SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL PEDAGOGY IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION: PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS IN EKITI STATE GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the perception of English language teachers concerning digital pedagogy in teaching oral English in Ekiti state government Colleges. The underpinning objective encompasses a survey of teachers' perception concerning digital instructional style. This study is descriptive research of the survey type. The population of the study consisted of 78 English language teachers in Ekiti state Government Colleges. Using multistage sampling procedure, four government colleges were randomly selected comprising forty English language teachers from the four Ekiti state government colleges. Questionnaires were administered on the sample of the study. Descriptive statistics was used in analysing data. The findings of this study revealed that 65% of the teachers could distinguish between digital and conventional pedagogy while 65% experienced no significant challenges with digital pedagogy during oral English lessons. Furthermore, majority of the English language teachers admitted that students feel bored when taught oral English with charts. These findings explicate the need to sustain digital pedagogy for teaching oral English. It was recommended that English language teachers should be retrained and trained in digital skills for teaching oral English in government colleges in Ekiti state.*

KEYWORDS: sustainable, digital pedagogy, language teacher, perception, Ekiti state, government colleges**.**

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of education in the spheres of human life, in line with global perspectives, can be hinged on the sustainable development goals stated as the fourth goal in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These sustainable goals, as explicated in the UNESCO goal 4 clearly encourages various educational agencies in developing countries, in particular, to administer and develop educational programs as a means of restructuring and sustaining quality education globally (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021).

In developing and sustaining education in various countries, developed or developing as the case may be, the teachers, teaching strategies and the students comprise the focal point for attention. Concerned stakeholder have observed in various for a that the spate of poor performance of students in the three tiers of education in Nigeria, perhaps, has been a matter of great concern in the Nigerian educational context. In specific terms, students' use of spoken

English, being the language of instruction and wider use, arguably, has been viewed by scholars as endemic and below expected communicative bars. (Faloye and Obateru, 2021).

During the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria, most educational establishments were confronted with the need to shift to digital instruction. Presumably, this shift showcased myriad of challenges which included a change of pedagogy in the virtual classroom. Furthermore, in some states in Nigeria, training and retraining workshops on digital instruction were organized for the upgrading of English language teachers. In Ekiti state, governmental agencies (GO's) in collaboration with non-governmental agencies (NGO's) focused on the training of language teachers with emphasis on basic digital literacy skills.

The Millennium Development Goal project (MDG) underpins the need to assist teachers in aligning with current language teaching skills. However, manuals on training and retraining workshops for digital literacy seems to be deficient in exposing these teachers to digital pedagogy particular in the use of digital strategies in teaching oral English. In most cases, the modules for English language concentrated more on conventional methods with minimal instruction on digital pedagogy. For instance, the Millennium Development Goal project (MDGP)for English language teacher contains extensive content on basic information computer technology (ICT) with extreme minimal instruction on how to apply this digital knowledge in teaching. This is where digital pedagogy needs to support English language teachers in enhancing oral English lessons in 21st century paradigms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigeria has been ascribed the seventh position as the most populous country with diverse challenges ranging from poverty to high literacy rates, among others. Craddock, (2021) alludes to this assertion. However, concerted efforts appear to be motion at salvaging the educational system in Nigeria with government and non-governmental agencies leading the campaign. Furthermore, a significant number of educationists agree that the teachers in basic to tertiary educational levels in Nigeria cannot be ignored in the sustainability drive of education in the country. Adedoja and Abimbade (2015) notice the huge financial resources allocated to upgrading teacher education, in general and language teacher education in particular for the benefit of second language learners in schools in Nigeria. Global mandates and missions for improving education in countries such as Nigeria can be explicated in concerted efforts championed by non-governmental organizations (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization ,2021).

Nwogu, (2018) notes the efforts of state governments in some parts of Nigeria in the area of training and retraining English language teachers in the use of jolly phonics: an aspect of prosodic features of English. In the same vein, Alghonaim, (2020) lays claim to the pedagogical significance of using cartoons in teaching oral English for improving students spoken English. Specifically, Faloye and Olaniyan (2019) pinpoints the essence of arming English language teachers in government colleges with digital teaching strategies suitable for enhancing students' performance in oral English.

Research based on expected attainment of educational goals in education, with particular reference to formal instruction appears to be unimpressive (Fehintola, 2015). Formal instruction in every facet of education, perhaps, stands a better chance of realizing stated

objectives in learning through the pedagogical and communicative competence of the teachers. Nanjundaswamy et al (2021) supports the need for teachers' upgrading to the use of digital pedagogy in the teaching paradigm. Likewise, the teaching strategies employed in the classroom, to some extent, determines adequate realization of stated objectives hinged on particular subjects in the school curriculum. Most importantly, the teaching strategy, accompanied by teaching and learning tools, for oral English classes are vital in arousing students' interest the lessons enjoyable to the learners.

