INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND STUDENT'S COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND HISTORY STUDENTS, ADEYEMI COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ONDO, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The importance of English Language in Nigeria's education is very great. English language and History have an unbroken relationship. As we have history of all the subjects, so do we use language (English) to bring points home. Language is the most potent attribute of man, because he is a talking being. This paper exposes the relationship between History and English language using ICT in teaching the two subjects. Clarity would be brought out between those who use ICT and those who do not. The purpose is to facilitate and enhance smooth and conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning process, as well as promoting student /lecturer relationship through effective use of the ICT, with the sole aim of heightening the knowledge of both lecturers and students. The paper also make recommendations on the impact of ICT on students in this wide-world of globalized economy.

Education has been given high priority in human life today. Ukeje (1979), defined education as a set of activities, which entail handling down the ideas, values and norms of the society across generation. It involves the transmission of knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs, while Whitehead, (1932), believed that education does not end at the acquisition of knowledge, but the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in the development of both his immediate and distant micro and macro environment. Bamisaye (1989) also proves that education is a cumulative process of development of intellectual abilities, skills and attitudes and all of which form our various outlooks and dispositions to action in life. So, education is used for sustenance.

The role of ICT in education in the present day Nigeria is enormous and immeasurable. Computer in education means teaching or learning with the aid of computer system (hardware and software). Introduction of ICT in the school setting have had a great impact in contributing to the achievement of the educational objectives, aims and goals. (Badmus, 2004). The term 'ICT' is widely used in educational research, policy and practice replacing 'IT' (Information Technology) which is also used in reference to computer and internet. Ayodele (2002) in Oluwaronbi (2012) defined ICT as electronic based technology that is generally used to retrieve, store, process and package information as well as provide access to knowledge.

Technology is not new to education. However, contemporary computer technologies, such as internet and printed pages, allow new types of teaching and learning experience to flourish. Many technologies are interactive, making it easier to create environment in which students can learn by doing, receive feedback, and continually refine their understanding and build new knowledge. Access to ICT brings unprecedented opportunities in terms of availability to research material and information generally. (Oluwaronbi, 2012).

The essence of education is to make learner more productive, useful to himself/herself, bold, skillful and confident. This act is graciously linked to the motivation which one could get through ICT. Abimbade (1997) notes that computer is a very useful and versatile tool in education. It permits self- pacing by learner, provide remedial instruction for those who need it and support learner's exploration of all aspects of knowledge that is of interest. In all, ICT is used to teach all subjects and is also taught as a separate subject.

Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, spoke of the transformation of the economy through information technology noting that "in this new environment, the most important commodities of a nation are information and knowledge". (Blair, 2000). This brings the focus of the paper to information Literacy and Education. Shapiro and Hughes (1996) define Information Literacy as "a new Liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information itself, its technical infrastructure and its socio- cultural and philosophical context and impact". It is an act of recognizing the need of information, ability to locate it, evaluate it and use the needed information effectively. (American Library Association, 1989).

Relating ICT with History and English Language

The word "history" and "the past" are often used as synonyms. But "the past" means what has ever happened while "history" only investigates and explains the past. (Oshokoya, 1996). Oshokoya also proves that history is concerned with evidence about human beings who have actually lived. It is also concerned with how human lives have changed through time. It is not only concerned with the explanation of the past, but of the contemporary world.

Collingwood, in Osokoya (1973) claims that history is for human self-knowledge. He asserts that:

Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do and since nobody knows what he can do until he tries, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history then is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.

An indept knowledge and analysis of the above assertion will, no doubt, make one to see English language (or languages) and History as tools to each other in achieving their goals. (Omojeje, 2012). It is a fact of history that English language crept into Nigeria through colonization, thus, it became the second language (L_2) of most Nigerians today. It becomes difficult for the L_2 learners to pronounce or use English proficiently. More often, the first language (L_1), Yoruba for example, tends to influence L_2 (English language), thus causing *interference*. For instance, the Yoruba speakers pronounce consonants like "V" as in Veronica as "f"; θ as in three as "t"; "KS" as in Felix as "s" etc. This aspect of history is what Collingwood means by "knowing yourself and knowing what you can do".

