



English Language Teachers Adaptation to New Media Tools: A Study of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri

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ABSTRACT

This study applies Siemens connectivism theory and Rogers diffusion and innovation approach to examine how English language instructors at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri have adapted to new media tools in teaching and learning. Nigerian public schools including Alvan Ikoku face difficulties in making the shift from traditional teaching methods to 21st-century blended learning, despite the global trend of integrating media tools in education. The study, which is led by a review of the literature, randomly sampled 50 English language teachers in the School of Languages and General Studies. It finds that the school's attempts are hampered by the teachers' failure to incorporate new media tools. In order to be in line with international educational practices, the study advises stakeholders including the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) to give blended learning training for educators at all levels top priority

INTRODUCTION

The essence of teaching and learning according to Hoque (2016), citing Bloom (2001) is to develop the three domains; cognitive (mental skills), affective (attitude) and psychomotor (physical coordination) as these skills would help in harnessing positive interpersonal relationship in individuals within an inclusive learning environment.

The dynamics of language teaching are being redefined by the incorporation of new media learning tools, which are a transformative force in the rapidly changing environment of education. For language teachers, the growing prevalence of digital materials and interactive technologies has created previously unheard-of opportunities. This study sets out to investigate how English language instructors are adjusting to these innovative resources with particular attention to Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, where the nexus between conventional teaching approach and technological innovation approach serve as the research focus.

Learning is everywhere. It is a process of continual growth or change in ones brain which is dependent on the volume of information an individual acquires daily. Cherry (2022), asserts that learning which is an active, lasting change in behaviour experienced by multi-step process acquisition of information, knowledge and skills should not be limited to the classroom lecture period.

The source claims that unstructured or self-directed learning (SDL) enhances the abilities of educators to produce graduates who are lifelong learners. SDL is a process where a student takes the initiative to diagonalize his learning needs, formulate learning goals, identifying human and material resources, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes with or without the assistance of others.

In SDL the individual takes instructions or guidance from instructors, engage in group participation, self reading and electronic dialogues with their instructors to help boost critical thinking. Kapur (2019), citing Self Directed Learning (2006) is of the view that self directed learning activates motivation, persistence, self discipline, self-oriented and achievement oriented interests in students.

The introduction of new media activities alongside the traditional teaching method is aimed at improving self-directed learning thereby producing graduates who are life-long learners endowed with confidence and creative skills which is currently the recognised key component for sustainable development. Torres (2011), in Vierra (2019), confirms that it promotes individual well-being, social prosperity, life satisfaction, civic participation. It encourages student participation in problem-solving and intellectually stimulated activities which helps them in developing their knowledge and skills.

Edo, Nwisagbo, and Kagbaraneh, (2022) affirm that life-long learning is a centred-approach activity that creates a shift from teaching to demonstration approach and from a convergent way of reasoning to a divergent way of thinking, confirming that problem-based learning in education is a learner-centred approach.

Teacher education according to Ogbodo-Adoga (2019) is given to intending teachers to equip them with skills, knowledge and competence needed to educate others in general or specialized subjects and make them independent life-long learners. The use of media tools increase student participation in the classroom and beyond. Accordingly, Akinola, Oyebimpe, and Adewole, (2016) affirm that new media enhances the various teaching and learning strategies required to meet the needs of teachers and students alike as it widens access to education, range of instructional options and opportunities for any-where, any-time, any-place and any-path learning and should be encouraged and inculcated in teacher education.

For language teachers, the growing prevalence of digital materials and interactive technologies has created previously unheard-of opportunities. Our goal is to decipher the nuances surrounding English language teachers' experiences, struggles, and victories in utilizing these cutting-edge tools as we traverse the complex terrain of technology integration. Combining the dynamic qualities of new media with the principles of language learning should create a more immersive and stimulating language learning environment. But the path to smooth integration is paved with obstacles that call for a sophisticated comprehension.

