

TECHNOLOGY-BASED TOOLS FOR THE TEACHING OF ORAL ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NSUKKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the technology-based tools for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools. Three research questions guided the study. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of 43 English language teachers from all the secondary schools in the area. Two instruments were used for data collection in this study: an observational checklist and researcher-developed questionnaire titled Technology-based Tools for Oral English (TETOE). The checklist consists of 14 items with response options of available and not available while the questionnaire instrument was measured using a 4-point Likert scale. The instruments were validated by experts, one from the Measurement and Evaluation unit and two from Language Education unit from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria. The instrument was also trial tested using Cronbach's Alpha statistics and it yielded a reliability index of 0.63, showing that the instrument was reliable enough for the study. Data collected using checklists were analysed using frequencies and percentages. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering research questions two and three while percentages were used to answer research question one. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the technology-based tools are not available and by implication, not utilized in the teaching of oral English in public secondary schools in Nsukka. It was recommended among others that state ministry of education, non-governmental organizations, and other well-meaning individuals should provide public secondary schools with technology-based tools and other equipment for use by teachers for improved teaching and learning of oral English.

Keywords: English language, Oral English teaching, technology-based tools

Introduction

English language is a global language and widely used medium of instruction and communication. It has a prestigious official status and has acquired constitutionally endorsed legal right. According to Ahmadi and Lukman (2018), English language is the official language in Nigeria and medium of instruction in Nigerian schools. In Nigeria, English language is a second language and a lingua franca. This means that it is the language for communication, economy, law, press, trade and a medium of instruction in schools (Emehelu, 2016). As a language of instruction, it is a prerequisite for educational advancement and career progression in the country. The English language is studied in secondary schools as a core school subject. It is a solid foundational course at all levels of education in Nigeria. The key elements of the course are designed to cover the basic four language skills for effective communication in the language.

The four language skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening involves understanding spoken language, picking up on nuances, and comprehending meaning. Speaking requires the ability to articulate thoughts, express ideas clearly, and engage in conversations. Reading involves understanding, interpreting, and extracting meaning from a written text. Writing involves conveying thoughts, ideas, and information through written words, structuring sentences, and organizing content logically. According to Ijaduola (2017), each skill complements the others, combining to form comprehensive language proficiency. Proficiency in these skills enables effective communication and interaction in both personal and professional settings. To excel in English, one must master listening and speaking skills, which are essential communication skills. Developing strong speaking and listening skills can enhance

academic and professional success, collaboration, public speaking, conflict resolution, relationships, among others. The ability to communicate effectively in spoken English is referred to as oral English.

Oral English and spoken English are often used interchangeably, but there is a subtle difference between the two. Oral English focuses on formal spoken language, while Spoken English encompasses both formal and informal conversations. Oral English refers to the spoken aspect of the English language, encompassing pronunciation, conversation, and verbal communication skills. It involves the ability to express oneself fluently and effectively through speech in various contexts, such as discussions, presentations, and everyday interactions. Oral English, according to Okorji, (2017), also known as spoken English, is the form of English used when people speak to one another. It is the way in which the English language is transmitted through a conventional system of sounds.

The aim of oral English teaching and learning according to Egbe (2010) is to expose students to Received Pronunciation (RP) and other varieties of English for the purpose of interaction when they meet people who use such varieties. Gimson (2014) asserts that the importance of oral English is to equip one with the ability to understand educated speakers of English and also be understood by others. The importance of oral English to a learner of language has necessitated the inclusion of oral English in external examinations in Nigeria. Onuigbo (2003) maintains that oral utterances are very important in communication such that an effective speaker triumphs in other communicative skills. Improving oral English skills can be achieved through engaging in conversations, practice with native speakers, listening to English media, receiving feedback from teachers, joining English language exchange programmes, among others.

