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ICT Compliance: Towards Professional Development in Teaching English Language in Ekiti State Primary Schools, Nigeria

Bankole Faloye, Aderonke Ogunleye
Department of English,
College of Education, Ikere – Ekiti, Nigeria
bankole.faloye@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The study examines the need for inculcating ICT in the teaching and learning of English Language in Public Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The Cluster Impact Survey research design was used in this study. Also, a Needs-based Interactive Session comprising a minimum of ten (10) schools and five (5) teachers per cluster were mentored and observed by professional educators for thirteen weeks. As a pre-survey, questionnaires were administered on two hundred and fifty teachers from five cluster centers. The instruments for the research comprised Classroom Lesson Observation Checklist (CLOC) and Cluster Lesson Observation List (CLOL). Results from the findings revealed tha aboutt 89.5% of the participants were basically deficient in the operations and applications of ICT in the teaching and learning environment.

Keywords: ICT, Professional Development, Teaching, English Language, Primary Schools.

Introduction

A host of scholars interested in the professional cum academic development of teachers at the basic levels of education, with special emphasis in developing countries, have canvassed for a paradigmatic shift from conventional means of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to an ICT based approach. Furthermore, it is a common feature for agencies, ministries or parastatals of either Local, State or Federal Government to create avenues for developing the required pedagogical skills for carrying out the job of teaching. In Nigeria, teachers at the Primary school level are expected to functions as professionals in and outside the learning context and specific stated objectives are also expected to be attained.

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.However, research as shown that the general academic performance of pupils (in public primary schools to be specific) has been dismal despite the exposure of almost 85% of public primary school teachers to re-training programmes such as MDG's, UBEC/SUBEB Professional Development Programmes among others. The crux of the matter signifies a shift from the conventional approach of teaching to an ICT –centered one. Again, research shows that almost 88% of public 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 Mbipom(2000), the computer would be a very handy tool in the hands of an effective school administrator". This tends to be supported by Onuma, (2007) 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 facilitation of learning among the majority of citizens, with emphasis on the basic level of education.(McFarlane & Sakellariou,2000). Furthermore,the National Grid for learning, UK government initiatives indicated that teachers must move swiftly to more internets and web based work in schools. According to Obunadike, (2006) 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 ICT in upgrading the professional capabilities and pedagogical efficiency , most especially in primary schools, can best be described as being " challenging" (Nwite, 2007). Consequetly, an array of Government and Non-Governmental agencies have made efforts in ensuring that teachers in primary schools become " ICT friendly" with the aim of boosting the academic cum linguisic competence of the young learners.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the level of ICT compliance of public primary school teachers and its pedagogical effect on teaching and learning of English Language.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are :

1. To determine the current level of ICT compliance of public primary school teachers in Ekiti,, Nigeria.
2. To determine the potentiality of a paradigmatic shift from conventional teaching and learning approaches to an ICT-based approach in teaching and learning English Language in public primary schools.
3. To analyse the professional views of the teachers regarding the present and future use of ICT in teaching and learning English Language in public primary schools .
4. To issue a number of policy recommendations for both teachers in public primary schools and Government.

Research Questions

This research survey employed the use of four research questions to conduct the study, and they are enumerated as follows;

1. What is the current level of ICT compliance of teachers in public primary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
2. What is the degree of utilization of ICT in the schools?
3. What impact does Non-governmental and governmental agencies have on the level of ICT compliance in primary school education
4. What is the level of pedagogical utilization of ICT in English Language lessons ?

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 approached from different angles by both Non-governmental and governmental agencies. Furthermore, the paradigm shift from major conventional or rather, traditional teaching approaches to a universal approach in the form of utilization of information communication technology (ICT) has been "the order of the day" through re-training and training programmes organized by relevant educational bodies . Unwaha, (2013) 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". Consequetly, Njoku, (2006) 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, Pieter & Bas, (2010) agree that ICT is an important tool for both pedagogical purposes and administrative purposes. However, their submissions in the report (The Netherlands Country report: 2010) reveal that , though teachers and students feel competent about their technical skills, they are less confident about the pedagogic use of ICT for 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 of the developing nations, Nigeria inclusive.. Although this attitude is slowly changing, a wide gap still exists between the developed and the developing nations in the use of ICT (Aderibigbe, 2008). The Cluster Schools Model for Teacher Professional Development (2013) reveals course content for the utilzation of ICT in schools and among a host of issues, pointed out the importance of ICT 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 (Government of Ekiti State, 2013). 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 (Adedara & Faboya, 2011). Faloye, (2014) asserts the relevance of ICT and its educational based tools to learning a second /foreign language such as English in primary schools. He points out the merits associated with including ICT content in the language curriculum, and most importantly, at the basic level of education.

