

## Leveraging Information and Communication Technology in English Teaching and Learning: A Study of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Zaria

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### Abstract

*English language has remained indomitable in the linguistic terrain of Nigeria all limiting criticisms notwithstanding. It is absolutely apparent that English has the largest users among other internationally recognized foreign languages and that alone has credited its acceptance as one of the leading languages in the world. Technologically, most inventions or products that are not English-based have their instructional guides translated to English. This will make such inventions gain wider marketability. Technology has made it possible for all fields of human endeavour to experience ease, speed and tremendous output in whatever each organization specializes in producing. The adoption and promotion of technology in the teaching of English language is a cardinal venture most especially in the current global outbreak of ravaging pandemics like Ebola, COVID- 19 among others. Of course, the traditional face-to-face teaching and learning era is gradually becoming unpopular in the global educational system. Thus, Nigeria cannot but embrace this wave of teaching and learning via various gadgets. In this regard, this paper attempts to examine the significance of scaffolding technology in English language teaching and learning in Nigeria putting its challenges and prospects into consideration. The author gathered the relevant data through both primary (questionnaire) and secondary sources (books). The findings of the research reveal that leveraging ICT while teaching and learning English language has not gained sufficient attention in Nigerian educational system as obtainable in advanced nations. Ergo, this paper will identify the relevance of ICT in the English language classroom. The conclusion reflects that leveraging ICT in teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria will facilitate convenience, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, concretization, consistency and comprehensibility for the teacher and the concerned learners.*

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## Introduction

In many nations, education is ranked the most profitable heritage for their nations (citizens). Nigeria has persistently pursued the realization of this global goal from the pre-colonial era to the present time with varying degrees of integrity, tenacity and sincerity. This is reflected in establishing several primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Of course, Nigerian educational system began after independence when the nation made conscious, meaningful and progressive efforts in stabilizing and promoting education to meet the nation's developmental challenges. The effort made by the government has culminated in the proliferation of schools at all levels for learners in diverse fields. But the expected speedy progress towards this direction has been associated with a rigmorole. These enormous accomplishments could not be appropriately sustained due to instability in governmental or educational policies. Therefore, the need to leverage technology in English language teaching cannot be undermined. Currently, the traditional methods of teaching the concerned language were already considered archaic and ineffective by learners because there are several ways of using technological gadgets to teach English or conduct online classes. Some of the popularly used applications and tools are social platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, etc.; open learning management system such as: Google Sites, Google Classroom, Moodle MS Team Classroom and Canvas, and Virtual meeting platforms among others. To this end, learners explore these technological platforms to acquire vastness in English language instruction as well as fortify teachers with methods to communicate with their learners unambiguously and with the utmost convenience. So, adopting modern technological appliances as part of teaching English language is not only timely but also

enhances innovative systems and methods that facilitate learning processes for comprehension with speed and accuracy. Thus, teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL), who use technology while teaching the learners, can consolidate the leveraged view of modern teaching methods or approaches with other components beneficial to learners to achieve the desired results or objectives.

## Statement of Research Problem

There is research on the relevance of technological gadgets in teaching and learning English. For instance, Prewsky (2010) worked on Teaching digital natives; Thompson (2019) examined Teaching students to critically read digital images; Bayero (2021) looked at a technology-driven curriculum in teaching English in primary schools among others. In spite of the efforts of these scholars, more attention needs to be given to leveraging technology in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper study sets to fill part of the gap.

## Aim and Objectives

The principal aim of this study is to examine leveraging technology in teaching and learning of English language in ABU and FCE, Zaria.

Specifically, the study is 'platformed' on the following objectives:

- i. identifying the role of technology in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions,
- ii. examining the relevance of leveraging technology in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institution,
- iii. unveiling the prospective benefits of leveraging technology in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions,
- iv. enumerating and discussing the challenges that are associated with leveraging technology in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions.

