Digital Appreciation and English Language Teachers' Professional Development in Ekiti State Government Colleges

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Abstract - The study examines digital reprtoire of English language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges. The survey attempted to explicate the need to utilize digital educational tools with emphasis on digital language laboratory technology in the teaching and learning of English Language in Ekiti State Government Colleges. The population of the study comprised all English Language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges. The sample for the study consisted of twenty language teachers randonmly selected from four Government Colleges in Ekiti State. The Survey research design was used in this study. Questionnaires were administered on twenty English Language teachers. Findings from the study revealed that about 89.5% of the participants were basically deficient in the operations and applications of a digital language laboratory (DLL) in the teaching and learning environment. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations made included the need to upgrade the digital literacy and pedagogucal proficiency of English language teachers in order to enhance students' performance in spoken English

Keywords- Digital Appreciation, Language Labouratory, Pedagogical Proficiency, Digital Literacy and Performance.

I.   INTRODUCTION

The importance of the English Language in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Likewise, the pedagogical implications of efficient lesson delivery in a second language learning context cannot be underscored. Quite a number of linguists have canvassed for a paradigmatic shift from conventional means of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to a digital enhanced pedagogical context [1]. Furthermore, it is a common feature for Faculties of Education, teachers' professional associations, agencies, ministries or parastatals at private, local, state or federal levels of government to simulate contexts and situations for developing the required pedagogical skills for carrying out the job of teaching. Consequently, quite a number of workshops, seminars and conferences have been organized by educational agencies at the three tiers of government in order to train and re-train teachers in the utilization of both conventional and digitalized means of classroom delivery example of such conferences include; 2019 International Conference on Education Learning and Training, Lagos by Center for Public Service Productivity and Development; 2018 Lagos Teachers' Conference with the theme : The Teacher Recalibration, a time Readjust, Re-engage and Shift; 2018 Faculty Of Education 15TH Annual Conference: Re-

Engineering the Nigerian Educational System For Sustainable Development UNN and the 2018 Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Program organized by the U.S Mission Nigeria amongst many others**.**

However, research has shown that the general academic performance of students in public secondary schools has been dismal despite the exposure of almost 85% of English language teachers to re-training programmes such as those listed above and MDG's, UBEC/SUBEB Professional Development Programmes which targeted digital literacy, teaching strategies, instructional technology and others. The crux of the matter signifies a shift from the conventional approach of teaching to an ICT –centered one which inn this case is referred to as digital literacy. According to [2] the term " digital literacy" has not succumbed to a standard non-arguable definition. However, for the purpose of this paper, the definition of [3] would suffice. They explained digital literacy as the abilities of a teacher to define, search, evaluate, organise, adapt, and communicate information in the context of teaching, professional learning and development. It is the ability to use digital tools or ICT skillfully for personal development and excellence, academic purposes and professional dexterity.

Again, research shows that almost 75% of secondary school teachers in Ekiti State have been trained/re-trained for almost a decade in the use of Computer Assisted programs for pedagogical purposes, and most specifically for English Language as a subject. As identified by [4], digital tools would be a very handy tool in the hands of an effective school administrator". This tends to be supported by [1] who pointed out that in the school situation, ICT is utilized to improve effective communication in English as a second language. He credited it with being the best educational technology medium for passing on information so far. In the same vein, it has been observed that for the past three (3) decades, there is a legitimate concern that developing countries have been slow in terms of the facilitation of learning among the majority of citizens, with emphasis on the basic level of education [5]. Furthermore, the National Grid for Learning, UK Government Initiatives (UGI) indicated that teachers must move swiftly to more internets and web based work in schools. According to [6] the whole world is experiencing the advancement of science and technology. Each nation is either a powerful producer of technology or a consumer of other nation's technology efforts. In the Nigerian context, the need to utilize the various forms of digital tools such as language laboratory in upgrading the professional capabilities and pedagogical efficiency, most especially in Government Colleges can best be described as being "challenging"[7]. Consequently, an array of Government and Non-Governmental agencies have made frantic efforts in ensuring that teachers in Government Colleges become " ICT friendly" with the aim of boosting the academic and linguisic competence of the young learners.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to find out the level of digital literacy of language teachers at Ekiti State Government Colleges and its pedagogical effect on teaching and learning of English Language.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are :
1.To determine the current level of digital accessibility of language teachers at Ekiti State Government College.
2.To determine the potentiality of a shift from conventional teaching and learning approaches to a digital-based approach in teaching and learning of English Language in Ekiti State Government Colleges
3.To analyse the professional views of the teachers regarding the present and future use of ICT in teaching and learning English Language in Ekiti State Government Colleges.
4.To recommend ways to enhance professional digital levels of language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the study, the following research questions are enumerated as follows;
1. What is the level of digital accessibility of English Language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges?
2. What category of digital and non-digital edcational tools are at the disposal of English Language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges?
3. What impact does Government have on the training and re-training of English Language teachers in digital –assisted techniques in Ekiti State Government Colleges?