The teaching of oral English requires appropriate materials, competent teachers, and appropriate teaching methods but many secondary schools may not have all that is required for effective teaching of oral English. For Osikomaiya (2013), there is the tendency that the students sitting for oral English examination may not be adequately prepared for such exercise. Osikomaiya posits that if oral English is properly and adequately taught, the students will acquire good speaking skills. Poor performance of students in external examinations reflects the poor quality of teaching they received from incompetent teachers. Majority of English language teachers have not had the opportunity to travel to countries where English is spoken as a first language. How then can these teachers teach a foreign language they have not effectively mastered? Ugwuoke and Okolo (2016) note that poor method of instruction, incompetence of teachers, unavailability and poor utilization of instructional resources are problems facing the teaching and learning of oral English. According to Olowoye and Fasanmi (2020), the art of teaching and learning oral English in secondary schools requires the adoption of innovative instructional resources for optimum learning. Ajibo (2021) posits that many schools lagged behind in the teaching and learning of oral English as students were not exposed to authentic spoken English materials such as podcasts, videos, and interviews to develop listening comprehension skills and model natural language use.

The overall, state-of-the-art in the teaching and learning oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka is characterized by a teacher-centered approach that hardly bring meaningful communication, active engagement, and the integration of technology-based resources to enhance the learning experience. But this is not the case in many public secondary schools in Nigeria as many English language teachers are far from having that oral English modeling status. The teaching of oral English requires teachers who are proficient in the language to serve as good models for the students to emulate. The teaching of oral English cannot be effective if teachers are incompetent in the adoption of technology-based tools for effective teaching. It has become pertinent for oral English teachers at all levels of education to embrace technology as a viable option for teaching oral English. Technology-based tools simplify complex areas of oral English such as intonation, stress, and rhythm where textbooks prove

ineffective. These tools provide learners with firsthand benefits of learning oral English as it is spoken and taught by teachers who are native speakers or experts in the language.

Technology-based tools refer to software, hardware, and other digital resources used to support learning, enhance productivity, improve efficiency, streamline processes and facilitate communication. Technological tools enhance effective curriculum delivery and promote educational excellence. Some of these tools include computers, smart boards, projectors, software applications, virtual reality, digital resources, among others. Classroom teachers can leverage technology-based tools to teach oral English in various ways. Some of such ways include using audio-video recordings like VoiceThread or Vocaroo to record and share audio and video clips for pronunciation practice and feedback; exploiting applications like Duolingo to access interactive speaking exercises and activities; tapping into websites like English Central or BBC learning English for authentic listening and speaking materials; using video conferencing tools like Google Classroom, Zoom or Skype for online discussions and conversations; using interactive whiteboards; organizing virtual role plays using virtual reality to practice conversations in real-life scenarios; connecting students with native English speakers through platforms like Tandem, among others. These technology-based tools are capable of enhancing oral English instruction, making it more engaging, accessible and effective. Mayantao and Tantiado (2024) argue that technological resources not only maintain students' interest in learning, but they also activate other senses. According to Ahmadi (2018), the incorporation of technology offers opportunities for students to complete assignments utilizing technology rather than conventional method of using textbook, paper and pen. Technology-based tools offer many benefits in oral English teaching and learning. However, these tools are not devoid of challenges. Some researchers have shown in their studies that technological tools are not readily accessible for teachers in schools. Some noted that when these technological resources are available, some teachers are not competent in utilizing them in the teaching of oral English. It is against this background that this study investigated technology-based tools for the teaching of oral English in public secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. Technology-based tools available for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools.
2. Extent the available technology-based tools are utilized for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools.
3. Impacts of technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the technology-based tools available for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools?
2. To what extent are the technology-based tools utilized for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools?
3. What are the impacts of technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The reason for the choice of this design is that descriptive survey design aims at collecting data from a particular population through the use of questionnaire and analyzing data collected for the purpose of generalizing the findings to the entire population. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey research design is a purposed-based category of survey research that aims at collecting data and describing in a sequential and systematic manner the attributes of a specific population. The study was conducted in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State., Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the 43 English language teachers in the 32 secondary schools in the area.

There was no sampling as the population was considered manageable for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection in this study: an observational checklist and researcher developed questionnaire titled Technology-based Tools for Oral English (TETOE). The checklist consists of 14 items with response options of available and not available. The questionnaire consists of two parts: parts A and B. Part A elicits information on the biodata of the respondents. Part B consists of two clusters. Cluster one contains 14 items while cluster two contains 12 items designed to answer research questions two and three respectively. The instruments were face validated by three experts: two experts were from English language unit and one expert from the Measurement and Evaluation unit, all from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The corrections made by the experts were effected before the final version of the checklist and questionnaire instruments were produced for data collection. Copies of the instrument were given to three research assistants who observed the schools to get firsthand information on the available technological tools in the schools. Data collected using checklists were analysed using frequencies and percentages. For the questionnaire instrument, mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions. The response options for the questionnaire were: Strongly Agree/Very High Extent (4 points); Agree/High Extent (3 points); Disagree/Low Extent (2 points); and Strongly Disagree/Very Low Extent (1 point). The criterion mean for the checklist was 50% while that of the questionnaire was 2.50.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the available technology-based tools for the teaching of oral English?