## Research Questions

The following ten research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. Do you agree that the use of technological gadgets attract curiosity in language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions?
2. Do technological gadgets facilitate creativity in the teaching and learning of English language in tertiary institutions?
3. Does the use of technological gadgets enhance better communication in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions?
4. Does the use of technological gadgets boost critical thinking in the teaching and learning of English language in tertiary institutions?
5. Does technological gadgets facilitate convenience in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions?
6. Is connectivity with technological gadgets a great advantage to teaching English and learning in tertiary institutions?
7. Does technology promote collaboration among teachers and learners of English language in tertiary institutions?
8. Does the use technology in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions facilitate 'complementability'?
9. Does the use of technology in English language teaching and learning concretize course contents in tertiary institutions?
10. Is learner's comprehension better enhanced via technological gadgets in English language teaching and learning?

## Literature Review

Some related literature on leveraging information and communication technology in language teaching and learning were reviewed to consolidate this paper's 'researchability' and relevance. Okpalla (2011) states that the foundation for education development in Nigeria began after independence when the nation strove to make meaningful and progressive efforts to stabilize and promote education to meet the manpower challenges necessary for human and material development. The effort made by the government has culminated in the proliferation of schools at all levels for learners in diverse fields. But the expected speedy progress towards this direction has been associated with a rigmarole. These enormous accomplishments could not be appropriately sustained due to instability in governmental or educational policies. The need to leverage technology in English language teaching cannot be undermined. Currently, the traditional methods of teaching the concerned language were already considered archaic by learners (Mofereh, 2019). He added that findings showed that 60% to 80% of learners were grossly disappointed with the traditional methods of learning language while 75% to 95% of the learners were familiar with language learning through technology and they achieved better than those who were in the traditional language learning classrooms.

There are several ways to teach English or conduct online classes using technological gadgets. Some of the popularly used applications and tools are social platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, etc.; open learning management system such as: Google Sites, Google Classroom, Moodle MS Team Classroom and Canvas, and Virtual

meeting platforms such as Google Meet, Wechat, Zoom, Goto Meeting (Alsaleem, 2020; Huang et al, 2019 & 2020; Mofareh, 2019; Shyamlee, 2012; Simonson et al, 2011). The language methods tools and applications are used for teaching communication and writing skills, carrying out research studies, and teaching contents that require less face-to-face interaction (Shyamlee, 2012). Learners explore the technological platforms to optimize English language instruction as well as equip every teacher with methods to communicate with their learners efficiently, effectively, and amicably. Using modern technological appliances as part of teaching English language is not only bounded to be used as modern gadgets and devices but also targeted at procuring the introduction to innovative systems and methods that enable the fostering and facilitation of learning processes so that it can be easier and more comprehensive (Mofareh, 2019).

### **Challenges of Using ICT in the Teaching and Learning of English**

There is no innovation (including the adoption and leveraging ICT in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions in Nigeria) that is absolutely void of its peculiar challenge(s) (Ojoo, 2022). Some of the factors affecting the use of ICT in the classroom are physical or environmental (that is, modern language laboratories and classrooms should be built in conducive or noise-free environments in order to enhance effective teaching and learning of English), physiological or biological (that is, teachers and learners with body disability may not impact or learn maximally as expected), economical (that is, the economic strength of each teacher and learner determines the type

of technological gadgets (s)he will be able to buy and use to access teaching and learning of English in tertiary institution in Nigeria), psychological (this means that teachers and learners that are not stable psychologically due to hunger, low social status or some life-threatening challenges find it difficult to concentrate in English language class and this culminate in poor performance in every aspect of English), philosophical (this implies that the way and manner at which teachers and learners of English view technological advancement in general (Isma, 2023).. Some embrace it while some are skeptical about its adoption let alone its leveraging) and political (this entails that failure of the government to provide the necessary funds for the procurement of technological gadgets and formulate, implement and adjudicate policies in favour of the use of technological gadget while teaching English in tertiary institutions in Nigeria) in nature.

