LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND DIGITAL LITERACY: ASSESSING VIEWING AND REPRESENTING AS LANGUAGE SKILLS

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ABSTRACT: *This study focused on an assessment of the viewing and representing skills of English language teachers in public and private secondary schools in Ekiti state. This study adopted the descriptive research of the survey type. A multistage procedure was used in randomly selecting four hundred and eighty English language teachers from thirty public secondary schools and thirty private secondary schools in Ekiti state. The research instrument was a self-structured questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using weighted mean, percentages, frequency counts and standard deviation. Results obtained revealed that English language teachers' basic knowledge in viewing and representing icons without text labels were moderately low with the mean scores of 1.9 and 2.0 respectively. A weighted mean of 2.50 revealed an average level of teachers' ability in deciphering icons with text labels. Mean scores of 1.9 and 1.8 were adjudged as very low for teacher's ability in viewing and representing Google Meet icons respectively.*
KEYWORDS: Language teachers, digital literacy, viewing, representing, skills

INTRODUCTION

With the discovery of the Covid-19 pandemic in February 27, 2020 in Nigeria, most educational institutions were confronted with the arduous task of teaching while the Lockdown was being enforced. Similarly, during the advent of Covid-19 pandemic. a significant number of citadels of learning in Nigeria began to consider digitalizing the teaching and learning process in spite of the seemingly unpreparedness of teacher and learner. In the same vein, the non-digital strategies and methods of teaching in schools gradually began to evolve in to virtual instruction. Consequently, teachers needed to adapt their teaching strategies in imparting relevant skills.

The relevance of education in the development of nations have been hinged on its impact on socio-political, economic and educational spheres of individual and collective lives.

In this instance, various international and national agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to mention a few, have shown substantial concern in ensuring teachers attain globally accepted standards across all facets of education comprising pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. This is evidenced in the numerous clarion calls for a digital adaption process involving utilization of digital instruction strategies such as computer-based resources in relevant soft skills in learners.

Generally, digital devices have metamorphosed in to efficient teaching and learning alternatives for improving speaking skill development in the present global context (Pieter & Bas, 2010, Akinwamide, 2016, Richards, 2016). With the overwhelming presence of digital teaching and learning resources at the language teachers' disposal, substantial effort in the direction of digital literacy cannot be overemphasized. In the case of language teaching, Egbe (2019) states that teachers now have to become familiar with appropriate language skills considered relevant to the evolving trend of events. A considerable number of state governments in Nigeria are encouraging teachers to attain digital literacy which includes the ability to view and represent information in digital space. For instance, state governments in Lagos, Ekiti and Ondo states, through their respective Ministries of Education, organized periodical digital literacy workshops for language teacher's re-orientation towards developing necessary language skills other than the usual four language skills. Hence, teaching with the support of soft skills and accompanying digital pedagogy suitable for a covid-19 pandemic situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a world where education systems are being revolutionized with the immense influx of digital instructional tools, English language teachers were confronted with the task of adapting to the paradigm shift from analog to digital mode of instruction. According to Corpuz – Bullecer (2017), language skills required for teaching in a virtual environment include appropriate digital literacy skills. Corpuz – Bullecer (2017) reflects on the general opinion of educationist on the need for English language teachers to make a detour from the use of reading, writing, speaking and listening to digital skills known as viewing and representing. Donaghy (2020) recognizes viewing as the fifth language skill for communicative instruction in digital mode. Furthermore, language teachers involved in formal instruction in primary and secondary schools are expected to function as mediators between the informal and formal educational settings where the learners are either transformed, deformed or left in limbo as a consequence of the teacher's professional competence.

Digital literacy levels of English language teachers in the 21st century, coupled with the accompanying demands of a post-COVID-19 era cannot be overemphasized, especially in a period where virtual instruction appears to assume the position of an instructional cum pedagogical bridge between learners and expected learning outcomes in communicative competencies. According to Falloon (2020), digital literacy and communicative competence, to a certain extent, is one of the current 21st century literacies which involves the instructor's ability to utilize digital technologies and communication skills. Egbe (2019) opines that the sustainability of quality teacher and

language education in Nigeria, for instance, becomes essential for the communicative development of young learners in a digital immigrant environment

Towards ensuring global uniformity in teaching and learning for the benefit of all categories of learners, educationists all over the world have begun to inculcate the need for a paradigm shift towards enhancing language skills for deciphering digital images and content (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2013). In this scenario, the teacher is expected to acquire the prerequisite soft skills for formal instruction, and most importantly, digital literacy in the teaching and learning context (Babalola, 2015) and (Ofodu & Oyinloye, 2014).

