USING E - LEARNING FACILITIES IN TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

E-learning has become an integral component of modern education system. Thus, in order to make teaching-learning effective and result oriented, various e-learning systems and strategies have been developed. In the present internet era, updates of knowledge are in the increase. Social education has accordingly emerged. As a solution to these new education forms and demands, it is proposed to employ a novel e-learning mode, i.e. web-based self-learning, hybrid or blended learning in the existing educational system of all the Institutions in Nigeria where the resources are very much accessible. This paper is intended to identify types of e learning facilities and discusses teaching of English through e learning, challenges and prospects of teaching English Language through e learning. English language is the main focus for the simple reason that the electronic resources are developed mostly in

Introduction:

E- Learning is a term for all types of technology enhanced learning where technology is used to support the learning process. Invariably, the medium of instruction is through computer technology particularly involving digital technology .Others include internet, tape recorders, radio broadcast, television and a host of others. E-learning is defined in various contexts. In Education it can be defined as pedagogy empowered by digital technology. In companies, it refers to strategies that use the company network to deliver training courses of employee [Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2009]. In

English and it is the medium of the instruction in schools. It has been generally found that the modern learners are not much attracted towards the traditional mode of learning. Instead, they would like to choose a learning mode as a fun (such as gaming) which is without any burden.

The United States, it is defined as planned teaching and learning experiences that use a wide spectrum of technologies mainly internet or computer based learning. Lately in most universities e-learning is used to define a specific mode to attend to a course of study. Computer assisted language learning is a model which can be used to reinforce what has been learned in the classroom. It can also be used as remedial to help learners with limited proficiency.

English has become a crucial language for learning and everyone's need in this globalization era, especially the future generation, since it is used in various fields, ranging from education, economy, social, technology and tourism. The development of science and technology encourages people to make renewed efforts in the use of technological products due to the demands of the time. The tradition in teaching English conventionally has slowly interfered by the products of technology, since it provides so many options in creating interesting learning process. Technology in this globalization era has become basic need in supporting educational process which is effective and qualified. With technology advancement in the 21st century, e-learning has become a valuable technology for teaching, learning and research in higher institution of learning (Ojeaga, & Igbinedion, 2012). For this reason people have experienced a drastic change which brought about improvement to almost all phases of human life, Such as improving access to services, enhancing connectivity, creating business and employment opportunities, and changing the ways people communicate, interact, and engage among themselves and with their governments. In the knowledge-based economy, level of technology advancement of a nation determines her growth (Awodiji & Ogbudinkpa, 2016).

Types of E-Learning facilities

As we are in the era of technological know-how, teachers need to know how to use computer and learn technology for constructing materials for teaching and assessing English, and they need to engage in innovative teaching and assessments through the use of technology. Carol A C.(2003). Computer Education is now accepted as an important educational tool in general, it is particularly true of English language teaching since it affords a number of potential opportunities to enhance both the content and delivery of the pedagogies typically associated with traditional English language instruction. Al qahtani Mofareh A. (2019). Learners should use computers as a significant part of their learning process as it will enable them to meet up with the present global challenges. Teachers should model the use of computer technology to support the curriculum so that learners can appropriately use computer technology in learning their language skills. Technology- based facility is a tool that has an important role to play in supporting foreign language teachers and facilitating language learning for students. In a typical school classroom, the students are usually from diverse ethnic groups and have different languages. Hence, the adoption of a common language as a medium of teaching the various subjects offered in the school. This language of popular choice is the English language. Teaching English Language through e-learning is a fairly new innovation in the country as the traditional method of Face-to-Face has been the only way of teaching where both the teacher and the learners (students) are physically present in a physical classroom setting. Online resources for the learning of English are numerous in the Internet with the availability of online dictionaries, encyclopedia and various e-textbooks in different aspects of English language like syntax, phonetics/phonology, morphology, English varieties and English composition. These aid the students in their independent studies.