Furthermore, Faloye (2013) emphasizes the pedagogical importance in 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 . 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 pupils. Thus, it became urgent to ensure continued professional develoment for all the teachers in the basic education sector. The crux of the matter in this regard was to train or re-train public primary school teachers in the use of modern day approaches such as ICT. (Universal Basic Education Commission, 2013).

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 six hundred and ninety four (694) public primary schools in Ekiti and eight thousand seven hundred and forty teachers.Two hundred and fifty teachers were selected from fifty primary schools as samples through simple random sampling .Each cluster comprised ten (10) schools and a random selection of five teachers (5) from each school. Five cluster centres was set up in five local government education areas in Ekiti State. The cluster centres are as follows:

(1) Cluster 1: Ado local government area (LGEA)

(2) Cluster 2: Ekiti East LGEA
(3) Cluster 3: Ekiti South West LGEA
(4) Cluster 4: Emure LGEA
(5) Cluster 5: Gboyin LGEA

The survey team comprised five academic staff from the Department of English, College of Education, Ikere Ekiti and five resource persons from State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). In each cluster centre , the evaluation team held meetings with the sample teachers to explain the purpose of the surver. A Teachers' Needs Assessment Instrument (TENASI) designed and validated by research experts were administered on the samples to elicit responses that are beneficial to the study. Also, the reliability of the instrument was determined by the Cronbach alpha procedural model which was used in establishing the consistency of the reliability of the research instrument used in conducting the survey. Evaluators observed a one- period (35 minutes) lesson performed by the teachers and fills out the Cluster Lesson Observation Checklist (CLOC). The duration of the survey comprised a thirteen week programme with keen obsersavation techniques (CLOC) utilized by the evaluation team. The observation checklist was stratified into three major sections such as Teaching Procedure, Fundamental Techniques/procedures and Class Management/ Control.However for the purpose of this study, section B was the focal point . At the end of the thirteen week period of survey, evaluators from the five cluster centres retrieved all intruments from the samples totalling 250 and analysed data using simple percentages and measurements of central tendency.

Findings

The findings of the study were based on the data obtained from the Questionnaire and Teachers' Needs Assessment Instrument using simple percentages and related statistical analysis such as mean, median and mode. Also, findings were generated form the research questions for the study.

Table 1
Teachers' level of ICT compliance

Level of ICT compliance	No	%
Access to desk tops	25	10
Access to laptops	40	16
Access to mobile devices	158	63.2
Schools with ICT laboratory	05	2
Schools with internet connections	0	0
Teachers' access to broadband connections	36	14.4

Discussion

From table 1, about 25 teachers have access to desktop computers (10%) either as head teachers in their respective schools or classroom teachers saddled with extra administrative duties. About 40 teachers (16%) have access to laptops probably due to the distribution of laptops to school teachers by the Ekiti State Government. Furthermore, about 158 teachers representing 63.2% have access to various types of mobile devices ranging from androids to I-pads and show a high level of competence in its usage. Unfortunately, only 5 schools have ICT laboratories representing 02% while none of them have any form of internet connection. 14.4% of the teachers make use of broad band connections provided by

various service providers (MTN, Airtel etc) mainly for personal browsing while most of them use the service for private browsing.2% of the schools that have ICT laboratories are special ETF intervention model schools located in key geographical locations in the state.

Table 2
Degree of ICT utilization

Degree of ICT utilization	No.	%
Use of desktop for personal use at home	22	8.8
Use of desktops at work	25	10.0
Use of laptops to support learning styles	40	16.0
Use of ICT for networking with pupils	08	3.2
Use of ICT for networking with colleagues	156	62.4
Use of multimedia applications	05	2.0

Discussion

Table 2 reveals a very low degree of ICT use both at home and at work. Teachers in primary schools in Ekiti State: 8.8 percent of all primary school teachers in Ekiti State utilize desktop computers at home for various domestic purposes while 10 percent make use of desktop computers for office work such as correspondence related to the school environment. It was revealed that the 10 percent that used desktop computers in schools were head teachers and teachers that doubled as class teachers and ICT laboratory supervisors. When is comes to teachers use of laptops for supportive learning styles, only 16 percent of them really utilized the various applications for education purposes. One of such identifiable tasks was the use of laptops to write and format lesson notes for teaching English Language. Another revelation in the study showed the use of customized laptops from the Ekiti State government with programmed and in-built applications restricted for pedagogical purposes. However, 3.2 percent of the teachers communicated with pupils in the upper class via mobile devices and Short Message Services (Sms) out of the classroom setting while about 62.4 percent of the teachers were very versatile in communicating with their colleagues through social networking as well as SMS. Furthermore, the use of multimedia devices and applications was alien to almost 98 percent of the teachers. Only 2 percent actually used the multimedia tools on the laptop for educational purposes such as PowerPoint , video and sound recordings and gallery collections for reading comprehension lessons. This was done with the aid of a laptop projector in the ICT laboratory.

