

The Influence of Standard Language Laboratory on the Effective Teaching and Learning of English Language in Nigeria

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Abstract

The researcher is motivated to investigate the possible influence of standard language laboratories on the effective teaching and learning of English language in institutions of higher learning, in view of prevalent deviant pronunciation of English words in Ibadan, Nigeria.

This project focuses on the objective to commission an enquiry into the effect and influence of standard language laboratories (through information communication technology) on the effective teaching and learning of the English language as a second language (ESL) and also examine ways it has helped in the proper mastery of the language, and what effect it has occasioned in the previous decades.

The project also seeks to provide basic answers to the trending questions of what influence standard language laboratory has on the teaching and learning of English; what is the effect the availability of the language laboratory has on the performance of the students, what would otherwise have happened if such laboratory was not available; it examines how the utilization of the laboratory aids the teaching and learning English as a second language. It looks into how available the standard language laboratory is to students and teachers for the effective teaching of the language. More so, are there any differences in the performance of students who have access to this facility compared to others without the language laboratory?

Keywords: Nigeria, ESL, laboratory, learning, teaching.

Introduction

According to Friedmann (2007), the discovery and development of Information Technology since the advent of the Second World War II has in many ways contributed to the development of a better world for all; and the impact cannot be overlooked on language learning. Ever since, English has become a global language of commerce, politics, government and a major language of constitutions and law for many developed and developing countries of the

world. It is of note that technology in all its ramifications has immensely contributed to the teaching and the learning process either for a student taking ESL as a career, or tutor teaching TESOL, for a living. ICT has helped in better comprehension and better classroom control over time. Fajemidagba (2020). Information Communication Technology is today one of the leading tools in the technological world, through which research findings, Information, conclusion and data can be stored, programmed, transformed or be communicated to larger audiences with little or no help of humans. The introduction and wider development of technology has brought about multidimensional changes to human endeavours today.

Singh (2013) said that language laboratories in teaching English language to speakers of other languages is no more news but a fast improving means to the end of getting ESL across to the world where it is generally needed. Language laboratories will play a major role in the development of the Language learning process if it is inculcated in the curriculum of every ESL learner and in the field of language study which has been striving before to bring more and better result to other nations. Teaching English to learners of other languages has been an important global activity and a large business and industry for the past few decades This is obvious in the translation of the language into textbooks, pamphlets, and published material throughout the world. Though before the advent of technology, English language teaching and learning, mastery and accuracy, proficiency and productivity had been seeing the brightness of days (because as a lingua franca in many language communities, it is a general unifying global language for a great many peoples of the world---to learn.. Most teachers use traditional methods where the centrality and target point is the teacher or the textbooks, making language learning more difficult to accomplish Many tutors are more concerned with the school syllabus coverage, students' grades or examination pattern while neglecting and ignoring the intellectual capacity of the students as they abandon the core, practical linguistic skill acquisition of the learners.

However, the reason behind the scenario cannot be far-fetched. Many higher institutions of learning, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics as the case may apply cannot afford, or do not have the materials---or, where the materials are available, the staff lack the technical know-how. It could also be that the school authorities do not permit them to use the gadgets out of fear of possible damage of the technological tools.

Therefore, the objective of the project is to search deeply and find a lasting solution, through findings, to the problem of the inadequacies, non-availability and inefficiency in the use of language laboratories across the sector of English language teaching and learning.

Background to the Study

The concept of standard language laboratory is a concept of definitions by various scholars whose attitudes toward the term seem infallible.

The English Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines laboratory as a room, building or institution equipped for scientific research, experimentations or analyses. A laboratory is a place specially prepared for scientific experimentations through the effort of information communication technology (ICT).

Without the help of information technology, the laboratory cannot be in existence. For the Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, information is getting an idea from one place to another through a source and technology as the practical study and knowledge of the practical use of scientific discoveries.

Information Technology through which laboratory came into existence is the term used to describe the items or equipment (hardware) and computer programs (software) that allow us to access, process, organize, manipulate, transmit, retrieve and present information by electronic means.

It is a technology that merges computing with high speed communication links carrying data, sounds and videos. Examples include the use of personal computers (PC) Television sets, scanners, projectors, spreadsheets, multimedia software programmes and different hand-held devices such as personal digital assistance.

