Abstract
Information Communication Technology (ICT) has become a major issue in many language discourses today. English language is widely used in communication, education and diverse human endeavors. In Nigeria, it is the official language as well as the language of everyday use. Based on this, there is need to sustain and attain global proficiency and mastery. Being one of the parameters for measuring a nation’s development, this paper emphasizes the need for the inclusion of ICT as a partner for national development. The researcher examines English as a global language, the place of ICT in Nigeria and the various technological applications and programs used in carrying out this growth, and development of English Language teaching/learning in Nigeria. The paper concludes by reaffirming the need for increased digital access and awareness in Nigeria
INTRODUCTION

The need for technological innovation has brought about communication revolution and rapid development of technological application in language teaching and learning. This has contributed to the development of improved language communication in Nigeria. Technological innovations have gone hand-in-hand with the growth of English and re-changing the way which we communicate and learn. This is because; language education encapsulates the medium and message of the communicative process. Educators are fast realizing that the use of computer assisted language teaching and learning could be convenient for the users.

English as a language has spread to almost all parts of the world, hence the universal adoption of English as a world language. Thus, Brumfit (1995) asserts; certainly, it is now true that the English Language is no longer the exclusive property of speakers of English as mother-tongue or first language. The ownership of English rests with the people who use it, however multilingual they are or however monolingual they are.

The growth of English language around the globe is actually based on the issues of bilingualism, multilingualism, colonialism, trade, communication, etc. Based on this spread and development, the need for the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT’s) in language teaching/learning programme is indispensable. It is important to note that this spread and development is paramount when computers are no longer the exclusive domains of the privileged few, rather, it is being made available to many.

ICT provides the basic technology for assisting language teaching/learners to acquire important communication skills in English language. This will facilitates the integration of relevant technologies in the development of Nigeria’s language education system. Through ICT, computer-based resources such as the internet are used to deliver, equip and assess learning and teaching materials. It is a known fact that language is dynamic, the English language, like any other language has spread to all parts of the globe, it is on this basis that this paper examines the language from a global perspective.

English as a Global Language:

The English language is the most prevalent language in the world. It is spoken by people in over 115 countries. This shows its importance and relevance in our society. This has contributed to the loss of the status of most mother-tongues in Nigeria. Linguists like Graddol (2000) believe that English is no longer the exclusive cultural property of “nature English speakers”, but rather it is a language that is absorbing aspects of cultures worldwide as it continues to grow.”

Because the English language has the status of a global language, it has large impact on other languages which makes them to either shift or extinct. This massive spread has equally resulted in the realization of variants of English language. A good example is the language of the short message services ‘SMS’ in the Nigerian environment. Borrowing is a significant factor in language change and dynamism. The English language has loan words which emanated from
trade, commerce, colonialism, missionary activities and more. These contribute to the spread of English and also affirms Banjo’s (1996) stance that English is now the “language of the younger generation”. This is an indication that it could have both positive and retarding effects on the Nigerian nation. This, notwithstanding, English language in Nigeria must be both nationally and internationally intelligible and acceptable to contribute to its digital growth and development.

This paper therefore examines ICT incursion as a catalyst for new developments in English language teaching/learning in Nigeria.

ICT IN NIGERIA

The emergence of ICT use in teaching/learning of English in Nigeria came on board as a result of the need to create; while adapting to the new dimensions of communication in the 21st century. This aims at changing the attitudes, values and aspiration of the language learner in line with the current global benefits of modernization. The adoption of ICT on English language teaching/learning, thus, becomes appropriate for the development of the individual in the Nigerian Nation.

ICT has transformed education in Nigeria and made it more interactive. It has empowered teachers/students practically and theoretically in the use of technological facilities. ICT enhances efficiency in a work place, it increases the speed of communication around the globe and it is helping teachers and students to keep up-to-date academic communication in Nigeria.

Some pertinent issues are yet to be resolved in the use of ICT in language teaching/learning in Nigeria. They include:
- Poor infrastructural support,
- Lack of basic ICT knowledge,
- Ignorance about its importance,
- Lack of governmental support in funding technology programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, among others.

It is also important to state that the emergence of ICT in the educational sector in Nigeria has altered some roles of English language in Nigeria; hence, not everyone is overly captivated about this incursion. Nonetheless, this paper takes a peep into the application of technology in language teaching and learning.

THE APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE TEACHING:

The application of technology in language teaching has become an indispensable tool in the contemporary world as a powerful means for communication and education. Technology has come of age as a language teaching resource as a result of which, communication revolution is having tremendous impact on language education. In as much as the use of technology in language education dates back into history; technology has significantly revolutionized language education both in theory and practice over the years across the globe.

