THE USE OF MOBILE PHONE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Abstract *This paper explores the potential of smartphones in enhancing English language teaching and learning in colleges of education. It discusses the benefits and provides practical examples of utilizing smartphones by English language teachers, which include accessibility, student engagement, active student participation at all stages of lesson delivery, hands-on learning, easy understanding, and increased flexibility. The paper also examines the challenges and limitations of using smartphones in language teaching and learning, such as distractions, internet problems, the cost of data, and unequal access to technology. Based on a review of existing literature and empirical studies, the study proposes effective and workable strategies for integrating smartphones into English language instruction, like the use of mobile apps and collaborative learning activities. This study therefore considered the implications for educators and policymakers seeking to leverage technology to improve language learning outcomes across tertiary institutions in the country. Thus, it recommends that English language teachers should be given specific ICT training; deliberate policies that would make it compulsory to use mobile devices in teaching and learning in colleges of education should be stressed in the Minimum Standard.*

Keywords: Mobile Phone, English Language, Teaching, and Learning, Colleges of Education

Introduction

In the present day, both teachers and students in colleges of education across the country do come to classrooms with different kinds of mobile phones, but they scarcely use them as learning tools. Indeed, at the beginning, possession of smartphones or any type of phone in and around classrooms was usually frowned upon by teachers and other educationists. When students started to bring phones to schools, teachers were fairly united in their opposition to the devices on the grounds that they were distractions and means for easy cheating, means of encouraging laziness and means of promoting examination malpractices (Owoicho & Nnwadozie, 2022). In addition, teachers seemed not to be confident in the use of e- learning devices in the course of their teaching and learning as opined by Vonorsdale (2019). However, a surprising twist of thought now is the clarion call by experts in the field of education encouraging teachers to incorporate smart phones as learning tools in their teaching and learning activities in and outside classrooms. On that note, Navidima & Bidakin (2016), Russell & Norvig (2020) are of the opinion that the use of smart phones is gradually becoming a compelling pedagogy that greatly enhances teaching and learning. This current pressures mounted on teachers by educational institutions, organizations, curriculum delivery experts and linguists to fully utilize opportunities offered by prevailing technology in every sphere of our life to diversify their methodologies and approaches in teaching and learning processes is gaining momentum, as opined by Chhabra (2012). The Nigerian National Policy on Education 2013; Okebe 2016; and Ahmad 2018). Equally, Navidinia, Badaki & Hekmai (2016), contributing to the relevance of technology in the field of education, reiterated that since the spread of technology has influenced different aspects of human life, teaching and l

earning should fully embrace it.

In furtherance of the above call, many youths nowadays, including students in colleges, live all t heir lives in a mobile phone-based society; they are active users of this device. They use it to co mmunicate with their friends, play computer games, take pictures, and use the internet to listen t o popular music and read news. They are familiar with the various apps like WhatsApp, YouTu be, Twitter, Blog, Zoom, TikTok, and other sites. Therefore, they expect their educational instit utions to "get on with it," a smooth continuity or building on their previous experience. To subst antiate this observation, the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), the regulatory body saddled with the responsibility of regulating telecommunication matters in Nigeria, says that 'a ctive users of GSM' in the country have 'increased from 184 million in December, 2019, to 199. 3 million in May, 2020. This means that by the end of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025, it is esti mated that the number of users would have increased to 200 million.

Interestingly, the youths within the age brac ket of 16-25 years, who are mostly students of higher institutions, constitute more than 60% of t hese users. The number of smartphone users in Nigeria is expected (is forecasted) to grow to ov er 150 million by the end of 2025, amounting to 66% (NCC, 2024). This development justifies why smartphones need to become an inevitable tool in teaching and learning in our tertiary institutions, including colleges of education. The presence of smartphones in our daily life is so alarming that there are claims all over the internet that 'there are more smartphones than people on Earth.' Kacetl and Klimova (2019), opine that, 'at present, hardly any younger person can im agine life without mobile techniques, as they use them on daily basis.' Invariably, these younger persons bring phones to classrooms for different purposes other than classroom uses.

In addition, the syllabus or course contents of English language courses in colleges of education place much emphasis on students' ability to communicate intelligibly. That is, they are expected to 'communicate and be communicated with' comprehensibly by bot h native and non-native users of English in oral and written forms (NCE, Minimum Standard; N ational Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012). In view of this, it has become essential to incorporate modern technology tools in all language activities as enshrined in the National Educ ation Policy (NPE, 2012). An overvie w of the English language curriculum (Minimum Standard for Colleges of Education, 2012) des igned for students in colleges of education showed that four strategic components of language t eaching received prominence; they include grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategi c competences. These components provide opportunities for students to acquire the ability to co nvey and internalize information or ideas correctly in both written and spoken forms and presen t them explicitly in relation to the social systems in any particular field of discussion. It is design ed in line with the four language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Theoretical Framework