Teaching and learning is an act of giving and receiving information usually from a source perceived to be more knowledgeable than the receiver.

According to Ofemile (2018) A language laboratory is an indispensable tool used in the teaching and learning of English language especially to the speaker of a second language (L2). In fact, the importance of a standard language laboratory is underscored in the effective teaching and learning of the English language. Language laboratories have surfaced as a new revolution over the years as a result of globalization that affects every sphere of life including teaching and learning.

It has been discovered over the years that effective teaching and learning of English language at tertiary level entails painstaking planning, proper preparation and availability of language laboratory usage where necessary for proper comprehension and mastery. Through the evolution of standard language laboratories learners' interests have been motivated because it gives way to experimentations, while it has taken them from an abstract to a concrete experience.

Practically speaking, the presence of standard language laboratories in institutions of higher learning will help to enhance better teaching and learning processes for a better understanding in language teaching and learning

Statement of the Problem

It has been discovered over the years that the learning of English language has been devoid of technology-based teaching, particularly in terms of the use of a standard language laboratory. It is against this background that the researcher has been curious to examine deeply the influence of standard language laboratories on the effective teaching and learning of English in schools.

Purpose of the Study

The aims of the study:

To make clear the influence of standard language laboratories on the effective teaching and learning of the English Language.

- To identify the importance of adopting standard language laboratories in the effective teaching and learning of English
- To determine the extent to which teachers use the language in teaching English language as a subject in schools
- To find out how the standard language laboratories have helped in the English language learning performance of the students
- To know how readily available language laboratories are to the students and teachers for the effective teaching and learning process.

Research Hypotheses / Questions

Hypotheses are very essential in a case study because they further clarify the statement of the problem. This study will attempt to produce adequate answers to the following questions;

- Does using a standard language laboratory have any effects on the teaching and learning of English language, a second, subsequent or additional language?
- How has the utilization of the laboratory helped the teaching and learning process?
- What are the problems encountered during the use of the standard language laboratory in schools?
- How has the availability of the laboratory helped the performance of learners?

What are suggestions for solving each of these problems facing language laboratory issues?

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the importance and influence of standard language laboratories on the effective teaching and learning of the English language and the roles of the teachers and students in using the laboratory.

A detailed review of related literatures was done to cover the following;

The introduction of ICT in the effective teaching and learning process is rapidly becoming one of the most important and widely discussed issues in contemporary education policy. Experts in the field of foreign languages and education are agreed that when laboratories, through ICT is properly used, it holds a great promise for improving and influencing teaching and learning of the students and in addition to shaping workforce opportunities (Rosen and Well 1995).

Thus language laboratory with the help of information communication Technology ICT has become key tools in the realization of effectiveness in school teaching and learning. Hence, it is having a revolutionary influence on educational methodology globally and increasing the effectiveness of teaching English language as our second language Mac Ikemejina (2005). Education is an important investment in building capital that is a catalyst for technological innovation and economic growth. The language, English, has greatly been influenced through the use of language laboratories for the betterment of students and proper teacher orientation. It is only through improving the educational status and the spoken English in the schools and in the society via technological development that the multifaceted development of its students in the school environment can be ensured. Imel (1999) says that the successful integration of technology, and the use of standard language laboratories into the teaching and learning processes of English allows the students and education at large to move past traditionally linear methods of instruction.

According to Mac Ikemendima (2005) standard language laboratories via ICT enhance the better administration and communication functions of effective teaching and learning which in turn has a direct impact on pedagogy. One key area in which standard language laboratories is becoming more important and influencing teaching and learning of English is the recording, testing, showing and analyzing basic apparatus or articulators in the organs hence improving and influencing students' cognitive achievement. The process of speculation, human body programming and implementation of these articulators can be managed through the use of standard language laboratories via information communication technology. It can therefore be deduced further that the standard language laboratory works most efficiently for the production of sounds when used---compared to the primitive way of language problem-solving mechanisms.

According to Bharathia Aleman (2004), it is required of any learner to have a good command of the language for communication purposes, with clarity and accuracy being vital for effective and efficient communication. What helps one to acquire such proficiency in that language is the process and methods of learning that language. The curriculum of the present day universities hardly has a laboratory session for arts subjects like Literature, Creative Art and most especially

in this research work, learning and teaching of English language. Hence, a laboratory for the English language or language in general seems to be new to students in enriching their language learning experience.