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the year 2020 in Nigeria, Khoo & Churchill (2013) notice that language teachers around the world in general, had to attain appreciative levels of using and applying viewing and representing language skills in preparing instructional materials, interfacing between the digital learners in interactive mode and communicating via the digital space. In Ekiti state, a significant number of language teachers in secondary schools were confronted with the challenge of adapting the conventional language skills of reading, speaking, writing and listening to operating virtual instructional tools such as Google Meet and Google Classroom. Faloye and Olaniyan (2019) noted the abysmal low level of digital literacy of English language teachers in Ekiti state which was likely due to to the lack of digital exposure to the use of instructional applications on computer devices such as android phones and laptops.
The digital literacy of the language teachers earlier mentioned comprises the use of cognitive skills through viewing and representing the numerous icons on digital devices, of which the android phone readily comes to the fore. The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to accessible global reports on various media, perhaps, signifies an imminent rise in the number of covid-19 pandemic cases in most parts of the world. Consequently, fears are being allayed by concerned stakeholders on the further negative effect this pandemic will likely have on the education status of learners, globally, and most specifically, in Nigeria.

Research Questions.
The following research questions were generated for the study:
1. What is the level of English language teacher's basic knowledge in utilizing navigational icons without text labels to access information on multimedia?
2. What is the level of English language teacher's knowledge in utilizing navigational icons with text labels in instructional tasks?
3. What is the level of English language teacher's knowledge in navigating instruction-based icons on Google Meet?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive design of the survey type. The population of the study consisted of 1,303 English language teachers in public and private junior secondary schools in Ekiti state. Using multistage sampling procedures, a sample of 480 English language teachers were randomly selected from sixty secondary schools located in six local government areas in Ekiti state. The sample for the study consisted of 240 public

secondary school language teachers and 240 private secondary school language teachers at junior secondary school levels.

The research instrument for the study was a 15- itemed self-structured questionnaire. Digital images of relevant digital icons were affixed to appropriate items on the questionnaire. The Google Form Survey for Assessment of Digital Literacy Levels of English Language Teachers (ADLLELT) was constructed and subjected to validity and reliability tests. A degree of internal consistency of 0.88 was obtained using Spearman-Brown split-half. Data was analysed using weighted mean, frequency counts and standard deviation with SPSS.

RESULTS

General Question: What school type at junior secondary level in Ekiti State possess digitally literate language teachers?

Table 1: **English language teacher's accessibility to digital devices in public and private secondary schools.**

Type of device	Private schools (JSS)		Public schools (JSS)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Internet enabled cell phones	144	60.00	200	83.33	344	71.66
Cell phones without internet	78	32.50	33	13.75	111	23.13
Laptops	18	7.50	07	2.92	25	5.21

Table 1 showed that English language teacher's accessibility of digital devices in public and private schools. It was revealed that (83.33%) of the respondents from public schools had access to internet enabled cell phones while (60.00%) of the respondents from private schools had access to internet enabled cell phones.

It was further revealed that (13.75%) of the respondents from public schools had access to cell phones without internet while (32.50%) of the respondents from private schools had access to cell phones without internet. It was lastly shown that marginal (2.92%) of the respondents from public schools only had access to laptops while (7.50% had from private schools. Hence, public schools at junior secondary level in Ekiti State possessed digitally literate language teachers more than private schools.

Research Question 1: What is the level of English language teacher's basic knowledge in utilizing navigational icons without text labels to access information on multimedia?

Table 2: Response to the level of English language teachers' basic knowledge in utilizing navigational icons without text labels to access information on multimedia

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD
1	Viewing & utilizing refreshing icon	2.3	0.720
2	Viewing and utilizing minimizing icon	2.2	0.819
3	Viewing and utilizing the task view icon	1.9	0.808
4	Viewing and utilizing the search icon	2.0	0.837
5	Viewing and utilizing the line and paragraph spacing icon	2.2	0.914
Weighted Mean		**2.12**	

Table 2 showed the response to the level of language teacher's basic knowledge in utilizing navigational icons without text labels to access information on multimedia. It was revealed that language teachers' basic knowledge in viewing and utilizing the refreshing and minimizing icons were moderately low with the mean scores of (2.3) and (2.2) respectively.