This paper draws inspiration from the work of Mayer (2010), known as the multimedia theory i n teaching and learning, which stresses the role of multimedia in teaching and learning. Accord ing to the theory (Mayer 2010), multimedia learning involves both verbal and visual forms of in ternalizing information. The theory is founded on three core postulations, which state that there are two separate and important channels (auditory and visual) for processing information and th at the capacity of the channels is unlimited. It further explains that learning is an active process of filtering, selecting, organizing, and integrating information; therefore, people learn more dee ply from words and pictures. And that words and graphics are more conducive to learning than j ust texts or graphics. Graphics could be static pictures, animation, or video but should always be relevant to the word on the page. Condruz-Bacescu (2014) explains the basic premise of multi media learning is that learners can learn more deeply from words and pictures than they can fro m just words alone. As a result, the learner can use more cognitive processing avenues to study

materials that combine verbal information with visual graphic information than processing mat erials that combine printed (visual) text with visual graphical information. This means that mult imedia materials tend to reduce the cognitive load usually imposed on memory.
Studies conducted by Mayer and his associates (Mayer and Mayer 2012) also indicate that stude nts who learn through multimedia with animation and narration do better in terms of learning th an those who learn from animation and text-based materials. With the advancement in technolo gy, multimedia theory tends to emphasize the use of visual and auditory materials, which includ e computers, smartphones, and other information and technology devices that allow users to be active participants rather than spectators in all learning processes. The theory emphasizes that the best approach to tackle learning is through a 'hands-on approach,' which is a pragmatic appr oach to learning. According to Cole & Jordan (2023), John Dewey (a renowned philosopher an d proponent of pragmatism) stated that the mission of education is for living. And that minds ar e not 'passively observing the world; rather, they are actively adopting, experimenting, and inn ovating ideas.' Thus, the use of multimedia learning tools like computers and smartboards is a 'hands-on' pedagogy and problem-solving-based learning using modern information and com munication devices. It is a modern innovation in education in general and teaching and learning in particular. And for one to live meaningfully in today's globalized world, vast knowledge of I CT is essentially required. It enables learners at all stages of the entire learning process to have opportunities to fully and actively participate (Etoneaku, 2013; Gluchmanvova, 2014; Gupa, 20 14).

Mobile Phones/Smartphones

Mobile phones are also known as cell phones or hand phones and are usually portable. Users uti lize it to make and receive calls and send and receive text messages. Mobile phones also have so me basic features like calendars and calculators with a keyboard or keypad and a screen.
A smartphone is a more advanced type of mobile device; it combines the features of a mobile ph one with those of a computer. It offers a wide range of capabilities and functions, which include, among others:

i. Touch screen interface
ii. Internet access
iii. Apps
iv. Camera
v. Multimedia capabilities.

In summary, smartphones are handy devices used for communication, information access, activity, and productivity. They enable users to make calls, send text messages, browse the inter net, access apps, and much more. In terms of teaching and learning, smartphones offer a wide ra nge of uses, such as accessing educational materials/content, facilitating collaboration, and enh ancing learning experiences and output.
Indisputably, smartphones are 'everywhere in every life' with unique features and applications; they are multimedia devices that provide enormous opportunities to our present-day activities, i ncluding teaching in general and teaching English as a second language in particular. However, it has been observed that despite the fact that smartphones are the commonest among multimedi a tools, they are the most neglected by teachers. They have not reasonably taken advantage of their affordability and availability in utilizing them for teaching and learning.

Application of Smartphones in English language Teaching and Learning

Researchers (Cain, 2012; Xie & Zhang, 2012; Petal, 2013; Pourhossein & Sabouri, 2017; Ahmadi, 2018) reiterated that by incorporating smartphones into English language learning, stu dents can access a wide range of resources, practice their skills, and engage in activities such as

vocabulary building, listening and speaking, reading, writing and comprehension, and grammar, among others.

YouTube

The use of YouTube videos in an English language class is capable of enhancing the teaching a nd learning of various aspects of the language, such as vocabulary development, accents, pronu nciations, voice modulation, and expressions, among others. Chhabra (2012) emphatically state s that "the real advantage of using YouTube in teaching English is that it offers authentic examp les of everyday English" people use. The teacher can use it as a tool to improve the four languag e skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Practically, the teacher can select a pa rt of the movie appropriate to the level of the students and show movie clips to them. First, the te acher can mute the volume and ask the students to watch the movie attentively and then later as k them to watch it for time. After the second watching, he asks them to frame from the movie cli ps. This will definitely improve their speaking skills. Students' speaking skills can be enhanced when the teacher selects part of the movie and asks students to narrate the rest of the story. This will enrich their creativity and speech. Other uses of YouTube in an English class may include preparing worksheets on the movie clippings in advance and asking students to complete those worksheets while watching movies. This is a good activity capable of improving their listening and writing skills simultaneously. Students can also be asked to write a paragraph or paragraphs related to the movie or summarize news after watching it on YouTube.

Twitter

Twitter, a social networking site that relies on micro-blogging for communication, could help in many ways in improving students' communicative competence. According to Tervell (2016), t he teacher can use dozens of activities to teach various aspects of English. The teacher or instruc tor can select any genre of story and begin the activity with a story opener, which is tweeted to t he students for contribution to the storyline. Once all Twitter network participants have contrib uted to the development of the storyline, the teacher can analyze their work. This involves editin g, story structure, creative writing, proper use of grammar, and mechanical accuracy.