### **Methodology**

The data of this study were sourced from fifty (140) respondents (20 lecturers and 120 students – NCE and undergraduate). The subjects were from the Department of English in Federal College of Education, Zaria and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The respondents were randomly selected and had had series of experiences in the teaching and learning of different courses in English language. The research instrument comprises a structured questionnaire. One hundred and forty (140) copies of the questions were administered to the randomly selected subjects in order to ascertain the significance of leveraging technology in the teaching and learning English language in Nigeria. Simple percentage was used to analyze data.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

*Table 1: Do you agree that the use of technological gadgets attract curiosity in language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	105	75
No	20	14.3
None	15	10.7
Total	140	100

The above data shows that out of the hundred and forty respondents, one hundred and five constituting seventy-five percent (75%) affirmed that the use of technological gadgets attract curiosity to both teacher and learners' curiosity in English language teaching and learning in Nigeria; twenty (14.3%) were on the negative side while fifteen (10.7%) were neutral. This implies that technological gadgets attract curiosity in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.

*Table 2: Do technological gadgets facilitate creativity in the teaching and learning of English language in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	115	82.1
No	15	10.8
None	10	7.1
Total	140	100

From the above table, it is glaring that out of the 140 (100%) respondents, 115 (82.1%) stated that the use of technological gadgets facilitate creativity in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria; 15 (10.8%) remained negative while 10 (7.1%) were neutral. This portrays that technological gadgets facilitate creativity in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.

*Table 3: Does the use of technological gadgets enhance better communication in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	125	89.3
No	10	7.1
None	5	3.6
Total	140	100

The data above reveals that, out of the 140 (100%) respondents, 125 (89.3%) agreed that technological gadgets enhance better communication in English language teaching and learning in Nigeria; 10 (7.1%) said no while 5 (3.6%) were neutral. This means that technological gadgets enhance better communication in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.

*Table 4: Does the use of technological gadgets boost critical thinking in the teaching and learning of English language in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	111	79.1
No	29	20.8
None	10	7.1
Total	140	100

The above data unveils that, out of the 140 respondents (100%), 111 (79.1%) agreed that technological gadgets boost critical thinking in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria; 29 (20.8%) responded negatively while 10 (7.1 %) were neutral. This reveals that technological gadgets boost critical thinking in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.



*Table 5: Does the use of technological gadgets fascinate convenience in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	130	92.9
No	2	1.4
None	8	5.7
Total	140	100

It is obvious from the above data that out of the 140 (100%) respondents, 130 (92.9) affirmatively stated that the use of technological gadgets fascinated convenience in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions; 2 (1.4 %) negatively responded while 8 (5.7 %) were neutral. This implies that technological gadgets fascinate convenience in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.

*Table 6: Is connectivity with technological gadgets a great advantage to English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	128	90.4
No	8	5.7
None	4	2.9
Total	140	100

The table above apparently shows that out of the 140 respondents, 128 (90.4%) agreed that connectivity in technological gadgets is a great advantage in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions; 8 (5.7%) gave negative responses while 4 (2.9%) were neutral. This reveals that connectivity with technological gadgets is a great advantage to the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.

*Table 7: Does technology promote collaboration among teachers and learners of English language in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	105	75
No	15	10.7
None	20	14.3
Total	140	100

The above table reveals that out of the 140 respondents, 105 (75%) overtly agreed that technology promotes collaboration among teachers and learners of English language in Nigeria; 15 (10.7%) gave negative responses while 20 (14.3%) were neutral. This proves that technological gadgets promote collaboration among teachers and learners of English in tertiary institutions.

*Table 8: Does the use technology in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions facilitate 'complementability'?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	100	71.4
No	29	20.7
None	11	7.9
Total	140	100

Form the above table, it is glaring that out of the 140 respondents, 100 (71.4%) agreed that the use of technology in English language teaching and learning in tertiary institutions facilitate the 'complementabilty' of other existing methods of teaching language; 29 (20.7%) reflected no in their responses while 11 (7.9%) were neutral. This shows that technological gadgets complement the existing English teaching and learning methods in tertiary institutions.