The application of technology in language teaching over the years is yet to be widely adopted in the Nigerian environment. The outcomes had been few lasting effects because there are more non-native than native users of the language. The introduction of technology in language is, therefore, seen as a contributory factor in shifting away from a communicative approach towards a context–based approach to language teaching pedagogy. The range of new information technologies is diverse and includes micro computer, the satellite, and telematique
(the merging of computer and telecommunications). Its major achievement has been the provision of communicative experience, i.e., communication by humans –to – machine.

The English language teacher must, therefore, be conversant with new technologies of information and communication to attain a good level of efficiency. There are fundamental set of skills and knowledge required for this attainment. According to the international ICT literacy panel (2001), they include;

- Cognitive proficiency
- Technical proficiency
- ICT proficiency

Cognitive proficiency refers to the fundamental skills of daily school, home and work needs. They include such skills as numeracy, problem solving and visual/spatial literacy. The English language teacher requires these skills so as to achieve his desired proficiency needed in knowledge transfer.

Technical proficiency is the basic component of digital literacy. The teacher is expected to have the fundamental knowledge of computer ware application, installation, maintenance, networking, shooting, and so on, in order to operate the necessary facilities freely. ICT proficiency is the integration and application of cognitive and technical skills. This will help the language teacher to maximize his technological capabilities.

Technological proficiency aid innovation, individual transformation and society change. It gives the language teacher (especially English) access to know what data to collect, how to collect or retrieve it. It also helps him plan his language program. He is able to interpret and represent information, and as well make his evaluations. He can transfer, download or upload information. The benefits of technological facilities to the language teacher are enormous. This has led to development of current trends in technological applications in language teaching.

**Current Trends on Technological Application in Language Teaching in Nigeria**

There are some current developments in technological applications in language teaching in Nigerian schools. These recent developments emphasize achievement on central and peripheral learning processes. This facilitates person-to-person interaction (i.e. teacher/learner, peers, families etc), through telecommunications and computer networks at various parts of their location in the country and beyond. It aids fast and comprehensive language acquisition and communication. It provides bridges to the target language and culture.

The uses of technological facilities in language teaching fill the gap in internal and external delivery, and it could be used within the immediate environment or by distance education. It grants access to learners from various social backgrounds, as well as provides autonomy to the teacher/learner. It has some other classified modes of use which includes;

- Teacher /learner physically present in the same environment.
- Teacher / learner in different locations and time.
- Teacher / learner standalone use, usually for learning purpose.

The use of technological facilities in language teaching/learning has really revolutionalyzed the existence and activities of language facilitators in Nigeria, especially in the face of globalization and new knowledge society. Hence, this paper seeks to answer these questions in the course of this research;
What technological skill attainment will be required of the teacher/learner?

Which technologies are suitable for teaching and learning of the English language in Nigeria?

What are the implications of emerging technologies in English language teaching and learning?

The strategy we adopt in integrating technology into the teaching and learning of language can have huge impact on the success and failure of technologically driven classroom expected in our nation. In recent times, the use of the internet has become so widespread in achieving this goal. A review of the internet while evaluating computer uses in language teaching in Nigeria, forms part of this section indicates that technologies in language teaching has the capacity to create new opportunities for teaching and learning. Bransford and Brown (2000) were of the opinion that it creates this new opportunities by bringing real-world problems into the classroom for teachers and students to explore and solve. In other words, using technology as an instructional resource has increased and encouraged teachers’ awareness and ability to create both independent and collaborative learning environments that enable learners acquire and practice new language (Tswanya, 2006, p.45-46).

Technological innovations have gone hand-in-hand with the growth of language teaching especially English, thus, re-changing the way in which we communicate and learn. The growth of the internet has facilitated the growth of the English language especially when computers were widely available to many users. Graddol (2000) observes that over 80% of information stored on the internet is in English. This implies that in the recent future number of internet users must have doubled the number at present.

In another opinion, Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004) suggest that the internet may be a contributory factor in shifting away from a communicative-base approach towards a context-based approach to language teaching. The internet changes the language partly because it gives rise to new vocabulary; we now have technologies like text messaging on mobile phones, the use of ipods and computer online chat rooms. There is also the computer-assisted language learning which helps the learner to understand what constitutes the English language and how it works. These issues are among the present experiences of ICT usage in the Nigerian environment.

In our language learning/teaching field, emphasis is now placed on online learning and interactions amongst students and teachers. This is achieved through the internet in various web settings. The internet refers to the telecommunication and computer systems linked together which comprise of online gadgets, software, files, documents, audio files, and graphics, etc, which are requested and utilized around the globe. English language teachers and learners in Nigeria interact freely on the internet. They write and submit their stories, articles, reports, seminars online and were also able to communicate with colleagues around the globe.