 In the 21st century, Language Teacher Education (LTE) symbolizes, among others, a context where teachers handling second languages such as English should be able to teach with up-to-date instructional tools while using these digital tools as a means of enhancing positive learning outcomes (Faloye, Obateru and Alonge, 2021).

Egbe, (2020) opines that research has continued to reveal a downward trend in the performance of students in oral English, to an extent, in almost all levels of education in Nigeria including the (Placeholder1) secondary school level. Also, the introduction of government colleges, formerly referred to as unity schools, in Nigerian space, appears to have insignificant impact on students' learning outcomes in oral English. This assumption may be hinged on the premise that state government should be able to provide adequate instructional and facility support to the government colleges. Unfortunately, the performance of students in oral English examinations has continually ebbed despite frantic efforts made by relevant stakeholders in education (Ekiti State Government, 2012). Definitely, something must be faulty in the educational system with reference to a probable faulty teaching technique, the teacher, the inability for teachers to transmit from conventional to digital pedagogy or a blend of these variables.

Statement of the Problem
The dwindling performance of students in oral English cannot be overlooked based on the linguistic cum communicative importance accorded it. Researchers have attempted to find a lasting solution to the poor speech habits and abysmal learning outcomes of students in oral English papers. However, these academic feats tend to persist. Hence, the problem of the study encapsulates English language teachers' inadequate deployment of digital pedagogy in teaching aspects of oral English in government colleges in Ekiti state.

Research Questions.
1. Can English language teachers clearly distinguish between digital pedagogy and conventional instruction?
2. Do English language teachers have pedagogical challenges during teaching oral English lessons?
3. My students usually show signs of boredom in a lesson devoid of digital instruction.
4. Do English language teachers possess adequate training in the utilization of digital interactive pedagogy in the oral English lesson?

METHOD

This study featured the use of descriptive design of the survey type. The population comprised 78 English language teachers in Ekiti state government colleges. Multistage

sampling technique was used in randomly selecting 40 teachers from four government colleges spanning the six senatorial districts in Ekiti. A Perception of English Language Teachers on Digital Pedagogy Questionnaire (PELTDPQ) was used in collecting data for the study. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained with Crobach's Alpha. An alpha (α) of 0.76 was obtained from the reliability test and was adjudged high enough for the study. Finally, the data retrieved from administering questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: Can English language teachers clearly distinguish between digital pedagogy and conventional instruction?

Table 1: Percentage analysis of English language teachers' perception of digital pedagogy and conventional instruction.

S/N	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
1.	I can make a clear distinction between the use of digital pedagogy and conventional Instruction	06(15%)	08(20%)	18(45%)	08(20%)

Key: SD = Strongly Agree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.
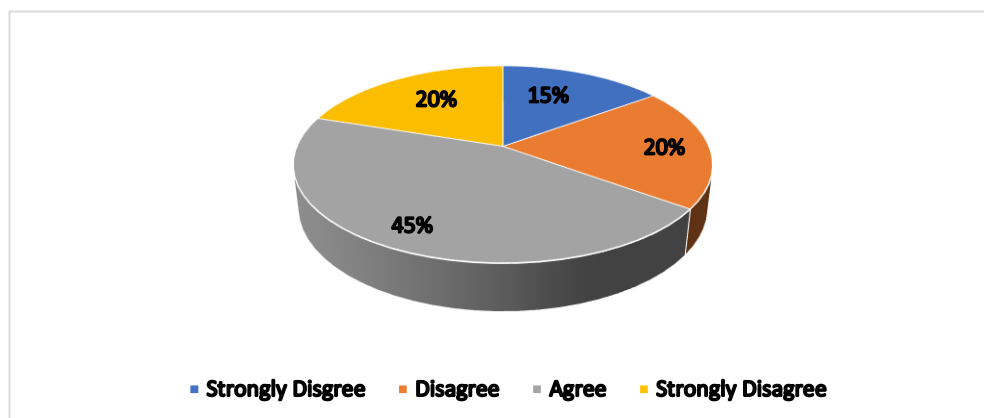

Figure1: Graphic representation teachers' perception of digital and conventional pedagogy. Source: Authors.

In table 1 and figure 1, 18(45%) of the respondents perceived that English language teachers are likely to distinguish between digital and conventional pedagogies which involves classroom exercise during oral English lessons. Also, 8(20%) of the respondents opine that English language teachers should be able to differentiate between the use of digital and conventional pedagogy while 06(15%) perceive that teachers handling oral English lessons are likely to have challenges in distinguishing between digital and conventional pedagogies of teaching oral English. Therefore, it can be deduced from the findings that a significant

number of English language teachers in Ekiti state government colleges seem to be attuned to the application of digital technology in oral English lesson.

Research Question 2: Do English language teachers have pedagogical challenges during teaching oral English lessons?