It was further revealed that language teachers' basic knowledge in viewing and utilizing the task view and search icons were very low with the mean scores of (1.9) and (2.0) while teachers' basic knowledge in viewing and utilizing the line and paragraph spacing icon was moderately low.

Summarily, it was revealed that the level of language teacher's basic knowledge in utilizing navigational icons without text labels to access information on multimedia is moderately on the average with weighted mean of (2.12).

Research Question 2: What is the level of English language teacher's knowledge in utilizing navigational icons with text labels in instructional tasks?

Table 3: Response to the level of English language teacher's knowledge in utilizing navigational icons with text labels in instructional tasks

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD
1	Viewing and representing the upload icon with text label	2.6	0.744
2	Viewing and representing the file icon with text label	2.6	0.926
3	Viewing and representing the' sort by' icon with text labels	2.6	0.740
4	Viewing and representing the' paste' icon with text label	2.5	0.977
5	Viewing and representing the font colour icon with text labels	2.0	0.889
Weighted Mean		**2.50**	

Table 3 showed the response to the level of language teacher's knowledge in utilizing navigational icons with text labels in instructional tasks. It was revealed that language teacher's knowledge in viewing and representing the upload, file and sort by icons with text labels were averagely high with each having a mean score of (2.6).

More so, the level of English language teacher's knowledge in viewing and representing the paste icon with text label was on the average with the mean score of (2.5) while the language teacher's knowledge in viewing and representing the font colour icon with text labels was moderately low with mean score of (2.0).

Summarily, it was revealed that the level of English language teacher's knowledge in utilizing navigational icons with text labels in instructional tasks was on the average rating with weighted mean score of (2.50).

Research Question 3: What is the level of language teacher's knowledge in navigating instruction-based icons on Google Meet?

Table 4: Response to the level of English language teacher's knowledge in navigating instruction-based icons on Google Meet

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD
1	Viewing and representing the page activation icon on Google Meet	1.9	0.891
2	Viewing and representing the upload icon on Google Meet	1.8	1.005
3	Viewing and representing the volume control level icon on Google Meet	2.1	0.636
4	Viewing and representing the voice note icon on Google Meet	1.9	0.752
5	Viewing and representing the send text to participants on Google Meet	1.8	0.650
Weighted Mean		**1.90**	

Table 4 showed the response to the level of language teacher's knowledge in navigating instruction-based icons on Google Meet. It was revealed that language teacher's knowledge in viewing and representing the page activation and upload icons on Google Meet were very low with respective mean scores of (1.9) and (1.8).

It was further revealed that language teacher's knowledge in viewing and representing the volume control level, voice note as well as send text to participants on Google Meat were equally very low with mean score of (2.1), (1.9) and (1.8) respectively.

Summarily, it was revealed that the level of language teacher's knowledge in navigating instruction-based icons on Google Meet was not encouraging at all as it was very low with the weighted mean of (1.90).

DISCUSSION

From the findings of this study, a substantial number of revelations have been brought to the fore in the realm of digital literacy levels of English language teachers. Most noticeable are the assessment and unimpressive digital awareness in the use of viewing and representing as language skills in a digitally non-native context. Furthermore, results from findings of this study revealed that English language teachers showed a low level of basic knowledge in the application of viewing and representing language skills which involved recognizing and utilizing icons without text labels on their android phones and computers. This revelation could be perceived as an indication of English language teacher's inability, perhaps, to align with the paradigmatic shift from applying the four basic language skills to second language teaching to advanced language skills such as viewing abd representing. This finding aligns with the studies of Donaghy, K. (2020), Egbe (2019) and Faloye & Olaniyan (2019) which replicates the global desire for digital literacies in teaching and learning processes.

In table 2, the findings have shown a likely improvement of language teachers' ability to recognize and decipher icons linked to directional text labels. Most of these icons fall into the category of basic digital operations such as saving documents, minimizing and maximizing tasks, downloading and uploading documents and related computer tasks on Word. Furthermore, the findings showed an average level of teacher's awareness of navigational tasks on cell phones with internet connectivity in contrast to findings revealed in table 1. This significant revelation could be accounted for by the teacher's regular utilization of text-labelled icons in contexts other than formal instruction. Also, demographic data in figure 1 appears to underpin the relevance of applying viewing and representing as language skills to the level of language teachers' dexterity in digital instructional context.