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over a decade or two, the need to improve teachers' professional output at various levels of education in Nigeria and particularly in Ekiti State has been acknowledged by Non-governmental and governmental agencies. Furthermore, the shift from major conventional or rather, traditional teaching approaches to a digital-based approach has been "the order of the day" through re-training and training programmes organized by relevant educational bodies. [8], identified some challenges which are extraneous to the teacher but which actually do affect his/her performance in the classroom. He mentioned quite a few among which is the "low capacity of teachers in the use of ICT for instructional purposes". In the same vein, the digital literacy of teachers cannot be overemphaiszed in enhancing academic outcomes of second learners of the English Language [9]. Consequetly, [10] viewed ICT in the context of education as a mix of technologies for collecting, storing, processing, communicating and delivery of information related to teaching and learning processes. He identified three categories of ICT to include processed information (that is, computer system), disseminated information (i.e. telecommunication systems), and represented information (that is, multimedia systems).

Furthermore, [11], agreed that digital educational tools are important tools for both pedagogical and administrative purposes. However, their submissions in the report (The Netherlands Country report: 2010) revealed that, though teachers and students feel competent about their technical skills, but teachers are less confident about the pedagogic use of digital tools for teaching and learning purposes. Unfortunately, despite the enormous advantages embedded in the use of ICT, it seems as if its deployment has not met with enthusiastic embrace and widespread acceptance in the developing nations, Nigeria inclusive. Although this attitude is slowly changing, a wide gap still exists between the developed and the developing nations in their digital literacy skills most es[ecially in the teaching profession [8].

[12] revealed course content for the utilzation of ICT in schools and among a host of issues, pointed out the

importance of ICT-based strategies to the professional teacher in " today's modern society" The import of this realization points to the fact that, perhaps, today's teacher needs to be overwhelmingly ICT- compliant for the job in the classroom and in the digital language laboratory [13]. The young learner is increasingly in need of teaching approaches that would arouse and facinate his/her imagination in a formal and atimes, rigid context. In this vein, the teacher is confronted with options of using the "usual" teaching approach or a more facinating approach. Various scholars are supportive of this assertion [14]. [15] asserted the relevance of ICT and its educational based tools to learning a second /foreign language such as English. He pointed out the merits associated with including ICT content in the language curriculum, and most importantly, at the basic and post-basic levels of education.

Furthermore, [16] emphasized the pedagogical importance of introducing digital assisted learning models in teaching English as a Second Language to young learners. As a result of the quest for teacher professional development in Nigeria, the Universal Basic Education Commission in Nigeria deemed it fit to upgrade the relevant knowledge and skills of teachers in the area of digital literacy. It was observed that many teachers in the system (Ekiti State in this regard) lack the necessary content and pedagogical skills to impart knowledge to learners. Thus, it became urgent to ensure continued professional develoment for all the teachers in the basic education sector.