*Table 9: Does the use of technology in English language teaching and learning concretize course contents in tertiary institutions?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	95	67.9
No	35	25
None	10	7.1
Total	140	100

It is clear from the above table that out of the 140 respondents, 95 (67.9%) consented to the fact that the use of technology in English language teaching and learning concretizes the designated course contents; 35 (25%) answers were negative while 10 (7.1%) were neutral. This confirms that technological gadgets concretize course contents in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.

*Table 10: Is learner's comprehension better enhanced via the use of technological gadgets in English language teaching and learning?*

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	125	89.3
No	5	3.6
None	10	7.1
Total	140	100

The above table reflects that out of the 140 respondents, 125 (89.3%) absolutely agreed that comprehension is better enhanced via the use of technological gadgets in English language teaching and learning; 5 (3.6%) gave negative responses while 10 (7.1%) were neutral. This unveils that technological gadgets enhance better comprehension in the teaching and learning of English in tertiary institutions.

### Findings and its Discussion

Findings emanating from the study show a great deal of benefits that can be derived if the teaching and learning of English

in tertiary institutions in Zaria is leveraged on information and communication technology. These benefits include:

- i. Curiosity:** The above analysed data reflects that the integration of a leveraged technology in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria will facilitate the desired transformation. Both teachers and learners are eager or motivated to explore the world around them in the course of delivering lessons in the class. That is, a leveraged technological gadget in teaching English in Nigeria causes an immense enthusiasm in learning because they are exposed to new things (contents) in every contact.
- ii. Communication:** The place of communication in language teaching and learning cannot be undermined. Of course, language is a tool for communicating emotions, ideas and feelings among human-beings in every speech community. For effective language teaching and learning to take place, there must be smooth interaction within or between the teachers and the learners. It forms the basis through which learners decode the lessons' contents. Communication is often employed for explanations or clarifications to any vague and misconceived concepts taught in the classroom. In consonance with this, technology has aided communication in language teaching and learning in the sense that poly-faceted media (voice nodes, texts, emojis, etc.) could be used in singular teaching and learning context.
- iii. Creativity:** This refers to the ability of someone to fashion out something new from junks or transform the existing objects, ideas, concepts, creeds and credos in order to enhance its value. To this end, the engagement of technology in language teaching and learning paves way for creativity in the classroom. Teachers and learners employ divergent approaches to

facilitate teaching and learning. to buttress this assertion, vocabulary can be taught or learnt via computer games; the pronunciation of sounds in a language can be taught through strides and computerized phonotactics among others.

- iv. Critical Thinking:** Technology has generally empowered teachers and learners to think critically in the classroom. A particular topic can be divergently viewed and all the various expositions of the learners may be correct. A comprehension passage can be accompanied with relevant pictures which are deliberately posted to elaborate the passages' contents. This will boost the thinking-ability of each of the learners as they are tasked to thoroughly read through, reflect on and attempt the questions posed on each passage.
- v. Collaboration:** Technology provides an enabling and easier platform for learners in the same class to be shared into smaller groups. The essence of this is to enhance guided discussions among members of each group. Teachers find it less difficult to structure questions in conjunction with the lesson's set objectives that each group will deliberate upon. This fascinates the building of a team-work zeal in both teachers and learners as each group formed comprises members from different backgrounds – educationally, philosophically, psychologically, sociologically, culturally, politically and religiously. It is the variance in the teacher and learners backgrounds that determines their views and opinions about the passage they analyzed. As learners relate freely with one another in the group, learning takes place faster and clearer form. The fast learners and the slow learners find a common platform for learning to take place in a more profitable manner.
- vi. Convenience:** The adoption and leveraging ICT in the teaching and learning of English has enhanced ease in an

unquantifiable manner. Before the advent, adoption and spread of the waves of the use of technological gadgets in the classroom exercises, the teaching and learning processes were stressful for both teachers and learners. Technology has immensely reduced the rigors and risks that were once experienced by teachers, learners, parents, etc. on the process of lesson delivery. Both teachers and learners have the choice of anchoring and participating in the classroom activities from anywhere. Learners decide where to learn and the desired postures of their choice.