This study is significant when analyzing the particular dynamics of integrating new media tools within Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education educational enclave, given the distinct challenges faced by English language teachers. The research highlights the need for specialized professional development initiatives and institutional support mechanisms to close the gap between traditional and blended learning practices, acknowledging the institution's role in creating a supportive environment for teacher education.

Objectives

Due to the increased demand on promoting the use of media tools for learners in every level of education to facilitate knowledge retention and expertise, this study aims to:

1. Examine The Extent To Which English Language Instructors At Alvan Ikoku Federal College Of Education Owerri Have Incorporated New Media Learning Resources Into Their Pedagogical Approaches And The Difficulties Encountered
2. Find Out How English Language Teachers Feel About The Use Of New Media Resources For Learning And How They Can Enhance Language Instruction.
3. Examine The Infrastructure And Professional Development Support Provided By The Institution To Enable The Smooth Incorporation Of New Media Learning Resources Into The English Language Curriculum.

LITERATURE RIVIEW

Conceptual Framework

A brief review on teacher education and new media and language education would be done in this section.

Teacher Education

The curriculum designed by the government and stakeholders in education to train teachers on the basics, technical know-how, and conduct required of them in the course of carrying out their responsibilities in the classroom and other settings is known as teacher education. Accordingly Ukoha (1999) in Mormah and Bassey (2021), reiterate that since education is about teaching the curriculum, it is necessary to create an enabling environment for teachers to impart knowledge and skill appropriate for student teachers to become productive.

Mormah and Bassey (2021), suggest that teacher education should be designed in line with the competitive global practices that emerging technologies have brought. The source, which quotes UNESCO (2008), promotes using ICT to enhance classroom instruction.

The emphasis on quality teacher education at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, is because teachers have a significant influence on the environment in which students learn. In keeping with current trends, the college management's dedication to improving teacher education to its optimal capacity is seen in their complimentary efforts to shift from traditional instruction to the creative new media methods by organising trainings for staff on the use of google classroom among others in teaching and learning.

METHODOLOGY

New Media and Language Education

The 21st century brought innovations in ICT, as a result of this, electronic gadgets such as cell phones, ipads, flashdrives, pagers, notebooks, laptops are within affordable range (Imoke, Nkanu and Bisong 2021). These devices have made access to information easy anywhere one finds himself. The Covid-19 period also furthers the use of these medium in teaching. The education world now operates on the level where different people, platforms and devices connect for productive learning, thereby, introducing creativity, quality collaboration, speed and fun to learning. (Udoudo & Gbemisola 2016).

New media according to Udoudo and Gbemisola (2016), has broken the limitations associated to the traditional teaching methods as students and teachers alike are privileged to information access wherever they are as soon as a digital device is connected to the available internet. They affirm that this innovation has boosted quality education and sustainable development in developed countries.

Supporting this view, Imoke, Nkanu & Bisong, (2021), citing Shilpa (2014) confirm that online facilities broadens student knowledge, facilitates interaction, community learning, exchange of ideas, provides students with multi dimensional learning approach and produces a generation of innovative and competitive students. This is in line with the Nigerian national policy for

Information Technology (IT) document and 2004 national policy on education mandating the use of IT at all level of educational institutions.

Recent scholarly works position the integration of new media learning tools as a transformative force in language education. Smith (2020), affirms that technology plays a critical role in promoting communicative and interactive language learning experiences, thereby, acknowledging that virtual environments, simulations, and interactive multimedia are effective tools for developing immersive language contexts (Jones & Brown, 2021). By encouraging dynamic and interactive language learning experiences, this kind of technology integration supports the communicative language teaching paradigm.

The numerous potential advantages attributed to technology integration notwithstanding, there are also significant obstacles for English language teachers to overcome. These obstacles according to Clark (2019), includes poor technical support and restricted access to resources. Kim and Lee's (2022) qualitative investigation delves deeper into the issue of educators' resistance. According to the study, resolving these issues call for a deeper comprehension of the pedagogical and cultural factors influencing teachers' perspectives in addition to technical solutions.