[14] recognized the importance of basic digital literacy training for language teachers in upgrading the academic performance of learners at post-primary levels of education in Nigeria. However, the practical application of the model is limited because of the complex pedagogical processes teachers are expected to go through in a digital language laboratory. One of such complexities of digital utilization is differentiation in the classroom where technology is used creatively and correctly in one-to-one classroom interactions.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study comprised a descriptive research design of the survey type with less emphasis on statistical study. The population consisted of all English language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges in Ekiti State stated as follow:

Table I. Population of English language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges

S/N	Name of Colleges	Gender		Total	Selected College for the study
		M	**F**		
1.	Ekiti State Government College, Ado –Ekiti	3	3	6	Selected
2.	Ekiti State Government College, Ayede-Ekiti	1	0	1	Nil
3.	Ekiti State Government College, Efon	1	1	2	Nil
4.	Ekiti State Government College, Emure	1	1	2	Nil
5.	Ekiti State Government College, Ikere-Ekiti	3	3	6	Selected
6.	Ekiti State Government College, Iyin Ekiti	1	1	2	Nil
7.	Ekiti State Government College, Oye-Ekiti	4	2	6	Selected
8.	Ekiti State Government College, Usi Ekiti	3	2	5	Selected
	Total	18	12	30	

Twenty English language teachers were randonmly selected from four Government Colleges (indicated in table 1) as samples for the study. The questionnaire comprised a structured likert-scaled format. The instrument contained four sections labelled A, B, C and D with sections A for eliciting information of the respondents' biodata and sections B to D containing items structured in the five-option- Likert-scale format. Furthermore, the instrument was administered on the samples of the study after validation had been done by language and research experts at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti and College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by the test-retest method using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The questionnaire used for the main study was retrieved within a week from the respondents with the assistance of a research assistant. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was used in analysing and describing data obtained from the research instrument. The data retrieved was analysed with SPSS 2.0. and the results are presented as follows:

V. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of digital accessibility of English Language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges?

Table 1: Ekiti State Government Colleges English Language Teachers Level of Digital Accessibility

| S/N	ITEMS	NEVER		SELDOM		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Teaching without digital device.	0	0	0	0	1	5.0	6	30.0	13	65.0
2	Uses Mobile Devices to communicate with students.	3	15.0	6	30.0	1	5.0	9	45.0	1	5.0
3	Access to laptop computers for instructional purposes.	7	35.0	3	15.0	1	5.0	5	25.0	4	20.0
4	Access to functional digital language laboratory.	18	90.0	0	0	12	10.0	0	0	0	0
5	Access to unrestricted internet connection in school.	20	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
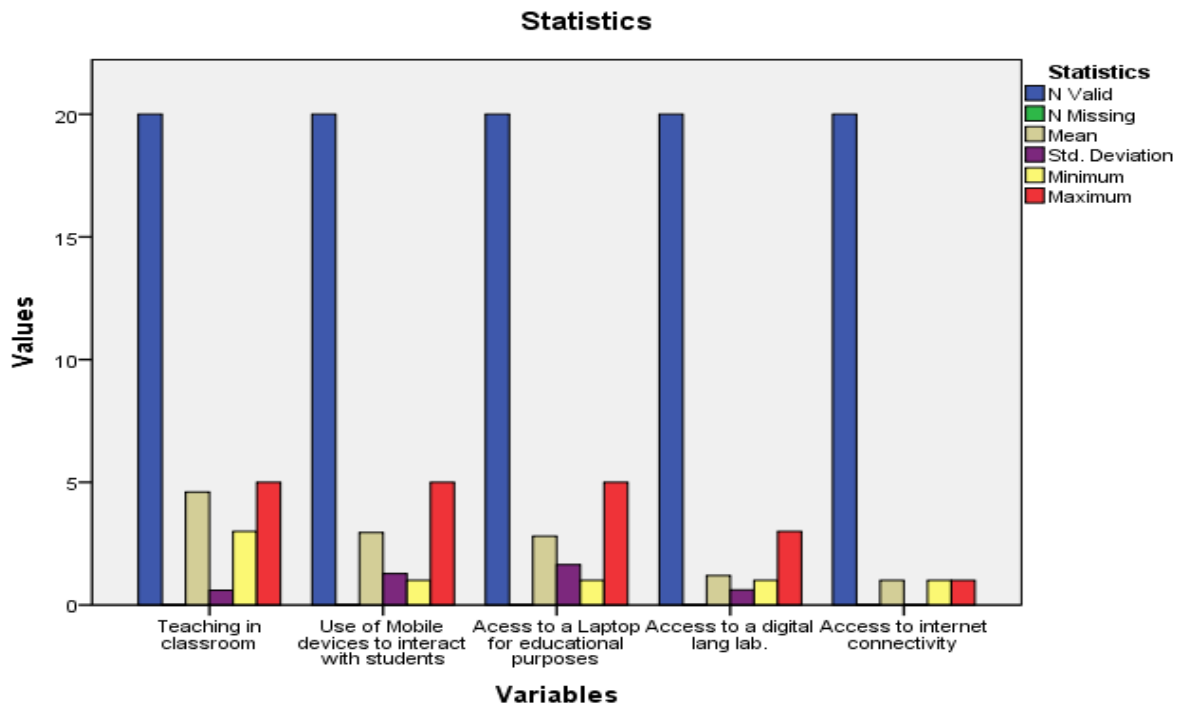
Figure 1: Ekiti State Government Colleges English Language Teachers Level of Digital Accessibility

