University of Jos Journal of Arts Education

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN EXGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper took a look at information and communication technology in English language teaching and learning for sustainable development. in Nigeria. It was stated that English language is the key in sustaining development and that no meaningful development call take place without it. It was also mentioned that the introduction of ICT in English language teaching and learning has brought remarkable improvcilrent in the teaching and learning process. Among the challenges -highlighted were resistance to change by teachers who have little or no knowledge of ICT, high cost of internet services in Nigeria and other financial constraints. Recommendations were made among which is that issues of equity and access to technology nrust be addressed. Students encounter ICT in many areas of their lives and it is essential that they be provided opportunities to explore the technology and be encouraged to use it as a learning tool. Government should improve on power supply and link many more villages to the national electricity grid so as to encourage individuals to learn and use the internet. It was concluded that judicious use of ICT tools to teach English boosts learning in terms of attitudes , autonomy and authenticity.

KEYWORDS: English language, Information and communication technology, Sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

The modern age is termed as the era of knowledge explosion. This explosion has become possible due to the progress of science and technology. Every a'spect of human life has changed due to the effects of science and technology. The use of science and technology in the field of communication has revolutionized the whole

world. Use of modern technological tools has led to the rise of ICT (Information and Communication technology.) Now ICT is being used in a number of fields like education, health, entertainment, games and sports, transportation, industries, fashion designing, textiles, agriculture; among others. With a single click, one can access a lot of information in the world due to the use of ICT. The field of education is not untouched by ICT as ICT has made exchange of thoughts, ideas, experiences and feelings easier. With the help of ICT people can get education and training simultaneously at a low cost. ICT is now being used in all aspects of education. Use of computers, internet, television, radio, projectors and mobile phones, e-mail facility, online audio and video conferencing as well as new applications have made the teaching and learning process attractive and convenient. So, it can be said that ICT plays a very important and pivotal role in the teaching/learning process which runs over into English language learning.

Use of information communication technology (ICT) in the English language pedagogy is still novel in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. In the view of Taiwo in Aremu (2014), "one of the most remarkable events in the last fifty years in Africa is the continent's CQnnection to the global world through the internet and mobile telecommunications." The employment of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the teaching and learning of English as a second language has been introduced to Nigerian socio-cultural setting as a result of the global networking of the new culture called "digital literacy". This digital culture according to Aremu has replaced the former 'print literacy' in the technological world because different automated packages have been introduced into teaching and learning. ICT in English language teaching and learning improves efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning that can improve the quality of understanding and mastery of the language being studied. English language being the official language in Nigeria is not only a second language, but also the language of commerce. education, politics, law and administration in the entire countr}'s afFair. The English language also occupies a very significant role in national development and acts as a veritable tool for sustainable development. Nigeria cannot achieve its developmental goals without giving priority to the teaching and learning of English language as it is the central means of disseminating information that can bring about development. It is often argued that for any nation to make progress. scie:ce 3:d technology must be well developed, but without language, scientific and inhr.ological concepts will be difficult to be expressed. Language is thus. the kc) :,' Je-.'elopment because every invention and discovery, work of art. culture. e:: ::: :\?: essed in language.

English, according to Akhtar(20161 is e:: : :- I!: :: : s: important languages which have played a significant role in ::-.: :-- = === :- ;:,'balization and knowledge

explosion. It is the most common means of communication throughout the glotx. This is why it is termed link language, global language as well as lingua franca. Therefore, it is necessary to teach English and develop English language skills among students using ICT. In Nigerian socio-cultural setting, the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of English as a second language has become common place. Teachers of English as a second language in Nigeria have commenced the act of updating their knowledge in computer literacy. According to Durant and Green in Aremu (2011), ICT (i.e information communication technology) presupposes the employment of computer and electronic gadgets to disseminate information and elicit responses from communicative utterances. Such technological information, according to Alabi (2005), can be accessed through the utilization of mobile cell phones, computer and internet. ICT is a digital technology used in storing, retrieving and disseminating information in the contemporary jet age. In the view of Alabi (2005) and Horstein (2008), technological and internet literacy is germane in the contemporary democratically organized education of the 21st century. The use of ICT packages like video-conferencing, teleconferencing, etc. helps in the teaching and learning of English language. According to Adeleke (2009), ICT helps in presenting interactive instructional aids on specific subject matters, assessment of students' progress and understanding of instructional materials. Series of computerbased packages which are useful in the teaching of English as a second language abound. These include: Computer-Aided Language Learning (CALL), Computer –Based Language Training (CBLT), Computer- Aided :Language Assessment (CALA), and so an.

THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development needs to be understood before sustainable development and the term development has been looked at from different angles by different people. Development has become a global watchword. However, despite the widespread use of the term, scholars are yet to agree on its meaning but a few definitions are relevant in this context. Topadro and Smith in Eyisi, Omazu, Akaegbobi, Daniel and Oni (2016, p.30) define development as “the process of improving the quality of all human lives and capabilities by raising people’s levels of living, self-esteem, and freedom.”Shah (2016, p.1) sees development as “improvement in a country's economic and social conditions”. More specially, it refers to improvements in a way of managing an area's natural and human resources in order to create wealth and improve people’s lives. Gboyega in Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) captures developrpent as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material well-being of all citizens, (not the most powerful and rich alone), in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future

4nd it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion oflife chances.

Similarly, Naomi in La\val and Oluwatoyin (2011) believes that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and other essential services all with a view to improving individual and collective quality of life. It was observed in the Concept of Development (20 16) that there are two dimensions of development which are the economic dimension and the social dimension. The economic dimension tends to equate development with economic growth and measure by economic indicators such as the GDP and GNP, whiles the social dimension looks at development through improvements in the lifestyles of people, health, education, empowerment, mortality rate and a host of other indicators.

Opara and Adegun (2004) see national development as a process of emancipation of man from poverty, fear, exploitation, dirty environment, dependency on foreign financing and expertise. It is the way of realistically finding political solutions to peculiar needs in time and space of the people. In the context of this paper, it is the attainment of sufficient levels of economic growth and social well being ofthe nation and its citizenry. Development is also seen as a multi-dimensional process involving the totality of man in his political, economic, psychological and social relations among other aspects of his existence. Often, the concept of development has been misconstrued with infrastructural development such as roads, industries, money and so on. But development includes much more than these. It is for this reason that Schumacher in Opara and Adegun (2014) warns that development does not start with goods but with people; it should therefore, focus on the quality of life of the people. The implication of the foregoing is that for Nigeria as a nation to be able to attain total development as described above, the educational system must provide citizens with qualitative functional literacy using every means including the use of educational technology through lifelong learning opportunities.

Lichman (1972) and Markovitz (1977) stress that a developed society is the one that has succeeded in providing a source of living for the majority of its inhabitants and in which premium is attached to elimination of poverty, provision of food, shelter and clothing to members. This argument agrees with the definition of development by Todaro and Smith (2006) from the modernization paradigm which sees development as a multidimensional process which involves the sustained elevation of the entire society and social system towards a better or humane life. They identify three basic components for understanding development which are sustenance, self-esteem and

freedom. These represent common goals sought by all individuals and societies. According to them, sustenance is concerned with ability to meet basic needs; selfesteem is concerned with a sense of worth and self-respect, of not being used by others as tools for their own needs; freedom is concerned with freedom from servitude – servitude to nature, ignorance, other people, misery, institutions and . dogmatic beliefs especially, that poverty is a predestination. Therefore, the definition by this paradigm which emphasizes the basic needs of life in transforming the individual in the society to self-actualization is a true definition of development. On the other hand, the modern concept of sustainable development is derived mostly from the 1987 Brundtland Report which states that sustainable development is seen as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (The Concept of Development, 2016).

English Language as a Tool for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

English language as a tool for sustainable development in Nigeria will be discussed under education, social, political and economic development.

Education

Obiegbu (2015) is of the view that the purpose of education in Nigeria is for national unity and development. It is also believed that no nation can rise above the level of its education for without education, a nation cannot get the needed manpower required for material advancement and enlightenment of the citizenry. The trained engineers, teachers, medical doctors, lawyers, etc are all products of education. This explains why it is argued that the quality of a nation's education determines the level of its national development. Supporting this assertion, Oyetunde and Muodumogu in Garridau and Jindem (2012) posit that there is a close relationship between language competence and educational attainment. This means that language success is generally educational success and by implication the quality of education of a nation is a key factor in national development. Similarly, Abekah (2009) maintains that professionals such as the teacher, politician, lawyer and the president with his ministers, law makers, among other individuals who contribute to national development, all use language as a medium of communication. Abekah reiterates that any development that takes place in any nation is executed with language, adding that, without the tool of language teachers, no nation can experience any kind of development. According to him, teachers generally train the manpower for their nations but language teachers arm students with the tool of communication and a business. He further comments that it is as a result of the efforts of the language teacher that the individual masters the relevant language as a tool to enable them read for any piece of information of any description.