Table 3.
Impact of Non-governmental and governmental agencies (N=250)

Impact of NGO's and GO's on Teachers	%Never-Seldom	% Freq.- Always
Retraining workshops on ICT(NGO's)	95	5
Retraining workshops on ICT(GO's)	5	95
Distribution of laptops (NGO's)	98	2
Distribution of laptops(GO's)	12	88
Sponsoring teachers to national workshops	100	0
Sponsoring teachers to international W/S	100	0

Discussion

The impact of Non-governmental agencies (NGO's) such as UNICEF, USAID and the private sector on training and retraining workshops in ICT are perceived to be on the low side with only 5 percent of the teachers frequently or always attending such programmes. However, 95 percent of the teachers in public primary schools in Ekiti State have been exposed to ICT training and retraining workshops through governmental organizations such as Millennium Development Goal projects(MDG's) being facilitated by GO's at state levels through SUBEB and UBEC. Furthermore, 98 percent of teachers reveal tha almost non-existent provision of laptops to facilitate ICT retraining programmes ad perhaps, the 2 percent of teachers acquires personally. Again, the role of the government agencies earlier mentioned in the provision of laptops as a back up to training and retraining workshops for teachers is evident in the 88 percent obtained .The Ekiti State government for the past 8 years or about have made customized laptops for educational purposes available to teachers despite the fact that only 16 percent of the teachers use them in the classroom.

When considering the issue of sponsorship of teachers to national and international workshops on ICT utilization, the related data revealed that none of the teachers involved in the study had benefitted from such kind of sponsorship. This revelation was quite startling.

Table 4
Pedagogical utilization of ICT in English Language lessons (N=250)

Pedagogical utilization of ICT	% YES	%NO
Preparation of lessons	08	82
Designing digital teaching material	05	95
Communication with learners online	04	96
Use of IWB's	01	99
Fostering pupils' ability to use technology in their learning	04	96

Discussion

Table 4 reveals the inability of teachers in using ICT for organizing their teaching tasks such as preparing lesson materials among others.08 percent replied in the affirmative as regards the use of ICT in lesson note preparation while 82 percent responded negative for using tools for preparing lesson notes. Only 5 percent of the teachers utilize various forms of digital preparation such as PowerPoint and gallery applications for their classes, while 95 percent, logically, prefer the conventional means of teaching. The level of ICT utilization in pedagogical terms as regards the use of modern digital tools such as IWB's reveals non-compliance to ICT usage as 99 percent of the teachers are negative in their response.. On a general note, teachers in primary schools in Ekiti State can be assumed , according to data presented, to have apathy towards using ICT for pedagogical purposes. For instance, only 5 percent of them use digital materials in the classroom.

Limitations

Despite the fact that much remains to be done, this study generates important findings in the field of Applied Linguistics as regards the benefits of ICT in education. In other words, having acknowledged some limitations of data processing , this study, nevertheless, confirms that there are some limitations of this study. Some of the limitations of this study include external validity, or the generalizability of the study. There were only five cluster centres with fifty participants that participated in the study and they were all teachers with varying

academic qualifications ranging from Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) to Bachelor of Education (B.Ed). Also, the participants were all from the public sector.

Recommendation

The following are recommendations generated form the findings of this study:

1. The State education agencies such as SUBEB, UBEC should organize intensive training and retraining interactive workshops on ICT use in both public and private primary schools
2. The primary school teachers should be provided with basic computer training skills with relevance to pedagogy during workshops.
3. Government should encourage the private sector (especially banking institutions) to assist in providing computers for the teachers through sot .
4. The State Universal basic Education Commission should inaugurate an ICT interim committee to monitor, implement and synthesize ICT in the primary school curriculum.
5. Finally, teachers should be further encouraged to be computer-friendly both in and out of the classroom context. Periodical ICT exchange programmes between schools in various local government areas would boost the confidence and professional development of the teachers.

Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that most teachers in public primary schools, despite their exposure to training and retraining workshops are not ICT compliant as professional teachers. Despite the vast array of ICT-driven tools in existence, the teachers are still reliant on conventional and, perhaps, obsolete teaching materials and approaches. This trend, as revealed in the findings of this study, needs urgent attention from Government and other relevant stakeholders in the education sector. This study has identified challenges such as lack of balance between availability of ICT tools and policy ambition, lack of role models in the utilization of ICT in teaching, apathy towards generational change in education via ICT by the 'old teachers' and most significantly, the dwindling financial ability to acquire modern ICT equipment by both state government and teachers.

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