Table 2: Percentage analysis of English language teachers' perception of pedagogical

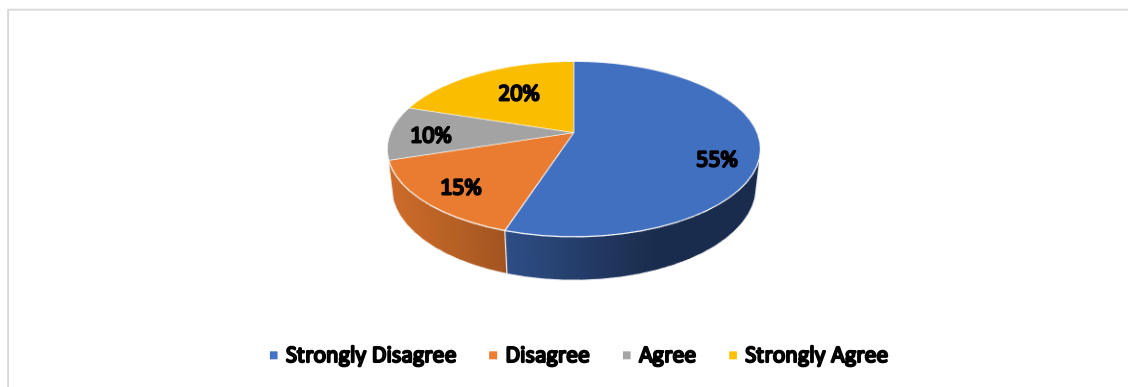| S/N	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
challenges					
1.	I confront challenges in applying digital technology to my oral English lessons	22(55%)	06(15%)	04(10%)	08(20%)

Figure 2: Graphic representation of English language teachers' perception of pedagogical

Table 2 and figure 2 revealed that 22(55%) of the respondents signified that English language teachers' seldom have challenges in using digital pedagogy in teaching oral English. Furthermore, 6(15%) of the respondents were of the view that teachers in charge of oral English lessons seem to be comfortable with the use of digital pedagogy while a total of 12(30%) of the respondents perceived that English language teachers are likely to face pedagogical challenges in using digital pedagogy during oral English lessons in Ekiti state government colleges.

Research Question 3: Do students usually show signs of boredom in a lesson devoid of digital teaching strategies.

Table 3: Percentage analysis of English teachers' perception of students' interest in digital teaching strategies.

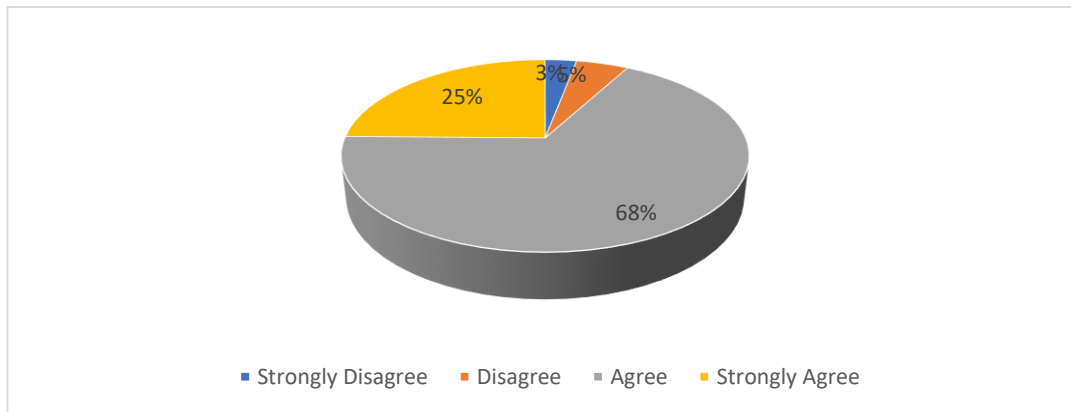| S/N	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
1.	My students usually show signs of boredom in a lesson devoid of digital teaching strategies	01(3%)	02(5%)	27(68%)	10(25%)

Figure 3: Graphic representation of teachers' perception of students' attitude towards digital and conventional pedagogies. Source: Authors.

Table 3 and Figure 3 revealed that 27(68%) of the respondents perceived that students appeared to prefer the use and application of digital pedagogy in teaching oral English. Similarly, 10(25%) of the respondents agreed that students are likely to prefer digital pedagogy during teaching and learning oral English. Consequently, the findings reflect the yearning for the use of digital teaching strategies as a replacement for the usual conventional methods in the interest of students in Ekiti state government colleges.

