TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE RELEVANCE OF COMPUTER TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING-LEARNING IN ILORIN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The relevance of the computer to the teaching and learning of English (or any other) language cannot be over-emphasized. The computer has the power to motivate the learners and prevent boredom in the classroom, thereby enhancing their performance. Unfortunately, you cannot give what you do not have. Thus, teachers who hold inappropriate views about, and lack the skills in the use of computer may not be able to derive maximum instructional benefits from it. This paper is the report of a study of secondary school teachers' perception of the relevance of the computer to the teaching and learning of English language in Ilorin, Nigeria. The study utilized a researcher-designed questionnaire that contained 20 items were administered to 209 teachers of English language randomly selected from 20 public and 10 private secondary schools in Ilorin, Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that there were significant differences in the perceptions of qualified and unqualified, and experienced and less-experienced teachers on the relevance of the computer to the teaching and learning of English language. However, there was no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers of English language just as there was none in the perceptions of teachers from private and public schools. Furthermore, there was a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers of English who were computer-literate and those who were not regarding the relevance of computer to English Language teaching-learning. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that secondary school teachers in the country should work closely with school administrators and relevant other stakeholders to meet their computer and other ICT needs. By so doing, the teachers would be able to make remarkable progress in their tasks of producing efficient users of the language.

Keywords: Teachers' perception; Computer-Assisted; Qualified and unqualified teachers; experienced and less experienced teachers;

Introduction

The teaching and learning of English language is an activity which usually takes place in the formal environment, i.e. classroom, an in and informal environment, i.e. the home, playground or through various media, either consciously or unconsciously. It is a deliberate attempt to inculcate the use of English language to a learner. Oladunjoye (2005) observed that students' poor performance in English language was as a result of teachers' poor teaching methods which affect learning. Other researchers, such as Salman and Perkings (1988) and Pea (1988), believed that learning could only be successful when learners are

motivated to learn. Specifically, Hortoitz (1986) in Yusuf (2004) opined that motivation can make learners to maintain correct attitudes towards learning and can improve their performance in any subject.

The perceptions teachers hold about their subject, pupil, material and context of practice partly accounts for their success in classroom practice. The philosophy of perception itself deals with how mental processes and symbols depend on the world that is internal and external to the perceiver. Schopenhauer (2004) noted that the perception of the external world begins with the senses which take humans to general empirical concepts that represent the world around them and then takes them to developing mental frameworks that help them to relate new concepts to the existing ones. Therefore the assumption in this paper is that teacher's perception and belief contribute to their effectiveness as the perception guides them in electing and actually using a variety of instructional models and strategies.

Skinner and Austin (1999) observed that the computer can be a useful English language teaching tool as it can raise students' motivation by increasing their confidence, encouraging them to become part of a group, and broadening their range of writing skills. For the successful teaching and learning of the language, some other resources are also necessary. Lawal (2006) described all the resources as human and non-human.

Researchers, such as Ridgway and Passey, 1991; Jones, 2002; and Kilickaya , 2011, have recommended the use of computers for language teaching and learning. They argue that language teaching is a complicated process that requires careful and diligent work, which the computer could make easier. Educators in the field of language teaching always try hard to find ways to make language learning enjoyable and attractive for the learners. Kilickaya (2011) stressed that carefully selected activities, games, and interesting stories do help language teaching and learning.

By the beginning of the 1980s, technology came into use to enliven language classrooms with films, television and language laboratories having video tapes and audio cassettes. Precisely, some Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) software applications were introduced in the form of drill and practice (Cunnigham, 1998). As technology developed, new programmes came into use to create a more interactive and interesting environment for language learners and teachers than what was available in the traditional, previous language classrooms. Many researchers on the best way to acquire a second language (Kilickaya 2011; Jones, 2002; Passey, 1991) recommended Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

Specific studies have been carried out on the roles of teacher attitude, training and perception in the success (or failure) of computer assisted language learning (Egbert, Paulis & Nakamichi, 2002; Warschauer, 2002; Ridgway & Passey, 1991; Jones, 2002; Kilickaya , 2011). The researchers are all agreed that lack of time, support and resources, and appropriate teacher disposition impeded the use of CALL by the teachers.

