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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY THROUGH ICT MEDIA FOR THE 2030 EDUCATIONAL AGENDA

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### Abstract

*This paper studied the teaching of English Language through ICT Media for the 2030 Educational Agenda. It examined critical issues such as challenges of learning and teaching English language in Nigeria, meaning and media of Information and Communication Technology, academic uses of the ICT media, and prospects of learning/teaching English language through ICT media. The paper therefore concluded that government and school proprietors should give proper attention through budgeting allocation, training of teachers of English in the use of ICT media and provision of social development goals.*

**Keywords:** Communication, ICT, Media, Pedagogy

### Introduction

The phenomenon of English as a global language cannot be overemphasised. In Nigeria, since its advent through contact with the Europeans, first through trade and later colonisation, the English language has assumed a prestigious status and has continued to provide a wide range of utilitarian values thus serving as the Official Language (henceforth OL) of the nation. As the language of administration, English language is used for the proceedings in the National Assembly and State House of Assemblies. It is used to preserve official documents of the government such as gazette, press release and even the Nigerian Constitution. English language is used both in the print and electronic media. Abati (2006:2) submits that "the Nigerian press has employed the English language as a vehicle for reaching out to its elite audience, and to a large extent that audience measures the value of a newspaper by the quality of its use of language".

With the advent of English in Nigeria, most Nigerian writers find another medium through which their thoughts can be expressed. The English language assumes different textures in the literary piece written in the country. With the use of English language, most of these African writers have gained access to large audience unlike their counterparts who write in their indigenous languages (Akinyosoye, 2010). The English language serves as the Lingua Franca (henceforth LF) in Nigeria. Through the use of English language, the peoples of the multilingual Nigeria are able to interact with one another as well as engage in international relationship with other

nations. Most importantly, the English language is a medium of instruction in schools from the primary level to the secondary level as stipulated in the national Policy on Education (henceforth NPE).

### **Challenges of Learning and Teaching English Language in Nigeria**

English is a very important language in Nigeria; hence, it has to be learnt by every citizen, particularly by those who are of school age. Little wonder then it is clearly stated in the National Policy on Education that the medium of instruction from primary four to the tertiary level should be the English language. But many challenges are associated with the teaching and learning of the language because of the fact that the language is used as a second language (henceforth L2) in Nigeria. Some of these challenges are as discussed in Farinde and Ojo (2010) are highlighted below:

**Cultural Interference:** Language is viewed as a vehicle through which socio-cultural values of a society are being transmitted. The main thrust of the linguistic relativists' argument is that every society views their world differently. Challenges may arise from the fact that the cultures of the mother tongue (henceforth MT) and the target language (TL) are different. The native speakers of English and speakers of the languages indigenous to Nigeria are having views of life, experience, dispositions, characterization and world that are totally different.

**Interference:** An average Nigerian child has already acquired a linguistic repertoire in their first language (henceforth L1). They now perceive the TL (which is the English language) in terms of their L1, particularly in the aspect of phonology and other psycholinguistic aspects of language relations.

**Language Skills:** There are four skills of language mastery. These are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In an L2 situation such as Nigeria, it is expected that attention should be paid to the teaching of all the skills. However, since reading and writing are the skills emphasised in the country's educational system, listening and speaking are thus poorly developed in the learners (Akindede and Adegbite, 1999).

**Mode of Acquisition:** There is a difference between language acquisition and language learning. While the former takes place in an MT or L1 context, the latter takes place in an L2 situation. Conversely put, language acquisition takes place in a natural situation while language learning takes place in an artificial situation. A child unconsciously acquires the MT or L1 but consciously learns the L2. In the L2 situation like Nigeria, a child has already acquired, to some reasonable extent, the linguistic mastery of their MT or L1. The child now learns the L2 at school where the teacher becomes their major source of learning the language. This situation imposes a great deal of problem and limitations on the competency or proficiency of the child in learning the English language. For instance, the teacher determines what the learners should know, learn and how. Consequently, the teacher's linguistic status is bound to affect proactively or retroactively pupil's learning outcomes (Orisawayi, 1985).

**Motivation:** The motivation for language acquisition in native speaker environment is integrative while in L2 situation, it is instrumental. Since the language is the primary means of communication in the native language situation, motivation is greater. It is the language the child uses at home, with peer group, in the church, at the neighbourhood, for cognition and even dreaming. But in an L2 situation, the child already has an MT that caters for their daily linguistic

needs. They learn and use the English language only in the school. Outside the school, they resort to MT or L1.