Students can also be asked to select a word of the week and tweet it around the network, requesti ng synonyms, homonyms, and antonyms of the word. Once all responses are received, the teach er can check them for accuracy and develop a list of the difficult words for intensifying the voca bulary of the students. An online debate can also be created through Twitter. Here, the teacher o rganizes a debate or quiz with the students of the same class or different class on class Twitter n etwork. The debate could be on school, local, national, or international issues depending on the level of the students.

Podcasting

A Podcasting is a series of digital-media files which are distributed over the internet using syndi cation feeds for playback on portable media players and computers. Utilizing podcasting in an English class is not difficult. Milian(2016) emphasized that there are many free teaching Englis h as a second language podcasts on the internet ready to be used. The teacher can assign a podca st assignment for homework and form a discussion on the topic the next day. The teacher can eq ually assign a music podcast that introduces students to the culture of the language. In this way, the sociolinguistic competency of students, a major part of communicative competence, is enha nced. In addition, podcasts provide opportunities for students to learn intonation and stress.

Blog

A blog, which is a shortening of "weblog," is a discussion of an informational website publishe d on the World Wide Web (www) consisting of discrete, often informal-style text entries (posts). Posts are typically displayed in reverse chronological order so that the most recent post appears first at the top of the web page. Blogs are a great way to share information and generate discussion (Chen & Liu, 2017). Nowadays blogs display photos, which can be used with audio and video. This means that language teachers (particularly English) can take advantage of this t

o teach speech work, reading, and writing. Photos and short film clips can be displayed for stude nts to watch and write short essays or comments on. Students should be encouraged to post their writing homework on the blog instead of only giving it to the teacher.
In the process of teaching reading comprehension, the teacher, in collaboration with the class, needs to provide contextual clues that can lead to the main idea. Using a smartphone, an overvie w of a text can be shown on the screen. Pictures and illustrations in the text can also be viewed. With these pictures and illustrations, students can predict the message of the text by combining pictures/drawings/illustrations and words.
The software and hardware of smartphones have the full capacity for teaching previewing as a r eading strategy. An overview of a whole reading material can be achieved within a few seconds or minutes by scrolling 'page up' or 'page down' on the screen. With the proper manipulation, t he reader can rapidly glance through the entire text and take note of the most important points. T his can be effectively done in seconds.
The main ideas in the text can also be marked by bolding, underlining, italicizing, or use of asterisks and printing out. In these ways, it becomes easier for the reader to successfully grasp t he overall impression of the entire text within a very short period of time. Thus, it helps the read er in developing awareness of the main points and details that need to be selected. There are also software programs on how to practice previewing as a reading strategy that are self-tutored, whi ch students can use to improve their skills, making the teacher play the role of guidance and the students act as facilitators.
Grammar apps like Duolingo can be used for grammar activities such as grammar games, how t o identify and correct errors, grammar quizzes, and grammar scavenger hunts. In a grammar sca venger hunt, students find and identify grammatical structures in real-life contexts. Thus, by inc orporating smartphones into grammar instruction, teachers can create engaging, interactive, and student-centered learning experiences.

Challenges

The use of smartphones in the teaching and learning of various English language courses in coll eges of education would obviously pose some challenges. Some of these challenges include:
How can we ensure that the content learning is as deep as it would be if courses were delivered with smartphones? Are teachers adequately knowledgeable in the use of mobile devices for teac hing and learning? Effective use of smartphones largely depends on the availability of internet s ervices and power; it has been observed that many higher institutions in the country lack these e ssential facilities (Etonyeaku, 2013). Other challenges are students' ability to afford smartphones and the cost of data.
These challenges can be surmounted if English language teachers embark on self- and sponsore d trainings and collaborate with college authorities and parents in the provision of the needed fa cilities.

Conclusion

Integrating smartphones into English language teaching and learning in colleges of education o ffers a very promising approach to enhance language learning outcomes. By leveraging mobile apps, interactive activities, and multimedia resources, English language educators can create en gaging, student-centered learning experiences that cater to diverse learning styles. While challe nges such as distractions and difficulties in terms of access to technology exist, the benefits of s martphone-based English language learning, including increased flexibility, student hands-on learning, engaging activities, and motivation, make it a valuable tool for language instruction. As technology continues to evolve, it is essential for educators to stay abreast of innovative appr

oaches and global best practices in utilizing multimedia resources in language learning to optim ize its potential and improve student outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the theoretical framework of the study, the entire literature review, and the empirical studies, the following recommendations were made:

- Teachers should use smartphones to facilitate student-centered learning, including peer-to-peer learning, collaborative projects, and self-directed learning.
- There should be a deliberate policy on integrating the use of smartphones (compulsory) in curriculum delivery in colleges of education.
- There should be 'tailored-made' ICT trainings purposely for teachers of English langua ge in colleges of education. The specific training should be based on to how to effectivel y integrate smartphones into their teachings.
- Parents should be enlightened on the need for their children to own smartphones for the purpose of their academic activities.

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