Several studies on how new media tools affect learning outcomes show that they positively correlate with increased language proficiency. Yilmaz (2021) draw attention to the role that interactive multimedia components play in developing a setting that is more immersive for language learning. He asserts that multimedia resources like audio and video not only improve language proficiency but also promote communicative competence and cultural awareness.

To this effect, Mitchell and Grey (2017) literature emphasize the value of professional development programs designed to meet the unique needs of language teachers in the light of the difficulties faced by educators. According to source, consistent professional training for teachers proficiency should be dynamic and continuous so as to give educators the abilities required for a successful technology integration. (Turner, 2023).

Li and Wu (2020) assert that socio-cultural factors greatly affect technology integration attitudes and practices among English language teachers and suggests a balance between the traditional method and conventional pedagogy. Understanding these cultural peculiarities is essential when formulating strategies within the educational environments.

Supportive institutional environment, according to Baker and Green 2019 which promotes and facilitates the use of new media tools is crucial in integrating technology in teaching and learning. In the same vein, Rodriguez and Smith (2022) emphasise on the need to create institutional policies and infrastructure that will sustain the rapidly changing role of technology in education. This includes training programs, and the availability of resources for the effective i
Examples of new media tools for learning

A brief exposition of some common media tools for teaching and learning will be made in this section. These include zoom, whatsapp, google classroom, padlet, chatGPT, telegram and you tube.

1. Zoom

Zoom platform allows users to connect with others through videos, audio and have live chats. You can chat, screen share, record your videos to watch later, upload your material. Zoom has a hosting capacity of about 1000 participants which makes it appropriate for both a small and large group of learners. Ohiwerei and Nden (2022) note that the availability of internet connectivity and smart phones have made zoom streaming possible. They are of the view that zoom technology has fostered the implementation of globalization strategies of reaching out without barrier to a wider student audience in higher education in developed countries.

Haqien and Rahman (2020) in Ohiwerei and Nden (2022) assert that adapting to the use of zoom technology requires behavioural change on both the teachers and learners which include access to electronic devices, internet, as well as the required skill to navigate the platform.

2. Whatsapp

This social media service allows two or more people to send and edit messages, photos, make audio or video calls using an internet connection. Godwin (2023) describes whatsapp as a multi-platform messaging app that one can make videos, voice calls send text messages. Afzal and Abdullah (2022) encourage the use of whatsapp as a supportive technology to traditional classroom as teachers can send both recorded and live videos, audios, post lesson notes, give quizzes and monitor students attendance. The students as well can get clarification on their assignment or lesson.

Whatsapp application is easy, simple, fast, low in cost and allows file attachment of up to 16mb in size. This app accommodates up to 256 participants, and the latest app up to 512 participants. (Noer & Febriyanti 2021).

3. Google Classroom

This educational app has productive tools such as google docs, drive, Gmail and helps teachers in the creation and collection of students assignments, add materials or attachments to the lesson. It also allows more than one teacher, gives real time feedback and gives room for instructors to create and schedule their lectures in advance. (Iftakar, 2016). In google classroom G suite users can have up to 20 teachers and a 1000 students while G mail account users have a maximum of 20 teachers and 250 students.

4. Padlet

Padlet is a web technology designed to advance students learning via an electronic bulletin board format. Bugawa and Mirzal (2018) in Waltemeger et al., (2021) affirm that padlet can be used in both traditional and virtual learning environment to encourage student participation and collaboration. Its features include using lecture highlighting videos, assignment, study guides, outlines, lecture slides, on-line web tools such as kahoot, an online quizzing platform to review course content. This app promotes creativity and collaborative learning among learners and serve as a valuable learning resource.

Padlet gives lecturers teaching the same course the opportunity to create, and monitor course related materials, share instructional strategies, materials and provide mentorship communication across the college or university. (Chadha 2018, Kumi-Yeboah 2018).

5. ChatGPT

ChatGPT is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) app used to generate lesson plan / outline, develop content, question and answers, quizzes, assignments, visual aids, slides or worksheet, monitor students progress and check for understanding. delay in feedback is eliminated in learning environment.