It is pertinent to note that there is a widespread availability of digital divide but its application requires some qualifications to achieve ‘technology literacy’ amongst the Nigerian population. This paper, therefore, examines the types of technologies used in language teaching and learning in Nigeria.

Technologies used in language teaching /learning in Nigeria

There are many ways of analyzing the various forms of technologies used in teaching/learning. This analysis centers on the relevance of the nations educational needs rather than the physical
component of either hardware or software. As Rodney (1996) rightly observed in his report, his team identified two broad categories of technologies in (Lundin and Sandery, 1993, p.9) to be as follows:

A. Distributive and
B. Interactive

Distributive technologies are generally associated with transmission learning models. A material is prepared in a predetermined manner and sequence which does not encourage interaction between teachers and learners. The distributive technologies include:

A. Electronic publishing (online or physical media such as magnetic and optic disks).
B. Conventional print publishing.
C. Postal and courier services
D. Radio / television broadcast
E. Audio /video services.

These technologies are not often used in language teaching in Nigeria. An interactive technology involves educational communication which is carried out between a higher person (teacher) and a lower person (learner). This is the widely adopted technique used in our environment. Good teaching requires that teacher has extensive knowledge of the;

A. Level of understanding of the learner
B. Context of the instruction
C. Barriers to a learners progress and
D. Strategies to use and overcome the barriers.

The preferred technology in Nigeria is based on the intended purpose. The nature of technologies used in any case determines the teaching and learning models for that particular educational service. In other words, technologies cannot be used to replace a teacher rather a teacher is needed to achieve educational outcomes and this is possible with technological support in the classroom. The teacher helps to provide meaningful feedback to the learner which helps him or her to achieve progress in some learning goals. The use of interactive technologies, thus, aims at assisting the learner in linking his or her new knowledge to an existing one. Interactive technologies used in teaching are thus seen as;

**Synchronous**: This allows all involved users to engage in activity at the same time, using the technology to bridge the spatial separation. Such technologies are;

- Video conferencing
- Audio conferencing
- Interactive television
- Audio graphics (combination of audio conferencing, fax and transfer of information between computers).
- Internet chat and multiple user environments (MUDs, MOOs, MUSTTs).

It could be **asynchronous** when it allows users to communicate with time delays between massages, as well as bridges time and space in communication. Some technologies used by most Nigerians for effective communication are;

- Computer mediated communication (email, bulletin boards, discussion lists)
- Audio message systems
- Text based computer conferencing
Interactive technologies could also be described as **standalone** which are generally intended for use without the need to connect to a communications system. The interaction here is largely between the user and a set of material. These materials include those technologies used to support,

- Interactive multimedia and
- Other computer based teaching courseware that has the attainment of a set of educational goals as its purpose; (tutorial programs, drills and practice and computer assisted instruction).

The emergence of technological applications in language teaching has been contributing to the realization of the goal of the digital age. Its emphasizes a task-based approach to language learning (i.e. learning through doing). Young and Bush (2004:54) suggest that there is need to maximize the benefits of technology use in the classroom through;

A. Recognizing the complexity of technology integration and its status in the field.
B. Recognizing and understanding the evolving and continuous effect computer information and internet has on literacy.
C. Recognizing the importance of creating relevant contexts for effective technology integration.

These could be further achieved according to these writers by;

A. Developing pedagogical framework
B. Asking the important question
C. Establishing working guidelines
D. Implementing these strategies while integrating teaching.

Reflecting on these strategies and practicing them regularly has enhanced technology application on language teaching and learning in Nigeria. In a similar opinion, Macro (2002 p.20-24) outlines the advantages of web quest, to include; fostering cooperative learning, using authentic online materials, promoting learner motivation as well as problem solving skills. This paper thus gives a clear focus to what ICT use in language teaching and learning set to achieve in Nigeria.

**Conclusion**

The application of technologies in language teaching and learning has upgraded language education to a new phase in Nigeria. There is improvement in the quality of language teaching through the diversification of contents, methods, and as well promoting experimentation, innovation and obtaining and sharing of information. There is wide-range of language learning reforms, hence the need to;

- Increase access to teachers knowledge and development through interactive technology
- Increase the peoples awareness on the importance of technology
- Increase access to Instructional resources
- Increase flexibility in what to learn, how to learn and when to learn.
• Train teacher to improve his competence in using the new technologies in his instructional activities
• Increase governmental support in technological programmes and funding in the tertiary institutions.
Adherence to these needs will help us realize more positive results in the application of technology in language teaching and learning in Nigeria.

REFERENCES