To Enged (1999) scientific advancements have thrown up a number of innovative products to assist the learning and teaching process, out of which the la laboratory is one and most important. Innovative products such as digital multimedia control, wireless headsets and microphones, the interactive response pad, etc. are very useful for a student's effective learning and teaching of English language for proper communication. These interactive tools are designed to enhance not only language teaching and learning but also class room grading and distance learning.

According to Chandrasekar (2014) the language laboratory plays a vital role in the language learning and teaching process. This works based on discussing those various features as discussed before. It is a technological aid for teaching and learning and it has a great number of advanced facilities that can help students in the school to learn a language with proficiency.

Marriam et al (1997) postulated that teaching and learning, and acquisition through standard language laboratories via ICT helps to increase the students' confidence and self-esteem. Using an English language laboratory, via the introduction of technology, students are afforded the opportunity to learn about technology itself. Furthermore, the language laboratory in teaching and learning is used to enhance the development of students' information literacy. A literate student is able to gather information, process information, publish information and communicate information within a range of contexts across all learning areas. Thus teachers can assist students to enhance the development of their information literacy by providing opportunities for them to use a range of standard language laboratories during the teaching and learning process of English language as a second language (L2)

Stamen 1995 corroborated this assertion by explaining that the power of standard language laboratories via information communication technology to increase the level of communication and influence the performance within the learning environment is a key to making the students' level of literacy and mastery of the subject increase.

Porle 1996 indicated that computer illiteracy and language laboratory inadequacy is now regarded as the new illiteracy and inadequacy. This has actually gingered a new strong desire to equip schools with standard language laboratories, computer facilities and qualified personnel, necessary to influence and produce technologically inclined, proficient and efficient students.

The Rationale for Standard Language Laboratory in Schools

The need for standard language laboratory in tertiary institutions like colleges, polytechnics and even universities cannot be overemphasized, thus is it necessary to develop a thorough rationale before the introduction of a language laboratory in schools. The importance and influential significance of a standard language laboratory is evident in educational perspectives, student performance and efficiency in the larger society. Although, the chalkboard, textbooks, radio, television and films have been used for this purpose over the years, none has quite impacted the teaching and learning of language like the standard language laboratory. The standard language laboratory has the capacity to provide higher interactive potentials for both teachers and students to develop and understand their individual intellectual capacity, organs, programs and creative ability.

The main purpose of the standard language laboratory as postulated by Becker, et al (1999) includes the learning of the phonetics of a language, the effective communication training programs for the general public, private and corporate sector (junior, senior and higher level officers can be given through the laboratory) and to both successfully apply the existing knowledge and produce new ones.

Furthermore, it will be a great mistake if the kinds of language laboratories are not mentioned for proper investigations in the nearest future. The language laboratory assists educators in delivering foreign language instructions like English language, and has been through many developmental stages over the years. Thus, there are four kinds of laboratory being focused on here, viz.,

Convention Laboratory: This is the primitive form of the language laboratory. The conventional laboratory has a tape recorder and a few audiocassettes of the target language to teach the learners. The teacher plays the tape and the students or learners listen to it and learn the pronunciation. As it is used in a normal classroom set up, it is prone to distractions and this type of laboratory is no longer in vogue.

Lingua Phone Language laboratory (LPLL): This is again a conventional type of laboratory, with a little modernization. Learners are given a headset to listen to the audiocassettes being played. Here distractions are minimized and a certain amount of clarity in listening is achieved.

There is also a modernized lingua phone laboratory today which uses electronic devices that have two functions. It works as a cassette player with all the functions of a normal cassette player on the left side and as a repeater on the right side that helps one to record one's voice and play it back for comparison.

Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALL): This uses the computer to teach language. The language course materials are already fed into the computer and are displayed according to the features available in the system. Nowadays, there are also laboratories with computers with a connection to the internet. These are called Web Assisted Language Laboratory (WALL). The development of CALL has been gradual, and this development has been categorized into the three distinct phases; Behavioral CALL, communicative CALL and Integrative CALL Barson & Debski (1996). The development of CALL has been gradual and its acceptance has come slowly and inversely.

Multimedia Hi Tech Language Laboratory (MiTLL): There is a lot of software available on the market that can be used in the multimedia language laboratory for example, Renet Aristoclass, Hiclass, Globarina, Console OCL – 908W, Histudio MHi Tecxh and Online software etc.

