etc. [2], defines ICT as all the digital technologies including computer, scanner, printer, telephone, internet, digital satellite system, direct broadcast satellite etc. there are different context where ICT are spoken of and such context includes education, healthcare, libraries etc.

The use of ICT in education sector is becoming quite popular. The role of technology in teaching and learning is rapidly becoming one of the most important and widely discussed issues in contemporary education policy [3].

ICT is becoming quite important in our daily activities. As a result of this, many institution of learning are adopting ICT in the teaching of different skills and knowledge. Because of realization of the effects of ICT in our everyday activities, in our work places, those at the helm of affairs in our education sector now structures the

curriculum to cater for these growing needs in ICT. In this 21st century, nothing can be done without the use of ICT and for people to be carried along, curriculum developers integrates ICT in the curriculum of education at almost every level.

ICT in Nigeria: Nigeria struggles with other nations in the use of ICT in virtually every sector many countries around the world have established organizations for the promotion of ICT’S because it is feared that under technologically advanced areas have a chance to catch up the increasing technologically advances, the developed nation will only serve to exacerbate the already exacting economic gap between technological “have” and have nots” areas [4].

The use of information and communication technology is growing rapidly Nigeria is not left out in the pursuit for literacy in ICT. ICT related tools have been known to make institution and markets more productive, enhance acquisition of skills and learning improve governance at all levels and make it easier for service to be accessed. ICT is part of our existence today in Nigeria it is important in education, banking, advertisement etc. in Nigeria. ICT is efficiently used in libraries, used in the teaching of computer studies and the teaching of English language is not left out.

Though the use of ICT is relatively new in Nigeria, there are so many challenges confronting its use. These challenges notwithstanding, Nigeria struggles with the rest of the world to impact this new trend in the citizens. As a result of the importance of ICT, the federal government mapped out so many programmes to help the citizens, join the rest of the world in embracing this new trend. ICT has offered a world of opportunities to Nigeria. In our schools today ICTS are being employed in teaching and learning, for checking results, used for registration and storing of vital information.

ICT in Nigeria Classroom: The importance of ICT in our educational sector cannot be over emphasized. This is simply as a result of the fact that the world is a global village. Where every human activity is computerized, this implies that applicability of the computer system to the affairs and administration of the educational sector in Nigeria would be of great benefits to its human resources, development and productivity. The adoption of the use of ICT in teaching and learning in Nigeria has a lot of benefits some of them are as follows

- It saves cost
- It aids the use of immediate feedback in learning.
- Encourages individualized instruction
- Makes learning interesting and creative.

[5], opines that for education to thrive in Nigeria, it must be ICT driven. According to him, no education is complete without ICT it is valuable in enhancing teaching and learning. It is relatively new in Nigeria educational system. This is not to say that it is a way of departing from the conventional teaching rather it is adopted to help learners to meet up with new invention in education, it is adopted because recently, education has shifted from being teacher-centered activity. The uses of ICT increase the access to and improving the relevance and quality of education.

In the Nigerian classroom situation, ICT enhances the acquisition and absorption of knowledge although there are some hindrances to its growth. The use of ICT in teaching is highly advantageous. This is because it enables them to demonstrate understanding of opportunities and implication of the uses for learning and teaching in the curriculum context, plan, implementation and the managing of teaching and learning in open and flexible learning environment [6].

With the use of ICT students gain deeper understanding of complex topics and concepts and are more likely to recall information's and use it to solve problems outside the classroom. With its use, students extends and deepens their knowledge, investigation and inquiring according to their needs and interests when access to information is available on multiple level. [7], states that in the classroom situation, ICT has been divided into two broad categories, ICT for education and ICT in education. According to him, ICT education connotes the development of ICT for specially for teaching and learning purpose and ICT in education has to do with the adoption of general component of information and communication technologies in teaching and learning process. In the classroom situation, the teacher can adopt the use of so many technologies in imparting knowledge ranging from videos, laptops, compacting digital move-making etc.

Supporting these views, [8], states that various technologies delivers various kinds of content and serves different purpose in the classroom. According to him, word processing and e-mail promotes organizational skills and modeling software promotes the understanding of science and mathematical concepts.

ICT brings more rich materials in the classroom for the teachers. ICT has broken monotony and provided variety in teaching and learning. It helps teachers to transfer knowledge speedily. Aids the learning of vocabulary studies with regards to the learning of the English language.

On this issue [9], states that there are five major areas where ICT contributes to education.

- Expanding access.
- Promoting efficiency in learning
- Improving the quality of learning
- Enhancing the quality of teaching
- Improving management system
- Expanding access to education.

ICT

An Aid to Teaching and Learning the English Language:

The English language is a foreign language in Nigeria. It is the official language of the citizens of the country. It is the lingua franca and it exists alongside the native languages of the country. Most Nigeria acquire the English languages as their L₂ that is their second

language but at the same time it also serves as the L₁ of so many citizens. The English language is also a subject taught in both the primary and secondary levels of education and in the tertiary level it is a discipline. As a result of the nature of the language, the language teachers try to incorporate so many strategies to ensure that students learn this language effectively. ICT is one of these strategies employed in recent times in the teaching of this all important language. Teachers in this area strive to help learners/students attain certain level of proficiency in the use of the language. With the growing awareness in ICT, teachers in recent times adopt some communication technologies in teaching of this language.