Language education is the core of general education as subjects cannot be taught and learnt without language competence, Supporting this assertion, Ige in Mwanti and Garridau (2011) is of the view that language is the corner stone of any educational process. It plays a vital role in education as it constitutes a subject and a medium of instruction. Language, whether spoken or written is the vehicle through which knowledge is imparted and knowledge is wealth and power. Every form of education, whether formal or informal, uses one language or the other. Since. we cannot talk of education without the language through which the concepts are expressed, English as the language of education in Nigeria contributes in no small way to the rapid development experienced in Nigeria. There is no doubt that Nigeria as a country has benefited tremendously through the use of the English language to advance the development of the country. Going by what is on ground in terms of

human development in all spheres of human interactions, technological advancement, provision of social amenities, etc. there is no doubt that Nigeria can lay claim to greater achievement through her adoption of English as a second language.

Economic Development

One of the major sources of revenue for Nigeria is production. Internally, Nigerians engage in trading and other business activities; the major foundation for the success ofthese businesses is the existence of English and other local languages as a means of communication. Nigerians can travel from one part of the country to another and other parts of the world for their business transactions because the English language facilitates smooth business interaction. Obiegbu (2015) comments that economists in Nigeria believe that English is crucial for economic development as it helps them trade more widely on an international scale. English is an international language and the widespread use of the language in international trade enables Nigeria to do international business. The international community can easily and comfortably be reached because of the prestigious language. An individual's economic empowerment in Nigeria is closely linked to good command of English. A wide range of business categories in Nigeria including the banking industry, technology, the pharmaceutical industry, and even vocational workers such as carpenters and electricians see increased need for English language skills. Obiegbu adds that the government of Nigeria firmly recognises that English is a key element of business communication and it is essential for attracting new investments. With government and companies pushing for far more English speaking workers, it can be expected that more individuals will view English, among other skills, as a step towards career advancement and higher pay. This is a motivating factor for individuals to learn English in order to obtain well-paid jobs within the most dynamic organisations and industries in Nigeria. This way, English language is a tool for sustained national

development. The fact that English is used as a lingua franca for advancing ,international trade, business, and economics as well as obtaining information and conducting research all over the world is a sign that it is a mark of sustainable development.

Political Development

Politics in Nigeria would have been a difficult business without a medium of general communication. One of the ways of conducting political activities in Nigeria is through house to house and open rally campaigns. Without language, it would be quite difficult if not totally impossible to address a political audience at different rallies. Language has made it possible and easy for past and present presidents to address the people of the country at appointed times. This alone has contributed a lot to the existing unity in the country. All the houses of assembly, representatives, the senate, judiciary and all other bodies in the nation find it easy to interact and communicate through the English language. Laws and bills are passed using the English language. Past and present political parties were formed and named in English language. For example, The Northern People's Congress (NPC), The Action Group (A(J), The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC), National Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) Nigerian's People's Party (NPP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressive Congress (APC), etc. Obiegbu (2015) observes that the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is written in English to create a level playing ground for all Nigerians. The national flag, the national anthem, the national Independence Day, national associations as well as several national monuments are designed in English; all of these assert that English is closely linked to sustainable development in Nigeria.

Social Development

Olusoji (2012) declares that Nigeria has moved from the days of town criers to the latest communication gadgets in the world. The contribution of information technology to social development is found in human comfort and the guarantee of an easy access to the whole world. This beneficial aspect provided by the influence of science and technology is succinctly captured by Brumfit in Olusoji (20 12) when he observes that there is easy kndwledge transfer now in quantities and at speeds unimaginable in the past; there is communication not just through television, but through- rnassi've databases. We can be, ih principle, anywhere in the world, and connect to databases that are traditionally preserved' in Paris or in Oxford or in Washington. Information travels fast these days through outlets such as internet, television, compact disc, radio, telephone and print media. It is possible to sit down in one's room and reach out to the whole world. Though expensive. these

communication gadgets have reduced the whole world to a 'global village'. Any important event now needs not gather crowds together at a particular position to watch such event. One can simply sit down in his/her room and watch events live and direct all over the world. The benefit of such gadgets is facilitated through the knowledge of common language which is English. Nigeria is a member of several international bodies such as African Unity (AU), United Nations (UN), among others. Nigeria is able to function and interact effectively in these organisations through the use of English language and that is why Odebunmi (2005) declares that English is the only means open to individuals from different ethnic and linguistic groups for interaction.