In response to a prompt, this app can generate high quality, detailed essay on any topic, discussion prompts that encourage students to think critically, design learning activities that align with academic standards.(Mondal, Marndi, Behera, & Mondal, 2023).

6. Telegram

Telegram is an end to end encrypted instant messaging platform used to send and receive messages. In telegram, you can organize chats in folders, and stored files can be retrieved overtime. This app allows one to send and receive messages from his contacts without sharing his phone number. Telegram is a useful tool for creating an asynchronous, flipped /blended learning environment for students.

Accordingly, Sagaray (2023) affirms that it supports texts and voice messages, video communication and screen sharing, document, image and video uploads. Telegram accommodates up to 1000 participants in a group. In telegram a teacher can either make use of a group or a channel. Channel is used to apply restrictions whereas a group allows students to submit messages or feedback, discuss and comment on the content.

7. You Tube

You tube according to Pratama et al., (2020) could be used by teachers and educators to offer multimedia forms of education, in addition to its popular use of sharing, uploading and commenting on videos. Learner's comprehension ability is higher when they see, hear and do. This tool provides audio visual information.

8. Theoretical Framework

This study uses an eclectic methodology based on Rogers' Diffusion and Innovation approach and Siemens' (2004) Connectivism theory.

The connectivism learning theory of George Siemens recognizes the impact of digital technologies and networks on the creation and acquisition of knowledge. According to him, a person's internal knowledge is limited in the digital age; as a result, he must engage, connect, and fortify relationships within the network of people, resources, and information that is accessible through digital media.

Connectivism theory challenges conventional ideas of learning by emphasizing a networked learning environment as opposed to depending only on inert cognitive processes.

Similarly, Everett M. Rogers' (2003) diffusion and innovation approach supports the use of technology in learning settings, but it is up to him whether or not these tools are adopted. Diffusion, according to him, is the process of sharing innovations within a group over a predetermined amount of time, whereas innovation is something that is thought to be new even though it may already exist.

According to Rogers (2003), innovation is dependent on knowledge, persuasion and decision. To reduce uncertainties in innovation, users should be informed of the advantages or disadvantages of rejecting or adopting the innovation within the expected time frame. The rate of adoption determines the strength of innovation.

Rogers (2003) Explains Five Stages of Innovation to Include

1. **The Knowledge Stage:** In this stage the individual learns about the existence of the innovation, what it is about, how to use it correctly for it to work and why the innovation is needed.
2. The affective or persuasion stage is the second stage. The level of uncertainty and the social reinforcement received from peers or colleagues influence this stage and determine whether an innovation is viewed positively or negatively.
3. The decision-making step is crucial since it allows the person to accept or reject the innovation. Decision-making suggests a trial stage.
4. The implementation stage: When a person chooses to apply an innovation, change agents should offer technical support to facilitate the process. The innovation can also be re-invented by the user; in fact, Roger (2003) asserts that the more times an innovation is re-invented, the faster it becomes institutionalized and accepted.
5. During the confirmation phase, the person searches for assistance based on the decision he has taken.
6. In the confirmation stage, the individual looks for support based on the decision he has taken. This support is geared towards adoption or discontinuance.

We have two types of discontinuance; which could be total rejection/disenchantment (due to dissatisfaction or it does not meet the needs of the individual) or replacement discontinuance (replacing with a new or better innovation)

He says the type of decision—which could be collective or optional—determines the adoption rate. In his observation, individual or voluntary decisions are typically implemented more quickly than group or organizational decisions. It is important to note that incompatibilities in information technology (IT) typically have an impact on teachers' use of it. Additionally, complexity has a negative impact on adoption and implies that motivation should be fostered through direct or indirect incentives and role modeling. He makes the point that adoption is aided by observability, or the extent to which an innovation structure is apparent to others. ntegration of technology in language instruction.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study adopted a descriptive survey using structured questionnaire and interviews for the collection of data. The population of the study is made up of 50 random sampled English language teachers handling NCE and Degree courses from the School of Languages and General Studies in the college. This research experienced unwillingness from some of the respondents in giving honest response.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of findings

The data collected for this study is analysed based on the structured questions and respondents response. The discussion is guided by the structured questions, and the data collected is coded, and analyzed accordingly:

Question 1: How often do you integrate new media learning resources into your methods for teaching English?