ICT enables a representation of language as a symbolic system. In the learning of the English language, student easily come to terms with concepts like morphology, phonetics, imagery [3]. The integration of ICT in the English language teaching allows students to become competent users as well as consumer in English.

- It improves writing and reading skill
- Develops speaking and learning skill.
- Supports collaboration, creativity independent learning and reflection.
- It enables students to access information and respond to a widening range of texts.
- Organize and present information in a variety of forms.
- Broaden the range of audiences for their work.
- Compose a widening range of text for a broad range of purpose.
- Developing understanding of language and critical literacy [3].

Before now, teachers of the English language find it very difficult to teach phonics/pronunciation in the English language. Teachers in the traditional teaching method will continue to pronounce correct sounds until there are tired without even the student getting at what the teacher is trying to impart in them but in recent times, with the use of computer, ICT, learning pronunciation in the English language has become so interesting instead of the language teachers reciting there sounds verbally, they simply re-correct the correct pronunciation of sounds using any of the numerous ICT facilities which includes mobile phones, radio cassette, DVD disco etc and transfer this knowledge to the learner. These facilities help students to listen repeatedly to these sounds thereby learning them easily.

The use of ICT also helps students and teachers to have a good knowledge of recent developments in the language. This is as a result of the fact that the English language is not static, it is dynamic and there are bound to be changes and students are expected to keep abreast of these new changes in the language.

In this area, ICT has been of great help to the learning of pronunciation. Speech and usage of the words of English language changes. When a teacher is not conversant with these changes, such teacher ends up transferring wrong information to the students. Teachers have many avenues of following new trends in this all important language and one of these avenues is the use of ICT. This way, they also transfer these information to the students and through the use of ICT students also see these information themselves.

Challenges of Using Ict in Nigeria: There are so many factors militating against the proper use of ICT in the Nigerian educational system. Some of these factors include:

- Lack of fund: times, enough funds are not provided for the provision of required gadgets needed for the use of ICT even when, these funds are provided some official at the helm of affairs usually embezzled these funds thereby making it impossible for ICT literacy to be achieved.
- Lack of qualified and experienced teachers: for ICT to fully thrive in our educational system, there is need for the teachers to be trained. For example in most secondary schools in Anambra state, each school has only one trained computer teacher. Can such a teacher effectively teach a whole school the operation of computers and other gadgets related to ICT for it to be effectively used in teaching and learning.

Anao (2003) [2], States that information transfer using ICT is minimal or non-existence in secondary schools in Nigeria. There is a great need for trained and experienced teachers who can effectively install, maintain and operate these system effectively.

- Gender: female teacher's exhibits low level of computer use due to their limited technology access, skill and interest.

- Limited ICT facilities and infrastructure: ICT facilities are lacking in most schools. There are clear indications that the supply of relevant and appropriate software is a major bottleneck obstructing wider application of the ICT. To be fully implemented in the Nigerian educational system, enough facilities need to be provided.
- Teachers work load: In most private establishments teachers have enormous workloads. When this is the case, they can hardly impact this knowledge fully. Government establishments are not left out of this. Curriculum developers need to fully evaluate the contents of the curriculum and know how to bring down the work load of the teachers to enable them to be more effective in disseminating knowledge especially ICT effectively.
- Lack of power supply/Electricity: ICT facilities cannot be used without electricity. In Nigeria today, the epileptic nature of our power supply is not encouraging for the implementation of ICT in teaching and learning in our schools. Because of this, both the learners and teachers hardly use ICT gadgets in teaching and learning. These factors and many others hinder the use of ICT in teaching and learning in our educational system. Government should try and see that these problems are looked into. For proper implementation of ICT manpower needs to be provided, power supply should be given attention, funds should be made available and this will greatly improve the utilization of ICT in our education system.
- ICT aids individualized learning. Here students can conveniently study even when the teacher is not there.
- ICT makes students autonomous, independent, providing choice, enlarge student's horizon and motivation to learn.
- Provides correct information which is as comprehensive as possible and also provides immediate feedback to learners.

CONCLUSION

The effective use of ICT in teaching and learning makes pupils/students feel they are in control, not of classroom management but in terms of independent learning. It is another education tool available for both teachers and students, it is interactive and dynamic. Its educational benefits are enormous.

Stakeholders in education should strive and provide this all important facility in our educational sector funds needs to be provided constant supply of electricity should be ensured, adequate manpower should be provided, adequate infrastructure should be put in place etc.

There is no doubt that when these are done, teaching and learning through ICT will improve tremendously in the Nigerian educational sector.

REFERENCES

- Prospects:** There are numerous good prospects for the use of ICT in teaching and learning in the educational sector. Some of them include:
- Providing variety in the presentation of content which helps learners in concentration, better understanding and long retention of information which is not possible otherwise.
 - Teaching with the integration of ICT brings liveliness in teaching and learning process. It also helps the upgrading of language skills and for building constructive knowledge.
 - Enhancing educational efficiency this is because of large population in our educational sector, students are hardly given individual attention. It aids thinking skill in mathematics and helps in language learning for subjects like English Language.
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