E-learning.is classified variously. Some educational Technologists identify two primary types. Namely: computer-based e-learning and Internet based e learning. Algahtani (2011) describes computer-based e learning as one which comprises the use of a full range of hardware and software generally

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that is available for the use of Information and Communication Technology and could be used for either computer-managed instruction or computer-assisted learning. In Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL) or Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), computers are used together with traditional teaching by providing interactive software as a support tool within the class or for self-learning outside the class. This computer-assisted training methods use a combination of multimedia such as text, graphics, sound and video in order to enhance learning. The primary value of Computer Assisted Instruction is interactivity as it allows students to become active learners instead of passive learners by utilizing various methods such as quizzes and other computer-assisted teaching and testing mechanisms. On the other hand, Computer-Managed Learning (CML) or Computer-Managed Instruction (CMI) is used by educational institutions for storing and retrieving information which aids in educational management like lecture information, training materials, grades, curriculum information, enrolment information and so on. Here, computers are used to manage and assess learning processes. These learning systems operate through information databases which contain bits of information which the student has to learn together with a number of ranking parameters. This enables the system to be individualized according to the preferences of each student. If the student's learning outcome is not satisfactory at the end of the learning exercise, the process can be repeated until the student has achieved their desired learning goals.

Moreover, Internet-based learning according to Almosa (2002) is a further improvement of the computer-based learning which makes educational content available on the Internet. The knowledge sources like e-mail services and references on the internet could be used by learners at anytime and anywhere even when teachers or instructors are not present with them. Zeitoun (2008) classified Internet-based learning according to such features used in Education as: mixed or blended mode, assistant mode, and completely online mode. According to him, the assistant mode supplements the traditional method as needed, the mixed or blended mode offers a short term degree for a partly traditional method and the

completely online mode involves the exclusive use of the Internet (network) for learning activities. Internet-based learning allows students to learn at their own pace; access the information at a time that is convenient for them, and provides education to remote students that otherwise would not be privilege to attend school.

Another classification of e-learning is based on the timing of instruction; namely synchronous e-learning and asynchronous e-learning. Synchronous e-learning also known as real-time learning involves the teachers and the learners being online and also interacting at the same time from different locations with the use of tools such as video conferencing (zoom) and online chats. This type of e–learning according to Almosa (2002) offers the advantage of instantaneous feedback. Also, the participants can share their ideas and opinions during the lecture. This is currently one of the most popular and quickest growing types of e-learning. Asynchronous e-learning, on the other hand, involves students studying independently at different times and locations from each other, without real-time communication taking place. It is pause-and-resume kind of learning and the learner and teacher cannot be online at the same time. In asynchronous e-learning, participants can post communications to any other participant over the Internet through thread discussions and e-mails after the learning has taken place. Again, this type of e-learning method is considered to be more students centered than the synchronous type as they give students more flexibility. Students who do not have flexible schedules prefer it because it allows them to utilize self-paced learning as they can set their own time frames for learning and are not required to learn at specific time intervals together with other students.

Teaching of English Language through E-Learning in Nigeria

In Nigeria today, English is not only the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools and institutions of higher learning (Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities), but it has also become a Lingua Franca. This is because Nigeria is a highly multi-lingual and multicultural society made up of people who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The current trend in technology has virtually changed every aspect of life including language pedagogy, language learning, and language use. Miangah and Nezarat, (2012), believed that e-learning serves as an important motivator that is helpful for teachers and students in the classroom. Licorish et al. (2017) agree that students will be able to engage in the lesson quickly as they explain the pictures by using the appropriate form of the structures. E- Learning also has a positive impact on students' learning as it makes them more engaged in the lesson which results in retaining more information. Fitriah (2018) confirms that e-learning promotes the improvement of the memorizing concepts and better performance in terms of results. English as a Second Language teachers, as successful language learners, should always be aware and open to experimenting with new skills as well as be creative with the teaching and learning of English in and out of the classroom as proposed by Maulidar, Gani & Samad (2019). As an English as a Second Language teacher, one should always be occupied with proper knowledge and readiness to improvise the subject matter according to every students' ability and capacity based on e-learning as revealed by Hardan (2013). This will help students to be more self-assured and expressive when speaking a particular language, and also eliminate the fear of making mistakes as they will know the effectiveness of the skills by incorporating them in their daily lives. It is a significant aspect of education because effective teaching motivates teachers as well as aids students in learning and increasing academic performance (Hamid, Hassan & Ismail, 2012). Past studies proposed that e-learning could be measured by the influence of teachers on students' achievement. However, measuring a teacher's quality is a complex process as it involves teaching preparation and assurance (Darling-Hammond, 2000), experience and information (Goe, 2007), pedagogical skills and optimism as well as system and skills (Waxman et. al., 2003). Research on the use of e-learning tools in the classroom has shown that ICT makes a supportive and encouraging environment for the students to increase their basic skills in terms of quality and quantity (Pandey & Mishra, 2016). The findings of the research were reinforced by