In the area of NYSC, Obiegbu (2015) notes that the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) which is aiMed at bringing together all the educated Nigerian youths from tertiary institutions is a great ideal of the Nigeria government. This ideal would not have been possible without the English language which binds all together at various camps and at places of primary assignment. The idea of the National Youth Service Corps is geared towards reinforcing the spirit of oneness among Nigerian youths

ICT and English Language Teaching(ELT)

Ammanni (2016) comments that English language has become/a global language because of its numerous functions and preferences over several other languages over the globe. It has become the window to the world. English is not only the mother tongue of Britain but also to so many countries like Canada, USA, New Zealand and so on. It is also used as second language in many countries like Nigeria, Ghana, etc. English has become a medium for business and interactional purposes among other functions .English is playing a major role in every field such as medicine, engineering, education, art and law, music, etc. As the world is changing, there must be changes in~ language learning. English and technological development have transformed the learning and teaching English as a lingua franca in an unprecedented way. In every aspect of human life, science, information, technology all play a vital role. Even in the field of education, technological developments have opened a new page. Traditional methods of teaching are not showing great impact on learners. Technology has become a tool for making learners innovative and has also become a way of motivating learners towards learning.

Because English is used as a lingua franca for advancing international trade, business, and economics as well as obtaining information and conducting research all over the world, it is necessary to teach English and develop English language skills among learners at all school levels. Globalisation has maximized the spread of English since nations have needed to utilise English as a lingua franca to develop

their international trade, business and economics. In Zughoul's (2003) view. **bile** globalization has eased the spread of the English language, the English language also functions as a tool for international communication to contribute to the globalisation process.

Akhtar (2016) observes that to teach English and develop English language skills, various approaches and methods are in use but most of them are traditional, less interesting, ineffective as well as less motivating. So, it is necessary to use modern approaches and tools of ICT to develop better understanding and acquisition ofbasic skills i.e. LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) of English language among students. ICT has a lot of things to offer to both teachers and students for the enhancement of their vocabulary and improvement of English language skills. Today ICT tools and approaches are being used widely due to their convenience, omnipresence, effectiveness and being economic. Some of these approaches, facilities and tools are CAI (Computer Assisted Learning), CALA (Computer Assisted Language Assessment), CALI (Computer Assisted Language Instruction), CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) , TELL (Technology Enhanced Language Learning), Blogs, Wiki, e-mail facility, digital libraries, multimedia, mobile learning, free and open source software and social media, MOOCs, virtual classrooms, documentaries, digital storytelling, mobile applications, i-Pads, digital notebooks, tablets, smart phones, recorded audio-video materials, online spoken tutorials, digital pronunciation dictionaries, etc. Modern studies and researches show positive results of integration of ICT in the field of ELT and development of English language skills. These facilities have paved the way of individualized learning and provided freedom of learning anytime, anywhere according to needs and convenience of the learners. So, proper steps should be taken to integrate ICT into the field of ELT to make learners well versed in English language skills.

According to Sharma and Barret (2007), there are several reasons for using technology in language teaching. In addition to the fact that technology can be motivating, it offers the possibility to work autonomously or interact and collaborate with others. Technology also provides instant feedback on language performance in various tasks and exercises.

Similarly> e-books have many functionalities. Learners can use them to develop their reading skill. For instance, e-books have added audio, interactive tasks and built-in dictionaries. Another advantage of this tool is that learners can access e-books on several devices such as tablets, mobile phones and laptops. The internet saves time and energy. English lessons cqn be learnt through internet without even leaving one's home. With internet, students can learn English anywhere, any time and u-hen e\'er

they want. The internet offers instant feedback to learners which enhances the learning experience of students. Commenting on the use of internet in ELT, Ammanni (2016) declared that the internet offers the best way to learn language other than immersion in an English speaking milieu. The student's relationship with websites is more noticeable than with print based text. Internet users may return to sites frequently or use internet for interaction to share their information and ideas.