Another focus of this study delves on the level of teacher's utilization of navigation icons related to the use of virtual instructional tools such as Google Classroom. The findings reflected a significantly low level of basic knowledge of relevant language skills for an active learning process. In the pre-covid-19 pandemic era, to some extent, language teachers were more likely to rely on appropriate language skills such as speaking, reading, writing and listening. However, with the advent of Covid-19 pandemic accompanied by a series of lockdown situations, there had to be a shift to virtual instruction. This instructional shift comprised training and retraining of language teachers in the utilization of digital media. Consequently, digital navigation skills comprising viewing and representing tend to fill the avarice between non-digital teacher instruction and learning outcomes in the oral English language class. However, findings from this study have revealed a very low knowledge of basic navigational skills involved in teaching with digital devices. Perhaps, this finding reflects the lack of enthusiasm on the part of stakeholders in the education sector to upgrade teachers' digital literacy.

Previous studies carried out by such as Poth (2016), Faloye &Olaniyan (2019) and (Bigné et al., (2018) are aligned to the findings of this study on the likely abysmal level of virtual instruction using Google Classroom and related virtual tools. In fact, this finding encapsulates the abysmally low level of English language teachers digital competence in public and private secondary schools in Ekiti state.

Generally, the findings of this study have attempted to establish most views of researchers about the likelihood of significant depreciation in digital quality of teachers in spite of global prescriptions for a major shift from conventional instructional skills in language teaching to a digitalized one. In line with the views of Egbe (2020) and Al-Nuaim (2012) the gap between teaching and learning English language in an ever-growing digital world, to a large extent, could be bridged through a paradigmatic tilt towards applying language skills such as viewing and representing to second language teaching and learning at various levels of education. Hence, language teacher's reliance on the familiar productive and receptive language skills within a digital paradigm may be viewed as secondary to the viewing and representing skills which is more likely to be relevant in the 21st century education system

Implications of Research and Practice.
The findings of this study underpin diverse implications for the teachers of English language in public and private secondary school education, curriculum planners and digital literacy .According to the findings of this study, the present research responds to the global call for an upgrade of teacher education in the direction of digital literacy. This will likely result in focusing on the necessary utilization of digital instructional icons for enhancing teaching and learning with more relevant language skills other than the usual four basic language skills namely speaking, reading, writing and listening.

A second vital implication of this study emanates from the finding on English language teacher's accessibility to relevant digital resources for teaching English as a second language. The disparity in teachers' accessibility to digital resources in private and public secondary schools may need to be addressed.

Finally, curriculum planners would be sensitized about the need to redesign course contents in Colleges of Education to reflect digital literacy and its impact on the teaching and learning of relevant language skills through digital means.

CONCLUSION

A number of conclusions could be derived from the findings of this study. First, English language teachers in both private and public secondary schools have shown significant interest in acquiring cellphones with internet connectivity. However, the encouraging level of language teacher's accessibility to the digital world through digital devices appears not to be replicated in its use for instructional purposes. Furthermore, the teacher's basic knowledge in the use of navigational icons (images) prove to be average considering the ease of matching some icons with the directional text labels. For icons

without text labels and relevant icons on Google Classroom, the teachers seem to be uncomfortable. The study also affirmed that majority of the language teachers were just average in applying viewing and representing skills (soft skills) in language instruction at secondary school level in Ekiti state. It can be concluded that the digital literacy level of English language teachers could be described as average in the general application of viewing and representing of skills, perhaps, as a result of being significantly unfamiliar with current globally accepted trends in second language education.

Further Research
The present study raises a number of opportunities for future research, with emphasis of language education and digital literacy. The benefits of unravelling more problems and preferring necessary solutions sequel to this study may be considered as novel in the realm of current teacher education practices.
There is the need to extend this research to all facets of education in Ekiti with the aim to update the digital literacy levels of English language teachers and lecturers. With the current global trend in education, being digital, teachers would be exposed to more relevant strategies in teaching and learning.
Lastly, this experimental study should be extended to more states in the southwestern part of Nigeria.

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