Zorío (2018) who conducted a study on an effective online resource called Kahoot, an online game resembling a quiz that is very popularly used by teachers. Overall, most of the students were involved during the lesson and used e-learning devices such as their computers and mobile phones which promote their involvement motivation towards learning English. Licorish et al., (2017) agreed, stating that students will be able to learn better and independently as they are being motivated continuously throughout the teaching process. Sharma (2018) claimed that e-learning has undeniably helped improve students' basic skills as it increases participation in classroom activities. The result of the study showed that the students picked up various strategies throughout the lesson such as memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategy to accomplish their goals with the help of e-learning. Harris & Rutledge (2007) have resolved that the forecasters of teacher quality and effectiveness are reasoning ability, character attributes, and educational background based on e-learning. It is also mentioned that teachers have to be dedicated and motivated towards the teaching process if they want to see improvement in the students' academic performance. Most of the schools, both primary and secondary have been restructuring the education methods and approaches to increase the teaching effectiveness that will enhance the English language teacher's motivation as depicted by Sikand & Kauts (2016). In the 21st century, teachers are gearing towards adopting new teaching strategies and approaches to have a balance and positive learning environment through e-learning (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015).

Challenges of Teaching English Language through E-Learning
There is no doubt that proper implementation of e-learning in education improves the efficiency of the educational process by making learning easily accessible. In spite of this benefit, studies carried out by researchers indicate some of the challenges of e-learning faced by teachers in using ICT in Nigeria particularly.
Inadequate access to technology: Internet access in Nigeria is not steady and readily available. There is always network problem in most parts of

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the country. Internet services are not available in some rural areas and this makes it impossible for teachers to embrace e-learning.

Inadequate and epileptic power supply: Electricity supply in Nigeria is grossly inadequate and is one of the major problems facing the country. The electricity supply is not stable. Even the English language teachers in the cities and towns are faced with the problem of epileptic power supply as electricity supply is not constant and reliable. Electronic equipment like computer, television set, radio, etc. are always damaged due to poor supply of electricity. All these problems combine to hinder the effective use of e-learning in teaching English language course in schools. Kadiri (2008) opined that it is difficult to keep high technology equipment such as the computer when electricity supply is not constant and stable.

High cost of installation of ICT: In Nigeria, poverty level is relatively high and most lecturers (English language teachers inclusive) cannot still acquire their personal computers which is very expensive and above the reach of the average Nigerian. Even the few teachers who have their computers cannot connect to the Internet because of data subscription charges which are very high. Most of the time, lecturers and students make use of computer cybercafé for their online studies. Obanya (2002) observed that prices of computer hardware and software continue to drop in most developed countries, but in developing countries such as Nigeria, computers are still very expensive. Hence there is need for adequate availability of International Journal of English Language and Communication Studies technology in schools, though there is a huge cost incurred on acquiring installing and maintaining ICTs.

Lack of ICT skills: Most English language teachers lack sufficient knowledge of computer and its usage in the teaching process. They are not ICT literate and cannot handle effectively ICT tools for teaching and learning English language. According to Barret (2007) teachers need effective tools, techniques and assistance that can help them develop computer-based projects and activities especially designed to raise the level of teaching in required subjects and improve students' learning.

Maintenance and technical support: Lack of maintenance and technical support is a problem in ICT as there is the likelihood that the computer system may break down during lesson. Most of the time, there are very few technical staff who can handle such emergency repairs when it occurs. Even when English language lecturers and few students have their personal computers, when a technical problem occurs, repairs and maintenance is not easy and reachable.

Lukewarm attitude to change: Most English Language lecturers and students are not ready to embrace e-learning in teaching and learning the subject as there are no additional benefits attached to it. Also, most of them are not computer literate and would prefer to continue with their traditional chalk and board method of teaching. In addition, Ajadi, Salawu and Adeoye (2008) are of the opinion that since ICT encourages independent learning, most students are reluctant to take responsibility for their own learning but prefer to be spoon-fed at all times.