Gary (2013) comments that Video Conferencing (VC) continues to be a highly efficient way of inviting visitors into classrooms and for enabling learners to collaborate with each other from a distance. In certain situations this can be one of the few methods available for exposing learners to native English speakers and for facilitating cultural exchanges. VC can also bring specialist English teachers into classrooms for direct teaching as well as modelling good practice for the mainstream teacher. Teachers themselves can also link up using the technology for more in-depth teacher training sessions. Whilst excellent VC results can be achieved with professional equipment, great results can be obtained with a simple web camera, microphone and reliable internet connection.

Gary adds that digital texts and electronic books (e-books) particularly when accessed can inspire children to read. Many offer effective oral modelling via text-tospeech synthesis and access to other tools like electronic dictionaries. Specialised software can record, measure and track progress in reading, and interactive fiction (IF) promotes active reading by enabling learners to affect outcomes in stories, maximising engagement in the storytelling process. Children are also motivated by their own personal writing and there are many tools available to support writing and allow them to author for different audiences – multi-modal digital narratives like cartoons, storyboards, presentations, blogs, websites and extended prose.

Gary further posits that Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is flexible, rich and interactive in the terms of time and place and can encourage students in learning language more than other media. This is due to the computer's ability to present material in more diverse ways than either books or videos. In addition, CALL is able to generate interaction and improve communicative competence, including providing authentic material to the class or self-learning. The method focuses on computer utilization to enhance language learning and enables repetitive language learning activities that provide instantaneous feedback to the user. Learners can really benefit from self-directed vocabulary and grammar-based exercises, particularly those that monitor voice input and assess the accuracy ofpronunciation.

Challenges of Language Learning Through ICT

- Many learners do not have access to the computers and ICT
- Resistance to change by teachers who have little or no knowledge of ICT
- High cost of internet services in Nigeria
- Financial constraints
- Lack of constant power supply
- Some students misuse the internet for pornography and uneducated websites which degrade their morality

CONCLUSION

English language teaching and learning is an area where ICT is increasingly being used to give learners access to information, promote interaction and communication, and enhance digital literacy skills. In order to maximize the potential of ICT in language teaching, it is important that the use of ICT is introduced and supported in a sustainable way and in a range of pedagogical approaches that promote lifelong learning. The integration of ICT into English language teaching and learning is an innovation that can enhance sustainable development in Nigeria as no meaningfbl development can take place without language.

Finally, technology can promote language learning with fresh authentic and motivating materials directly usable from the internet. ICT tools have been reported to yield positive results in ELT classrooms. In fact, judicious use of ICT tools to teach English boosts learning in terms of attitudes, autonomy and authenticity. The range of technologies now available can support teachers in a variety of ways inside the young learner classroom in the home environment and while learners are on the move, going about their daily lives. Since English is utilized as an international language for enhancing international trade, business, and economics as well as getting information and doing research all over the globe, the use of ICT in its teaching and learning will be a worthwhile venture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The English language being the language of instruction at all educational levels and the vehicle of globalisatioh should be given more attention by training and retraining of English language teachefs at all educational levels and the provision of relevant teaching and learning materials, especially in the area of ICT

  English language teachers should be encouraged to use ICT tools which can increase their domain of knowledge of the English language with the help of e-journals, e-magazines and e-library.

English language teachers should be given opportunities to participate in discussions and conferences with experts of English language teaching to improve their knowledge and skills through video and audio conferencing. Language controls the government, the legal system, politics, health, education, mass media, local and international businesses and indeed every facet of life. No nation is an island because all nations are members of one organisation or the other and all these nations relate through language. When language is removed from man, community, nation or the entire universe, the totality of man will become meaningless. Language is therefore inevitable and indispensable to man

If all students are to have the opportunity to develop ICT skills and achieve English syllabus outcomes, issues of equity and access to technology must be addressed

Students encounter ICT in many areas of their lives and it is essential that they be provided opportunities to explore technology and be encouraged to use it as a learning tool.

Government should improve on power supply and link many more villages to the national electricity grid so as to encourage individuals to learn and use the internet.

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