Table 1: Percentages of technology-based tools available for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools.

S/N	Item Statement	A (%)	NA (%)	Decision
1	Interactive whiteboard	44.2%	55.8%	NA
2	Public Address System	53.8%	46.2%	A
3	WhatsApp	9.6%	90.4%	NA
4	E-mail	15.4%	84.6%	NA
5	Zoom	5.6%	94.4%	NA
6	Google Docs	23.1%	76.9%	NA
7	Internet	5.8%	94.2%	NA
8	Projectors	14.4%	85.6%	NA
9	Smartphone	23.1%	76.9%	NA
10	Recorded tapes	17.3%	82.7%	NA
11	Motion pictures	14.4%	85.6%	NA
12	Computer	50.5%	49.5%	A
13	Television	76.9%	23.1%	A
14	YouTube	44.2%	55.8%	NA
Grand Percentage		28.4%	71.6%	NA

Key: A= Available; NA= Not Available

Table 1 shows the technology-based tools available for the teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. It indicates that items 2, 12 and 13 had percentages of 53.8, 50.5 and 76.9 respectively. The benchmark for availability of any item is 50% and above. Since percentages of these items are above the percentage benchmark for availability, it shows that the technology-based tools available for the teaching and learning of Oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State include public address system, computers, and television. On the other hand, the percentage points for interactive whiteboard, WhatsApp, E-mail, Zoom, Google Docs, internet, projectors, Smartphone, recorded tapes, motion pictures, and YouTube

are below the 50 percent benchmark for decision making, which suggests that they are not available. The overall percentage availability of 28.4% indicates that most of the technology-based tools for the teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools are not available.

Research Question 2: To what extent are the technology-based tools utilized for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses on the extent available technology-based tools are utilized for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	S.D	Decision
15	Interactive whiteboard	1.94	1.03	LE
16	Public Address System	2.77	1.02	HE
17	WhatsApp	1.71	0.74	LE
18	E-mail	1.59	0.77	LE
19	Zoom	1.71	0.89	LE
20	Google Docs	1.63	0.81	LE
21	Internet	2.02	0.65	LE
22	Projectors	1.90	0.97	LE
23	Smartphone	2.01	1.09	LE
24	Recorded tapes	1.67	1.13	LE
25	Motion pictures	2.06	0.69	LE
26	Computer	2.55	0.78	HE
27	Television	2.78	0.49	HE
28	YouTube	2.38	0.61	LE
Grand Mean		2.05	0.83	LE

Key: LE-Low Extent; HE-High Extent

Table 2 indicates the respondents' opinions on the extent available technology-based tools for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. The result showed that items 2, 12 and 13 had mean rating of 2.77, 2.55 and 2.78 with standard deviation of 1.02, 0.78 and 0.49 respectively. Since the mean score is above the 2.50 benchmark mean for decision taking, it suggests that the respondents are of the opinion that technology-based tools such as public address system, mobile computer and television are utilized to a high extent in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. The overall mean value of 2.05 which is below the 2.50 acceptance benchmark indicates that most of the listed technology-based tools are utilized to a low extent in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Research Question 3: What are the impacts of technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the impacts of technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
29	Technology-based tools improve students' retention of the learning material	3.40	0.49	Accepted
30	They help concretize abstract concepts for the students	3.07	0.83	Accepted
31	They promote better understanding for personality development	2.92	0.72	Accepted

32	They extend the range of experience previously available to learners	3.55	0.50	Accepted
33	They enhance interest of students, leading to an improved academic performance of students	3.34	0.65	Accepted
34	They make oral English course materials easily available for students	3.01	0.49	Accepted
35	They make teaching and learning easier for the teachers	2.97	0.83	Accepted
36	They make the teacher improve in oral English exercises	2.72	0.72	Accepted
37	They make learning interesting and meaningful to students	2.55	0.50	Accepted
38	Students love to perform tasks when technology-based materials are involved	2.84	0.65	Accepted
39	Hands-on experience of oral English concept using technology-based materials make students interested in oral English	3.05	0.82	Accepted
40	They give students the confidence to perform excellently well in examinations.	3.09	0.56	Accepted
Grand mean		3.04	0.65	Accepted