Today, a standard language laboratory performs a lot of functions and influences effective teaching and learning of English Language as many nations are adding computer literacy, reading and writing literacy as skills students will need for succeeding in a technologically developed world and that is one of the tenets of language laboratory. At the instructional level, a laboratory is used for Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Music and English. This has helped immensely the development and mastering the subject by the second speaker of the language.

The movement of many organs in the body especially the vocal apparatus cannot be well known with an ordinary word of teaching and chalkboard but with painstaking, sophisticated technological equipment used via laboratory.

It is logical that we should expect educational technology, standard language laboratory via Information Communication Technology (ICT) to be developed, promoted and motivated with the objective to increase learners' productivity and teachers' participation, and solve problems in the teaching and learning process for the effectiveness and efficiency of English language as a second language (L2). (Aduwa- Ogiegbaen, et al 2005).

Teacher-Student Role in using Language Laboratory

Without any iota of doubt, the standard language laboratory has been of a good help to the development of student faculty and effectiveness of teaching the course in schools. Through the simultaneous use of audio, text, visual materials and multimedia, the language laboratory gives ample and exceptional opportunities to the students and teachers to develop capabilities for high

quality learning and to increase their need to be taught of radically new educational contents with media playing a vital role (Shavinma 1997).

The teachers and the students have roles to play in the standard language laboratory in relation to the effective teaching and learning process. The role of the teacher is to maintain absolute usefulness of the lab and make sure that all things done are according to the laid down rules and regulations of the school to avoid damaging the laboratory. However, the students' participation, concentration and effective use of the laboratory should not be taken with levity thus, they should cooperate with the instructor so as for the goals and objectives of the teaching to be actualized. Both teachers and students are to be together in mind, spirit and body to avoid a misuse of opportunities such laboratory might have prepared for them.

Significance and Relevance of Language Laboratory to Both Teachers and Students

Student language laboratory is a very helpful tool for practicing and assessing one's speech in any language. It provides a facility which allows the students to listen to model / correct pronunciation, repeat and record the same, listen to their performance and compare with the model, and do self-assessment. Since the language laboratory gives every learner and teacher of language freedom to learn and teach at their own pace, it is flexible and does not necessarily require the attention of a teacher all the time; at the same time it is possible for teachers to provide assistance individually and collectively. The language laboratory allows every participant to speak and listen. These are some other influential significance of standard language laboratory on the effective teaching and learning of English language in the school.

- It is a tool designed for teaching and learning any language, thus, helps one to learn pronunciation, accents, stress and all other aspects of the speech sounds.
- Experts utilize the laboratory for creating and editing scientific and technical materials for teaching and learning of language---especially English.
- The Language Laboratory enables the teachers to conduct courses for various groups of people like the students, faculties, business people etc., within the range of the laboratory capacity.
- Online courses and paperless examinations can be conducted through the language laboratory hence developing the students' computer literacy skills.
- Short-term and long-term coaching classes for international examinations like IELTS, TOEFL and other competitive examination can be organized with the school system. (Mac Jiorajima 2005).

Research Methodology

The method used is structured questionnaire. The research work is centered on the influence of standard language laboratory on the effective teaching and learning of the English language in institutions of higher learning. The schools were randomly picked among all others in the South Western part of Nigeria.

Instruction

This section is concerned with the analysis and discussion of the data collected on the influence of standard language laboratory on the effective teaching and learning of English language in Osun State University.

Presentation of Result

Table 1.0 Percentage Distribution of the Selected Schools.

Schools	No. of Respondents	Percentage
School of languages	21	84%
School of Art	1	4%
School of Social Science	3	12%
Total	25	100%

Table 2.0 Sex Distribution of the Students

Gender	Responses	Percentage
Male	11	44%
Female	14	56%
Total	25	100%

Table 3.0 Age Distribution of the Students

Age	Responses	Percentage
16-20	7	28%
20-24	13	52%
24-28	5	20%
Total	25	100%

Table 4.0 Tribe Distribution of the Students

Tribe	Responses	Percentage
Yoruba	15	60%
Igbo	9	36%
Hausa	1	4%
Total	25	100%

Table 5.0 Religion Distribution of the Students

Religion	Responses	Percentage
Islam	10	40%
Christianity	14	56%
Traditional	1	4%
Total	25	100%