**Standard English and Nigerian English:** There is a controversy of strict adherence to the norm of standard of either British English (BrE) or American English (AmrE) on the one hand and a variety of English broadly marked with a certain level of education and with all its Nigerianisms otherwise known as Nigerian English. The big question is what model of the English to learn or teach. This situation has posed a great challenge to an average Nigerian learner of English.

**Lack of Suitable Teaching Aids:** Findings have revealed that for learning to be internalised and meaningful, relevant instructional materials must be deployed. This will not only stimulate learning but learners will be motivated to learn. Language learning and teaching situations in Nigeria have shown a marked departure between expectation and reality as findings have revealed both teachers and students lack basic materials for necessary teaching and learning of the subject.

As the medium of instruction and subject in Nigeria schools, issues relating to content teaching as well as appropriate pedagogy have received scholarly attention. However, this paper sought to complement such efforts by examining the use of ICT media in the teaching and learning of English in Nigerian schools to enhance students' performance.

### **Information and Communication Technology: Meaning and Media**

Information and Communication Technology refers to the technology used to access information and aid communication (Babatunde, 2014). In a more elaborate way, Tsado (2012) describes ICT as facilities, tools or resources that could be used for accessing, processing, storing, preserving, retrieving and disseminating information with ease. Babatunde (ibid) considers ICT a superordinate term encompassing devices such as the television, radio, computer, network, hardware, software, cell phones, satellite, and the various services and applications it uses like remote computing, video conferencing, telemedicine, power point application and distant learning (p135). Suffice to conclude that ICT embraces new technologies and modern-day devices deployed for creating, processing, storing and retrieving information needed by individuals or institutions.

ICT permeates the business world. According to Ogundipe and Kosile (2009). It underpins the success of modern corporations and it provides government with an efficient infrastructure. At the same time, ICT adds value to the processes of learning and in the organisation and management of learning institutions. The Internet is a driving force for much development and innovation in both developed and developing countries (Ogunwale, Olaleye & Oyedemi, 2010).

In education, the relevance of ICT tools in teaching-learning process has taken the front burner in academic discourse. Information and Communication Technology devices are deployed for mobilising learners, imparting skills in content subjects, accessing, storing and retrieving information including processing of candidates' scores. The rationale for inculcating ICT into the teaching – learning process in secondary schools is justified on the strength of the strategic position the sub - sector occupies on the Nigeria's educational landscape.

## **Traditional and Modern ICT Media**

Media are considered as the channels for sharing information among a group of people. Selection and deployment of media for information dissemination are largely influenced by the context. Media are categorised into indigenous/oramedia (town announcer, drum, town hall meeting, etc), traditional (radio, television, newspaper, newsmagazine, etc) and the new media including computers (desktop, laptops, tablets, etc), palmtops (cells/mobile phones, pads/phones, blackberries, windows etc) and videos all of which are applied and utilised to convert processed audio-visuals and graphics to digital forms. Findings have revealed that the knowledge of ICT equips learners and teachers with practical and functional skills of computer, the internet and other allied areas of ICT. The new media are said to also include applications such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.

## **Academic Uses of the ICT Media**

ICT media are useful for various academic purposes, which include:

**Lectures:** ICT media are useful for lecture delivery, particularly in a distance learning situation. English language can be taught through platforms such as Radio, Television, Cassette, CDs, Telegram and WhatsApp, depending on the size of the audience.

**Individual/Group Activities:** Students can be grouped for active learning activities which may include discussions, group or individual assignments. These academic activities can be monitored and progress report obtained through ICT media.

**Submission of Assignments:** Individual or group assignments can be submitted through any of ICT channels, including the social media sites particularly WhatsApp.

**Discussion of Topical Issues:** The social media, especially Facebook, have offered a reliable platform to discuss topical issues in specific disciplines such as English in an L2 situation. Teachers and learners meet on Facebook to discuss common errors in English tagged "Language Clinic" while submissions are also shared through other links, particularly WhatsApp and Telegram.

**Follow-Up Activities:** These include provision of addresses of book sites and online libraries to assist students.

## **Challenges of Using ICT Media for Learning and Teaching English Language**

**Non-Affordability:** Many students are indigent. Considering the level of poverty in Africa particularly in Nigeria, many students still struggle to pay their tuitions, hence could not afford educational resource materials. Access to ICT media such as radio, television, handhelds, laptops, tablets, projectors and Internet among others is still at the lowest ebb. With the infusion of Global System for Mobile telecommunication (GSM), the utilisation of ICT resources for educational purposes is still low.