Furthermore Christopher (1995) investigated the achievement of some students who used computer in different subjects with their colleagues who only followed the traditional methods. The results show significant differences in the achievement of students in favour of the groups who used computers (Abdullah, 2012).

Alsouki (2001) investigated the effect of using computers in the teaching of L2 composition on the writing performance of learners. The findings revealed that the use of computers had considerable, different effects on writing.

Based on the world's experiences, Ridgway and Passey (1991) recommended the training of teachers in the use of computers in the classroom. Similarly, Jones (2002), Omorodion (2003) and Kilickaya (2011) emphasized that language teachers need to become trained users of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which is computer-driven, in order for the teachers to record greater professional success.

Nigeria today exists in a world of ICT, where the computer and the Internet have revolutionized communication. It brings about new characteristics and new opportunities to language teaching and learning (Omorodion, 2003). The desire to catch up with the world cannot be met without the efficient use of ICT which has turned the world to a global village.

Considerable research has been conducted on the teaching and learning of English language with the use of computers. These researches come under different names and titles, such as Computer – Assisted language learning (CALL), Computer – Assisted Instruction (CAI), (and Computer Managed Instruction CMI).

However, few of the different sources available on the topic has been carried out on Nigerian secondary school teachers' perception of the relevance of the computer to the teaching and learning of English at that level. The present study was therefore conceived to investigate the perception of teachers on the relevance of the computer to the teaching and learning of English language in Ilorin.

Research Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female secondary school teachers of English Language on the relevance of the computer in the teaching and learning of the language.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of qualified and unqualified secondary school teachers of English Language on the relevance of the computer in the teaching and learning of the language.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of experienced and less experienced secondary school teachers of English Language on the relevance of computer in the teaching and learning of the language.

Methodology

This study was a descriptive research which used the survey method that enabled the researcher to obtain information from a representative sample of all the secondary school teachers of English language in Ilorin, Nigeria. The study covered Ilorin metropolis which consisted of three Local Government Areas - Ilorin South, Ilorin West and Ilorin East. There were many secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis hence it was not possible to draw our subjects from all the secondary schools in the city. Therefore, only 30 of the schools were selected using the stratified sampling technique. This technique provided equal opportunity for all the schools to be selected, as advocated by Otu (1987). All the 209 English Language teachers in the 30 schools constituted the sample for the study.

The instrument for gathering data for the study was a researcher–designed questionnaire, titled "Secondary-school-teachers' Perception on Computer Questionnaire (SPCQ)". The instrument comprised two major sections – A and B; A elicited information on the respondents' background and personal information, while B was composed of fifteen (15) major items that elicited information on respondents' perception on the Relevance of Computer to the Teaching and Learning of English Language in the Secondary Schools in Ilorin Metropolis. Each of the respondents was required to register his or her level of agreement in the close-ended (Yes or No) questionnaire items.

In order to ensure its validity, the instrument was presented to two experts in three departments. Their critical inputs resulted in a corrected version of the instrument that was tested and re-tested in a pilot study on a randomly selected group of secondary school English Language teachers in Offa Local Government which is within the same state in Nigeria. The data obtained were analyzed using the Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient statistic, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.72.

For the sake of efficiency, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire in the selected secondary schools. The researcher sought and obtained permission from the school principals to administer the questionnaire with the assistance of the Heads of Department of English Language. Each respondent was given a copy of the questionnaire, which they responded to between ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes, after which it was collected by the researcher. The data gathered were analyzed using the chi-square was employed to test the hypotheses.

Results

The findings from the results of the study are presented as follows.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female secondary school teachers of English on the relevance of computer in the teaching and learning of the language.

Table 1: Chi-square Result of the perceptions of male and female teachers on the relevance of computer to language teaching-learning

Gender	Number	df	X^{2cal}	$X^{2\ table}$	&	Decision
Male	95	207	1.75	3.84	0.05	Accepted
Female	114					
Total	209					

Null hypothesis accepted

Table 1 indicates that the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers on the relevance of computer to the teaching and learning of English Language.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of qualified and unqualified secondary school teachers of English Language on the relevance of computer in the teaching and learning of the language.