Table 6.0 Academic Level Distribution of the Students

Level	Responses	Percentage
100	5	20%
200	10	40%
300	4	16%
400	6	24%
Total	25	100%

Table 7.0 Sex Distribution of Teachers

Sex	Responses	Percentage
Male	2	40%
Female	3	60%
Total	5	100%

Table 8.0 Age Distribution of Teachers

Age	Responses	Percentage
20-30	0	0%
30-40	2	40%
40 above	3	60%
Total	5	100%

Table 9.0 Tribe Distribution of Teachers

Tribe	Responses	Percentage
Yoruba	2	40%
Igbo	2	40%
Hausa	1	29%
Total	5	100%

Table 10.0 Religion distribution of the teachers.

Religion	RESPONSES	Percentage
Islam	3	60%
Christianity	2	40%
Traditional	0	0%
Total	5	100%

Discussion of the Findings

The result for the findings has shown that teachers and the students agree generally that the standard language laboratory has in one way or the other several effects on the teaching and learning of English language. To teachers, it is said and supported that utilization of the language laboratory helps in teaching and learning process.

Hypothesis one enquires: Does the standard language laboratory have any effect on teaching and learning? The finding has shown that it does. According to (Mac-ikemedima (2005) the standard language laboratory via information Communication Technology has tremendously aided proper performance of the students and also aids information distribution.

Hypothesis two: how has the utilization of the laboratory helped the teaching and learning process? Chandrasekar Aleman (2014) explains that language laboratory is very useful in language learning and its utilization has been useful in assessing students' speech. It has provided the students with the technical tools to get the best samples of pronunciation of the language, the electronic devices used in the laboratory is used to stimulate the eyes and ears of the learners to acquire the language quick and easily. The laboratory's collection he discussed further, is designed to assist learns in the acquisition, oral and written proficiency and cultural awareness.

Also, in agreement with, Babs (1978) Chandrasekar records that language laboratories offer broadcasting, television programmes, web assisted materials and videotaped off-air recordings in the target language. It is of note however that language laboratories have helped students to learn pronunciation, accent, stress and all other aspects of phonetics of a language; it

has also helped to get effective communicative training programmes for the general public, private and corporate sectors. Short and long term coaching classes for international examinations like IELTS, TOEFL and others competitive examination have been achieved with the use of language laboratories.

The language laboratory provides all student no matter where they are seated in the room with an equal opportunity to hear the instructor and be heard by the instructor, hence, each student can learn at own pace without restriction.

Hypothesis three: what are the problems encountered during the use of the standard language laboratory in schools? The huge success recorded in language learning through the use of laboratories poses a different threat to the health and vision of the learners when used without caution. The results from the questionnaires show that students tend to be more comfortable learning through ICT but the device produces radiations which are hazardous in nature. Problems encountered in the usage range from the epileptic, unstable nature of electricity supply in under developed nations, the complexity of some devices and the technicality involved which result in twist and damage to health, and the general environment; bulky instructional materials also result in boredom and misuse of the lesson Akhdiyati (2018).

Therefore, in conclusion, though the standard language laboratory as good as its recommendations were, still has certain anomalies which are not without solutions. Students should be allowed to access it as appropriate; be encouraged to teach with it.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of the standard language laboratory on the effective teaching and learning of English language.

From the table shown in chapter four, it is clearly revealed that standard language laboratory has some effects on the effective teaching and learning on English language.

From the above findings, it could be noted that there is a serious relationship between the teaching and learning process and the utilization of standard language laboratory.

Conclusion

In the course of this research, it was discovered that the standard language laboratory in one way or the other positively affects the teaching and learning process.

Many students that perform poorly in the school subject---taking English as a second language (ESL) suffer as a result of poorly equipped laboratories or infrequent use of the laboratory as a teaching aid and facility to the students. This is shown from the responses of the students as in the questionnaire sent out. Most of the students perform are acquainted with language laboratories while some are not, and so usually perform poorly in oral English. This in turn has advert effects on the performance of the students.

From the questionnaires sent out, it was discovered that the non-availability of the language laboratory has negatively affected the performance of the students. Some lamented that in their school, though the laboratory was well equipped, access to it was too restricted.

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