Table 1 and figure 1 show that 13(65%) of the respondents always uitlize the classroom, while 6 (30%) of the respondents often use the classroom for English lessons. Only 1 (5%) of the respondents use the classroom sometimes for English lessons. Analysis from the table also shows that 9 (45%) respondents often use mobile devices to interact with their students, while 9(45%) seldom and never use their mobile devices as an interactive tool. Table 1 and figure 1 also reveals that 7 (35%) respondents never have access to a laptop for educational purposes, 3 (15%) respondents seldom use laptops instructionally, 5 (25%) respondents often use laptops instructionally, while 4 (20%)respondents always utilise laptops for various educational duties. It was revealed that all of the respondents (100%) indicates that a digital language laboratory as well as internet connections are non-existent in all the Government Colleges in Ekiti State.

Research Question 2: What category of digital and non-digital educational tools are at the disposal of English Language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges.

Table 2(a): The Level of Availabilty of Digital and Non-Digital Educational Tools in Ekiti State Government Colleges.

S/N		Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Adequate power supply during school hours	0	0	5	25.0	6	30.0	9	45.0	0	0
2.	A Functional digital language laboratory	19	95.0	0	0	1	5.0	0	0	0	0
3.	Internet ready mobile devices for personal use	1	5.0	1	5.0	0	0	7	35.0	11	55.0
4	White board and related audio-visuals for formal instruction	0	0	0	0	1	5.0	2	10.0	17	85.0
5.	Social media applications such as Whatsapp for group chat with students.	0	0	3	15.0	4	20.0	12.0	60.	1	5.

Table 2 (b): Level of Availability of Digital and Non-Digital Educational Tools Based on Location / City.

City of Schools' location		Availability of power supply during school hours	Availability of internet ready mobile devise for personal use	Availability of a digital lang. lab.(DLL)	Availability of white boards for classroom instruction	Use of Whatsapp to assist my students educationally
	Mean	2.80	4.80	1.00	4.80	4.00
Ado Ekiti	N	5	5	5	5	5
	Std. Deviation	.837	.447	.000	.447	.707
	Mean	3.60	4.20	1.00	4.80	3.40
Ikere Ekiti	N	5	5	5	5	5
	Std. Deviation	.548	1.304	.000	.447	.894
	Mean	4.00	4.60	1.00	5.00	3.20
jOye Ekiti	N	5	5	5	5	5
	Std. Deviation	.000	.548	.000	.000	1.095
	Mean	2.40	3.60	1.40	4.60	3.60
Usi Ekiti	N	5	5	5	5	5
	Std. Deviation	.548	1.517	.894	.894	.548
	Mean	3.20	4.30	1.10	4.80	3.55
Total	N	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Deviation	.834	1.081	.447	.523	.826

Table 2(a) and 2(b) show that 25% of the respondents often experience power supply during school hours, 30% sometimes, while 45% often experience power supply in school. A mean score of 3.20 shows the erratic nature of power supply in the Colleges during school hours.