Table 2: Chi-square result of the perceptions of qualified and less qualified teachers on the relevance of computer to language teaching-learning

	Yes Total	No	df table &	x^2 cal	x^2	Decision
Qualified teachers	86 100	14	207 0.05	9.4	3.84	Rejected
Unqualified Teachers	74 109	35				
Total	160	49				

Null hypothesis rejected

Table 2 indicates a chi-square value of 9.4 which is greater than the table value 3.84. Therefore, we rejected the null hypothesis and inferred that there is significant difference in the perceptions of qualified and unqualified English Language teachers on the relevance of computer to the teaching and learning of English Language.

Hypothesis Three: An analysis of null hypothesis (Ho_3) which states that "There is no significant difference in the perception of English Language Teachers on the Relevance of computer to the teaching and learning of English Language based on their experience.

Table 3: Chi-square result of the perceptions of qualified and less qualified
teachers on the relevance of computer to language teaching-learning

	Yes Total	No	df table	x2 cal	x^2 &	Decision
Experienced	110 124	14	207 3.84		25.33	0.05	Rejected
Less experienced	50 85	35 49				
Total	160 209					

Null hypothesis rejected

Table 3 indicates that the chi-square value of 25.33 obtained is greater than the table value of 3.84, hence the null hypothesis involved is rejected, which means that there was significant difference in the perceptions of experienced and less experienced English Language Teachers on the relevance of the computer to the teaching and learning of the subject. The perception by the experienced teachers was better than that of the less experienced.

Discussion

The results of the analysis of the null Hypothesis 1 reveal that teachers' gender did not influence their perception, because the calculated x^2 value of 1.75 is less than the table value of 3.84 at the 0.05 level of significance. This means that there was no significant difference in male and female English Language teacher's perceptions of the relevance of computer to the teaching and learning of the language. Finding is against Kar's (1995) view that women are less positive about the use of computers than men.

Table 2 reveals the result obtained when the null hypothesis two was tested. The calculated chi-square (X^2) value 9.4 is greater than the chi-square table value 3.84 at the 0.05 significance level. Thus the hypothesis two was rejected, implying that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of qualified and less qualified teachers of English Language on the relevance of computer to the teaching and learning of English Language. The finding is in support of Yusuf's (2004) finding that one overriding factor of teachers' success in their professional success is their qualification.

Table 5 shows the result obtained when null Hypothesis Three was tested. The calculated (X^2) value 25.3 is greater than the Chi-square table value 3.84, at the 0.05 significance level. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. It was then considered safe to assume that there is significant difference in the perceptions of experienced and less experienced teachers on the relevance of computer to the teaching and learning of English Language, with the latter group having a better perception than the former.

The finding of this study would seem to support of Yusuf's (2004) finding that teaching experience is important in students' evaluation, curriculum planning and development, and

the execution of instructional strategies, using instructional materials. Other scholars (Kilickaya, 2011; Egbert, Paulis & Nakamichi, 2002; Jones, 2002; Warschauer, 2002; Adegbite & Igweike, 1996; Ridgway & Passey, 1991) are also agreed that the attitude of teachers (of any school subject) must be positive and that they should enjoy a wealth of experience in order to groom students in such ways that the latter would be able to hold their own in the society.

Although findings from this study are far from being conclusive, they tend to reinforce the view the use of the computer in English language instruction could improve learner performance remarkably. Another research design like the one involving quasi experiment and the use of a robust statistic would have enabled us to draw far-reaching inferences regarding the perceptions of teachers on the use of computer in the teaching of the English language in our locale of study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the foregoing findings and discussions, it may be concluded that many of the teachers were of the positive perception that computer is relevant to the teaching and learning of English Language. The computer would go a long way improving the performances of the teachers and learners of English in Ilorin. Most of the teachers believe that when given the necessary support, they are ready to make use of computers in the classroom. Based on the study, it is believed that the English Language Teachers are ready to improve on their teaching by adopting the computer in teaching and learning.

Thus, it is recommended that teachers should strive to become more literate in computer and other digital endeavours. That ICT determines the functionality man's living today is not controvertible. English language pedagogy must be positioned to continuously benefit from the computer.

In this connection, governments and relevant stakeholders in Nigeria should regularly organize training and re-training activities in order to keep the teachers abreast of developments related to the application of the computer to language education.

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