**Poor Accessibility:** Many teacher training institutions are either not connected to the Internet or have their coverage restricted. Lack or poor connection to network frustrates and discourages students from using ICT tools. Similar to this is the poor network service from the telecom service providers which have made access to the Internet so frustrating (Taiwo, 2012).

**Incessant Poor Power Supply:** Power supply all over the country seems epileptic. All ICT media depend heavily on steadily supply of energy to function effectively. Most rural communities are not connected to the national grid and therefore lack access to electricity supply. In urban cities where there is power supply, it is either irregular or regularly interrupted. Epileptic power supply distrups actual utilisation of ICT media, thus making ICT formation dysfunctional.

**Unnecessary Distractions:** Academic research activities require total concentration. Unfortunately, users of ICT tools sometimes get carried away or are entangled and distracted by non-academic frivolities, particularly ICT with social media. Today, many college students engage in avoidable Internet crimes and have had their destinies thwarted. Many users thus end up wasting their time and resources on such frivolous distractions.

**Negative Teachers' Disposition:** Inadequate, computer certificated teachers in our school system, the absence of trained teachers in computer science to teach students practical aspects of computer skills and non – availability of computer and allied tools in schools all put together militate against actual utilisation of ICT media in our schools. Most teachers in the school system stylishly avoid the use of ICT media and clutch to their traditional talk – chalk approach as a result of fears, ignorance, negative perception or inferiority complex. Findings have shown that resistant to change is a factor which prevents full integration of ICT in the classroom. School managements and proprietors are therefore encouraged to ensure all practising teachers brace up for the challenges of ICT and use ICT media, tools and skills to their advantage. This will help their students to be more productive and successful in learning.

**Inadequate Funding:** Poor funding is directly on the part of government and proprietors of schools. Findings have revealed education is grossly underfunded in Nigeria, and this has affected many areas in education sector. For instance, inadequate funding has resulted in low level of provisions of teaching facilities. ICT accessories, media, soft and hardwares are costly.

### **Prospects of Learning/Teaching English Language Through ICT Media**

Harnessing learning and teaching of English language through the ICT media provide the following prospects (Jekayinoluwa & Ojo, 2010; Adeboye, 2019):

1. **Exposure of Students/Teachers to ICT Skills:** ICT is learning – facilitated. It assists students in learning activities based on electronic delivery method such as CD ROMs, video conferencing, websites and e-mail. ICT media cover a wide range of application and processes such as web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classroom and digital application.
2. **Enhanced Learning/Teaching Opportunities:** ICT media provide rich academic resources irrespective of the background of both learners and teachers. It enables both students and facilitators to adapt learning and teaching to their needs.
3. **Learner-Centred:** Every student is considered a bundle of ideas. Hence, effective teaching requires putting the learner into consideration in terms of what is learnt, where and how to learn. This approach seems to encourage active learning in students.
4. **Technology-Driven:** English language teaching is aided by ICT kits such as computers, mobile phones, the Internet and other electronic resources.

5. **On the go!** ICT allows learning and teaching activities anytime and from any locations across the world. This is made possible through computer, teleconferencing, radio broadcast and network systems. The use of these ICT tools helps to bring the needed materials when users make use of search engines, meta search engines, subject directories, the visible web page, electronic referred, virtual library. etc. Teaching and learning of various aspects of English language now take place anywhere and anytime at the comfort of both the teacher and the learner. ICT channels, particularly the social media provide a resourceful grounds for the teaching and learning English language. Such include **“Common Mistakes, Language Clinic, You & Your Grammar”** Teaching is not delayed as it is not necessarily face-to-face
6. **Scientific and Research-Oriented:** There is no restriction to what is learnt and how it is taught.
7. **Reinforced Beyond the Classroom:** Teaching and learning are reinforced. This development intensifies learning and makes it fixated as learners are stimulated and motivated to learn.
8. **Targeting a Lively Classroom:** Students are assisted to learn, think, brainstorm and speak up their ideas. Students are broken into small groups for learning purpose depending on the aspects of language being learnt. ICT media allow students to actively participate in classroom transaction as they produce and share knowledge. An active class is a lively class! Everyone is waiting and ready to learn.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed the concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) media as it concerns the teaching of English language for the realisation of the 2030 education agenda. It highlighted various challenges of using ICT media for teaching English Language. It also discussed prospects of learning and teaching English language through ICT media. It therefore concluded that for the learning and teaching of English language to align with the 2030 educational agenda, government and school proprietors should give proper attention through budgeting allocation, training of teachers of English in the use of ICT media and provision of social development goals, including regular supply of electricity and functional Internet facilities.

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