Table 3 reveals the opinion of respondents on the impacts of technology-based tools in the teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. The result indicates that items 15-26 had mean rating of 3.40, 3.07, 2.92, 3.55, 3.34, 3.01, 2.97, 2.72, 2.55, 2.84, 3.05 and 3.09 respectively. Since the mean values of the items are above the 2.50 bench mark mean value for decision making, it implies that the respondents are of the opinion that the impacts of technology-based tools in the teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State include: improving students' academic performance, helping students understand abstract and difficult concepts better by making them concrete, promoting better understanding for personality development, extending the range of experience previously available to learners, enhancing retentive memory, making oral English course materials easily available for students, making the teaching of oral English easier, making the teacher improve in oral English exercises, making learning interesting and meaningful to students, makes students confident and perform excellently well in examinations, among others. Also, the grand mean value of 3.04 which is above the benchmark mean value of 2.50 used for decision making indicates that respondents agree to all the items on table three above as impacts of technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Discussions

The study found that the technology-based tools available for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State include public address system, television and computer. This finding of low availability of technology-based tools is in line with Enemuo, Anyaduba and Ezeaka (2019) who found that technology-based tools are not usually available for teaching in secondary schools. On the contrary, Aminu (2018) revealed that the technological resources for teaching are adequate, but the extent of their utilization is low. Schools may have limited financial resources to acquire a wide range of these technology-based tools, leading to a reliance on readily available and affordable options like public address system, television and computer. The implication of this finding is that teachers may be willing and competent to use technology-based tools, but these resources are not adequately available in schools for the teaching of oral English, leaving them handicapped.

The study also found that technology-based tools are utilized to a low extent in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu

State. This is an indication that teachers utilize only the available technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English. The findings are in support of Aminu (2018) who reports that technological materials for teaching are adequate, but the extent of their utilization is low. Also in corroboration, Mannir (2016) reported that the few available technological materials have not been effectively and judiciously utilized. However, Akram, Sufiana and Malik (2012) reported that teachers utilize instructional materials for effective teaching in senior secondary schools. This finding is an indication that these technological tools are not availability for teachers to adequately utilize them in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools. Also, teachers may not have received adequate training or support to effectively integrate technology-based tools in their teaching. Schools may also lack the necessary technical or infrastructural support (e.g., interactive whiteboard, E-mail, Google Docs, projectors, YouTube, Zoom, Recorded tapes, among others) to utilize technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English.

The study also found that the impact of technology-based tools in the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State include improving students' retention, helping students understand abstract concepts, promoting better understanding for personality development, extending the range of experience previously available to learners, among others. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Akram, Sufiana and Malik (2012) who reported that technology-based tools in teaching prove very effective as they increase the level of interest and enhance motivation for learning in students. This finding corroborates the findings of Enemu, Anyaduba and Ezeaka (2019) who reported that using technological resources in teaching has positive effects on students' academic performance. The implication of this study is that technology-based tools have multifaceted impacts on the teaching of Oral English in secondary schools. These tools facilitate teaching and learning by providing teachers with additional resources and tools to support their instruction.

Conclusion

From the findings, this study concludes that technology-based tools are not available and utilized for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Impacts of these technological tools on oral English teaching were discussed. Since these technologies offer a lot of benefits, it is important to make them available so that teachers can utilize them in oral English teaching.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. The state ministry of education, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders should provide schools with technology-based tools for teaching oral English. Additionally, the government should prioritize funding for these tools and ensure their equitable distribution across schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.
2. The Ministry of Education and school administrators should provide teachers with adequate training, technical support, and professional development opportunities to enable effective utilization of technology-based tools in teaching oral English. Schools should also ensure proper monitoring and supervision of teachers to promote the consistent and effective use of these tools.
3. Curriculum planners should integrate technology-based tools into the oral English curriculum to maximize their impact on teaching and learning. Furthermore, school administrators should implement security measures to safeguard these tools, ensuring their sustainability and continued use in improving oral English teaching.

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