- vii. Concretization:** Technology in language teaching and learning fascinates the simplicity of all the contents that are taught in the classroom before the advent of the technological gadgets in language teaching and learning, teachers strove to use instructional materials to simplify their presentation to learners. Recently, teachers do not need the improvised instructional materials anymore because the technological gadgets already have pictures and emojis installed to support the teaching and learning enterprise. Therefore, adopting the technological equipment assists in demystifying all the difficulties surrounding any concept that exists in every content discussed in the classroom.
- viii. Complementability:** Leveraging technology in the teaching and learning of English in Nigeria does not wipe out the existence and relevance of earlier methods adopted in English language teaching and learning. rather, technology has braced up the functionality and significance of each of the methods ranging from grammar translation to eclectic approach. In consonance with this, the adoption and leveraging of technological gadgets in the teaching and learning of English language



constitute a better platform for each language method to thrive productively in Nigeria.

**ix. Connectivity:** ICT has made knowledge dissemination more accessible. Authorities in language have published their discoveries in all aspects of language studies for others (including both teachers and learners) to connect to and affirm any concept taught. In fact both learners and teachers do not need to frequently patronize the library for academic researches. In the same vein, it is possible for a teacher to teach millions of learners in a contact across the globe as a result of technological gadgets and connectivity tendencies. Currently, learning is no longer limited by space. That is, teaching and learning can take place at anywhere. Technology has removed all forms of 'uncomfortability' as often reflected in accommodation predicament.

**x. Comprehensibility:** ICT provides more elucidating versions in the teaching and learning English language. Both teachers and learners are exposed to diverse researches and discoveries which enhance better understanding of every concept taught in language study. In line with this claim, the different scholarly contributions of scholars in every language ramification have paved the way for brighter, transformative, and enduring comprehension. The conglomeration of the above points ensures comprehension wherever and whenever the teaching and learning of English language is executed via the use of technological gadgets.

Despite the immense benefits that can be obtained by leveraging information and communication technology in English teaching and learning in some selected tertiary institutions in Zaria, the process will definitely face challenges. However the challenges should not deter English educators from employing ICT in the classroom.

## Conclusion

To address the four aim and objectives earlier raised in this paper, it is quite glaring that the relevance of leveraging ICT in language and learning of English language in Nigeria cannot be underrated. The global waves into digitalization in every societal activity are prevalent and Nigeria cannot be left behind. ICT possesses its numerous and rewarding benefits as reflected in: convenience, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, concretization, consistency and comprehensibility for the teacher and the concerned learners. However, there is no development without its peculiar challenges. To this effect, the adoption and leveraging of ICT has been confronted with a series of daunting limitations as shown in physical (environmental), physiological (biological), economical, psychological, philosophical and political. It should be noted that these challenges are not abnormal but they are surmountable. Of course, transformation begins when challenges are exposed and tackled. Therefore, all the identified hindering factors can be overcome if all the concerned stakeholders – government, management, teachers, learners, parents, and society- perform their designated roles as expected in every ramification.

## Recommendations

This paper recommends the following for consideration and implementation if the teaching and learning of English language via ICT will be leveraged in Nigeria for more effective, efficient, profitable and beneficial.

- i. The government should create an enabling environment for the viability that will enhance the leveraging ICT in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria. This can be done by funding building and equipping ICT centres with computers and other

gadgets in every institution of learning across Nigeria.

- ii. The government and non-government agencies should make provision for scholarship for both teachers and learners in Nigeria and abroad. This will motivate them to put in more profitable efforts in using ICT in the teaching and learning enterprises.
- ii. The teachers should embrace the use of ICT for classroom delivery and they should be ready to undergo more training and retraining in ICT compliant programmes.
- iii. The learners should be oriented more and compelled to comply with the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria.
- iv. The parents should encourage their wards to make provision for the necessary motivation by providing for each learner's basic needs that will facilitate the teaching and learning of English via ICT in Nigeria.
- v. The society should create a peaceful atmosphere that will make both teachers and learners to persistently embrace and use ICT in language teaching and learning in Nigeria.

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