Research Question 3: What impact does government have on the training and re-training of English Language teachers in digital –assisted techniques in Ekiti State Government Colleges?

Table 3: Government Impact on English Language Teachers' Digital Literacy Level.

S/N		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Government is doing its best in sponsoring teachers for training and re-training in digital instruction	1	5.0	12	60.0	6	30.0	1	5.0	0	0
2.	Teachers should be re-trained in digital utilization	0	.0	1	5.0	0	0	10	50	9	45.0

Table 3 shows that 60% of the English language teachers disagree that Government is doing its best in the training and re-training of teachers in digital appreciation. 30%% are undecided while 5% feel that Government is doing its best. Concequently, a total of 95% of the teachers are of the opinion that teachers should be re-trained in digital appreciation and literacy programmes.

VI. DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis indicated non-existence of digital language laboratories across Government Colleges in Ekiti State. An alarming 95% of the English Language teachers in Government Colleges opined that there was a non-existent status of digital language laboratories in the colleges where they teach English language. Furthermore, complementary educational services such as constant power supply were concentrated , though erratic, in urban areas such as Ado- Ekiti and Ikere Ekiti, with a drop in Usi-Ekiti represented by a mean score of 2.40. The English language teachers also revealed a situation of over reliance of white boards and related audio visual aids in teaching spoken English. Most of the teachers indicated that the absence of modern day digital educational tools had negative effect on the academic performance of the students. This supports the findings of [9] that ICTs have influenced learning, language skills and effective utilization of the English language in communication and performance in examinations.

In Table 3, almost all of the teachers agreed that re-training programmes in the use of digital learning tools should be embarked upon by relevant education agencies, based on the eventual provision of state-of –the –art digital language laboratories . Furthermore, the teachers were of the opinion that necessary educational facilities such as internet connections, use of social media applications such as Whatsapp, instagram and e-mailing can boost the interactive level between teacher and learner in terms of classroom instruction.

In conclusion, employing new technologies and teaching models in present day pedagogy would be of immense benefit to learning processes. The world is fast becoming a global village where various nations embrace emerging, or rather, emerged educational tools for enhancing its learners. [7] agrees that in a class room situation, ICT is used to improve teaching effectiveness. The use of spoken English in and outside the learning environment will further enable the second language users of English communicate, interact and survive in a world gratey reliant on the socio-cultural and economic functions of the English language.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations generated from the findings of this study:
1. Ministries of education should provide the necessary digital facilities for both language laboratory and classroom use.
2. The State education appendages such as Ministry of Education should organize and intensify training and retraining interactive workshops on digital language laboratory utilization because teachers seem not to be aware enough is done.
3. The Ekiti State Government College teachers should be exposed to periodical and practical training in the application of language theories in ICT.
4. School administrators should encourage and monitor the use of online digital platforms such as WatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and others between their students and teacher for purely academic purposes.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From this study, it is inferred that most English Language teachers in Ekiti State Government Colleges are not exposed to the use of modern day digital language laboratories and facilities as pedagogical supplements. This development could be traced to the inability of relevant stakeholders to acquire well equipped digital language laboratories and other

classroom digital facilities in the Ekiti State Government Colleges in particular, and perhaps, in Government Colleges all over Nigeria in general. As a matter of fact, digital appreciation and its accessibility is a sine-qua-non in this 21st century and no educational product can be globally competitive without its knowledge and skill. But for that to happen, the conveyers of that knowledge must first be empowered because it is said that you cannot give what you do not have. This study has therefore identified challenges such as lack of availability of ICT tools and language laboratory, lack of role models in the utilization of ICT in teaching, by the state government and school administrators

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