 Remoteness or lack of interaction: Students generally see e-learning as uninteresting and boring because learners are not able to interact or relate with their teachers when they do not understand any aspect of the lesson. This is because e-learning as a method of education makes the learner undergo contemplation, remoteness, as well as lack of interaction or relation. It therefore requires a very strong inspiration as well as skills in order to reduce such effects on the learners. E-learning is seen as less effective in respect to clarifications, offer of explanations and interpretations which can easily be accessed in traditional face-to-face teaching method.

Prospects of Teaching English Language through E-Learning
E-learning despite its overwhelming disadvantages in its effective use in developing countries like Nigeria has a lot of advantages that may lead to its eventual success and full adoption in teaching various subjects in schools especially in institutions of higher learning. The teaching of English Language through e-learning, like in any other course, will require proper planning and designing of e-language material. Also the delivery and usage

of these materials should be systematic depending on the e-learning tool used. E-learning media include audio/video cassettes, CDs/DVDs, radio and television broadcasts, computers and the internet (Tinio, 2003). Although the design of e-learning material will vary in relation to the e-learning medium used, a general approach is used as follows;

Step I: Planning E-Learning Material

For effective planning of e-learning material the course content should be broken down into bits. A content aggregation model was developed by Altenhofen & Schaper (2002) in which the course content is divided into four distinct structural levels namely:

  i.   Knowledge items
 ii.   Learning units
iii.   Sub courses
iv.   Course Figure 1: Altenhofen & Schaper's Content Aggregation Model The above model helps in the planning of course content for e-learning purposes into levels that will be designed appropriately to suit the e-learning medium intended to be used.

Step II: Designing E-Learning Material

Designing the e-learning material should be done with utmost care because it will determine the efficiency of the material in achieving its instructional objectives when it is used. The e learning material should be logical and systematic following the model above. The items in the material should be properly linked together to form a cohesive whole. The e-learning material especially the visual ones should include the following;

  i.   Animated graphics.
        Clear text: The text format should be attractive and should suit the idea intended to be passed.
 ii.   Easy navigations: It should be easy for the users of the e-material to move from one page, slide or screen (as the case may be) to another.
iii.   Games: Existing educational games should be included to help retain students' motivation where necessary.

iv. The audio should be clear and easily understandable.

v. Related videos of each topic or lesson should be included. Apart from planning and designing the e-learning material, the teacher should deliver the materials to the students at the appropriate time. Not too many e-learning materials should be given at once in order to ensure students understand what is expected from them in the use of these materials. It is the teacher's duty to organize these materials to suit the objectives of the course.

Conclusion

The study focuses on using e-learning facilities in teaching English Language. It observes the challenges and prospects of teaching English Language through e learning in Nigeria. The study discovered that e-learning involves the use of digital tools for teaching and learning. Also, e-learning has come to be a more effective method of imparting knowledge to students. The method is flexible in terms of place and time for the delivery of lessons. Despite the challenges discussed, it has sought to explain the role of e-learning and how e-learning has made a strong impact in the teaching and course knowledge units learning units sub-course learning process. I strongly believe that if e-learning is properly implemented and encouraged in various institutions in Nigeria, it will go a long way to improve effective and efficient learning not only in English language but also in other subjects (courses) in the school curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the challenges identified in this study as hindering effective teaching and learning of English Language through e-learning in Nigeria, the following recommendations are proffered.

1. if e-learning is properly implemented and encouraged in various institutions in Nigeria, it will go a long way to improve effective and efficient learning not only in English language but also in other subjects (courses) in the school curriculum.

2. The government authorities and school management in particular should provide adequate e-learning facilities in institutions of higher learning. Nwokolo and Anyachebelu (2012) assert that the level of e-learning facilities would be improved if quality Internet facilities are provided and accessible.

3. School management and government should brace up to those challenges through acquisition and installation of modern e-learning infrastructures and instruct active involvement of e-learning in all school curricula. There should be constant electricity supply in all schools and Institutions to enhance students' and lecturers' access to e-learning activities.

4. Periodical computer training should be organized for lecturers. This will enable them acquire relevant skills and knowledge on the usage of e-learning facilities

5. ELearning facilities should be upgraded from time to time in order to improve lecturers' performance.

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