Research Question 4: Do English language teachers possess adequate training in the utilization of digital interactive pedagogy in the oral English lesson?
Table 4: Percentage analysis of English language teachers' perception of exposure to digital

S/N	Statements	SD	D	A	SA
	pedagogy training workshops				
1.	English language teachers are adequately trained in the utilization of digital pedagogy for use in oral English lessons.	9(22.5%)	21(52%)	3(8%)	7(18%)

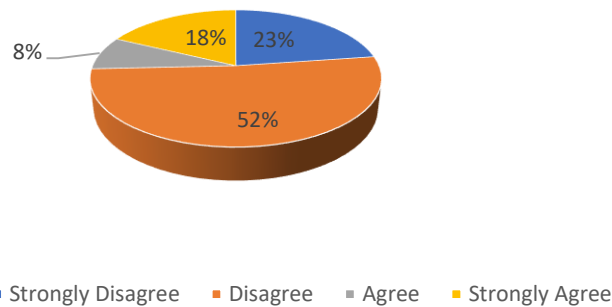■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Disagree   ■ Agree   ■ Strongly Agree

Figure 4: Graphic representation of English language teachers' perception of exposure to digital and conventional workshops. Source: Authors.

Table 4 and figure 4 revealed that 9(22.5%) and 21(52.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that English language teachers received adequate training in the use of digital pedagogy in oral English lessons. Conversely, a total of 26 (25%) were of the view that their colleagues received adequate exposure to digital training in pedagogy for teaching oral English. Hence, the findings in this section of the study suggests inadequate training and retraining of English language teachers in utilising digital strategies of teaching oral English in Ekiti state government colleges. Furthermore, it is likely most English language teachers in these government colleges seem deprived of exposure to digital pedagogy in teaching a practical-oriented subject such as oral English.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal the current pedagogical scenario prevalent in language teacher education in government colleges in Ekiti state. In a global and digital age, educators all around the globe expect a significant paradigm shift from teacher-centred instruction, including analogue instructional aids, to a more digitalized learner-friendly pedagogy. In line with this thought, the findings of this study show positive alignment to the digital awareness of English language teachers in government-sponsored government colleges. These digital pedagogies include replacing or blending the use of charts, white boards, teaching manuals with cartoons, animation packages, digital audiovisuals of native English speakers, to mention a few. Therefore, the findings of this study included a general perception of language teachers of an impressive level of teachers' ability to distinguish between the passive and digital active styles of teaching oral English.

The findings in this study also displays a favourable view of teachers in respect to possible challenges in applying digital pedagogy to various aspects of oral English. To most language educators, perhaps, this finding signal hope in the realm of language teacher education, on the one hand, and the possibility of surmounting mutating challenges usually associated with operational bottle necks on the other. However, this finding is not aligned with the study of

Faloye, Obateru and Alonge (2021) that noted some inabilities of government to support language teacher education with relevant and well-timed training programmes.

The inculcation of interactive and digital pedagogy in the oral English lesson requires the cooperation between teacher and student. In this sense, the findings of this study reveal the perception of English language teachers on the necessity for arousing the interest of the students during teaching of practical-oriented aspects of oral English. Quite a number of studies have endorsed the fact that positive attitude to learning usually produces positive learning outcomes. This finding is congruent with the study of Wesley (2012) that supports the impact of students' positive attitude to interactive instruction.

Implication to Research and Practice
The findings of this study underpin various implications for sustaining digital pedagogy in language teacher education in developing countries. In Nigeria, for instance, the study points in the direction of instructional realignment in the teaching of oral English with digital technology rather than the use of teacher -centred instruction.

The fourth sustainable development goal encourages the development of teachers in various subject areas. This study is expected to buttress the need to upgrade the language teacher in digital learner-friendly strategies of teaching oral communicative skills.
Finally, the findings of this study would enlighten the state government on the benefits of funding and supporting English language teachers towards attaining an appreciable level of digital literacy.

CONCLUSION

The significant impact, and perhaps interest, of state governments on the professional quality of language teacher education in government colleges could be traced to the encouraging perception of English language teachers on the need for a shift from conventional instruction to digital pedagogy for teaching oral English in government secondary schools in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The implication of this assertion appears to reflect readiness of English language teachers to embark on digital strategies of teaching oral English while hoping relevant and adequate avenues are provided for upgrading teaching in government colleges in Nigeria as a whole. Somewhat, this possible shift to digital technology utilization in the Oral English lesson is expected, to some extent, minimize pedagogical challenges in the teaching and learning context involving oral English. This concluding assertion tends to summarise the general findings of this study.

Future Research
This study cannot be conclusive in its present state. There is the dire need to delve in to research involving private and public secondary schools in Ekiti state. This step would ensure a realistic benchmark is set for all English language teachers in secondary schools in Ekiti state.

Lastly, it is suggested that further research should encapsulate virtual pedagogy for the teaching of oral English in secondary schools. With the advent of the fourth wave of Covid-

19 pandemic, further research on the use of virtual instruction becomes pertinent in sustaining effective pedagogy for teaching in general, and oral English in particular.

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