Table 1

| Options | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Rarely | 15 | 30% |
| Occasionally | 28 | 56% |
| Always | 7 | 14% |
| Total Respondents | 50 | 100% |

From the data collected and displayed in table 1; out of 50 respondents, only 14% of the teachers use new media tools always, a majority of the teachers having 56% incorporate it occasionally, whereas 20% use it rarely and 10% of the instructors do not adopt new media in their teaching and learning.

Question 2: Which particular new media teaching resources do you employ in your instruction?

Table 2

| Media tools incorporated | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Whatsapp | 41 | 82% |
| Google classroom | 9 | 18% |
| Padlet | 0 | 0% |
| Zoom | 0 | 0% |
| Telegram | 0 | 0% |
| ChatGPT | 0 | 0% |
| You Tube | 0 | 0% |
| Total Respondents | 50 | 100% |

Table 2 explains that a majority of the teachers (82%), use Whatapp to interact with their students and only 18% use google classroom. The study exposes that the teachers do not use zoom, telegram, you tube, chatGPT, and padlet in teaching and learning.

Question 3: What difficulties have you had adjusting to and incorporating new media learning tools into your instruction?

Table 3

| Problems | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Technical issues | 22 | 44% |
| Illiteracy/ lack of mentoring | 18 | 36% |
| Resistance from students | 10 | 20% |
| Total Respondents | 50 | 100% |

From the respondents the study notes that technical issues among others is a major inhibitor towards adopting new media in teaching and learning, followed by the instructors literacy level and lack of mentors needed for effective understanding of these tools. Students resistance such as joining untimely demoralise and discourage teachers.

Question 4: What effect, in your opinion, would using new media learning tools have on student engagement and learning outcomes?

Table 4

| Effects | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Positive | 50 | 100% |
| Negative | 0 | 0% |
| Total Respondents | 50 | 100% |

From the analysis, all the respondents affirm to the fact that incorporating new media will have a positive effect on the learners.

Question 5: Do you believe that the infrastructure and institutional support needed to incorporate new media learning tools into your teaching practices are adequate?

Table 5

| Infrastructure/institutional support | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Very Adequate | 0 | 0% |
| Not Adequate | 35 | 70% |
| Average | 15 | 30% |
| Total Respondents | 50 | 100% |

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper observes that the rate of adaptability of A.I.F.C.E. Owerri teachers towards using media tools in teaching and learning is low, notwithstanding the Directorate of Academic Planning (DAP) innovation on inculcating blended learning approaches. The study observes that Lack of mentorship and technical assistance were notable factors that led to discontinuance from the point of trial stage to the implementation stage down to the confirmation stage.

The study, therefore, recommends that

1. Stakeholders in teacher education such as the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) should emphasise and monitor blended learning training / re-training programmes for instructors at different levels of education for sustenance of best global practices in the educational sector which is the bedrock of institutions in developed countries.
2. Government as agents of change through the ministry of education should assist in providing an integrated system which include reliable internet facilities and teaching aids in schools that would assist facilitators and students in exploring their electronic devices at will.
3. School management should foster trainings/re-training that would make their teachers IT complaint for easy adaptability to blended learning programmes.
4. Strict measures should be adopted by institutions authorities to enforce compliance by teachers after undergoing trainings.
5. Mentors should be provided to monitor and assist these teacher overcome their difficulties.

FURTHER STUDY

This research is still delayed, so it is necessary to conduct further research on the topic of English Language Teachers Adaptation to New Media Tools: A Study of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri to improve this research and add insights for readers

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