Having known this, the language teacher does not assume that learners "can do" or "cannot do" until when the teacher drills the learners and makes them to "try" by imitating the teacher repeatedly. The teacher only gets the 'clues' of learners' knowledge until they have acted accordingly. Thus, the teacher is satisfied as "value" is placed on learners' activities.

While making reference to Smith and Laslett (1987), Oshokoya (2000) asserted that a good History teacher should be able to use the four "Ms" needed for effective classroom organization: management, mediation, modification and monitoring. The history teacher should know how to manage his time by planning it with the teaching materials, when and

where needed. He should also consider learners' assimilation differently. The English teacher also needs to make ready his lesson note and other teaching aid at a particular time for a particular class. He goes round the class to make sure that his teaching is participatory and individualized. Issues have proved that historians and linguists use the same method to deal with situations.

Language is the means by which people enter into society to produce reality. As human lives have changed over-time in history, likewise language does change (develop) in English language Grammar history have changed from Traditional or Classical theory to Structural Grammar to Tagmemic Grammar to Transformation Generative Grammar to Systematic Grammar. Today, Grammar changes or modifies to meet the contemporary world.

As the world is experiencing information revolution and knowledge explosion which is being accelerated by ICT, the interconnection between education, information, ICT and social transformation are very great. (Erwat, 2007). ICT has been playing vital roles in making the teaching and learning of English and History more concrete, practical, instructional and interesting. The traditional ICT products are the printed page, radio, television, films and so on, while the modern technologies include e-mail, voice-mail, FAX, internet, electronic bulletin boards and cellular telephones among others. It is a noted fact that linguistslh do check the meaning of difficult words from a passage read through cellular phones or internet. Also, dates and participants of history are regularly checked through ICT. Electronic bulletin board features articles, letters, poems, political leaders' speeches and pictures.

ICT's Classroom Situation of English Language and History

As mentioned earlier, language is a tool used by historians to achieve their purpose.

Since English language is the medium of instruction from later part of Primary Education to all other sectors of education in Nigeria, English language use in History classroom or vice-versa with the aid of ICT is our focus. A good story-teller is the quintessential narrator who possesses the gifted ability to deliver his stories through robust and exceedingly rich language (Faturoti, 2011). Stories are often told on television by presenters to build morality in the lives of the children. Teachers also use this medium to teach the children.

Register or vocabulary development in English language has its root in History. ICT is used to teach this aspect in History and English language. Revolution, world war, cold war, Jihad, Pilgrimage, slave trade and so on are registers of history, while building, plumbing, photography, Government and Politics being taught in English have their own distinct registers and which are closely associated with history. Through ICT, the meanings and roots of these words are known. ICT also increases the vocabulary of learners like *disc, wisiwyg, gigo and so on.*

Oral work in English language is a productive exercise which a speaker pronounces words as a "Received Pronunciation". That is, saying the *English-English.* (like that of the native speaker). In teaching this aspect in English language, history of pronunciation and the need for it comes into play. Only few Nigerian speak this form of English because of the overlapping influence of the L_1 (Mother Tongue) on L_2 (English language). The actual drilling helps here as both teachers of History and English instruct their students to listen to Voice of America and British Broadcasting Cooperation news to discuss the major points in the class. Through these news, *English accent* are known as well as the history of the nations of the world.

Grammatically, tenses are correctly used to achieve a particular aim. When grammatical errors are made continually or uncorrected by the speaker or writer, he/she misses a vital point and the listeners/audience/reader becomes less-interested. The historians are good users of language. History is language based as language is history based. A good story-teller in the class must be grammatically fluent. It is on this premise that political/opinion leaders are adored for the speeches and gift of the gab. Through films, radio and internet, the linguistic and historians do watch or listen to the speeches of their leaders. ICT is used to teach and correct grammatical mistakes just like the Radio and News papers.

Teaching and learning English language in our secondary schools demands Historical skills. A candidate must possess the ability to state the story imagined or experienced in a coherent, logical and grammatically acceptable way before he can earn a credit mark. In 'Part A' questions 1-5, of the National Examination Council (NECO) or the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) which usually contain a story question. This corroborates the fact that learners are expected to be story-tellers. Stainaker in Osokoya (1951) states that Essay writing is found useful in history because it is very appropriate in measuring learning outcomes that demand for freedom of response and originality. Essay test is therefore useful in finding out student's ability to assess the worth of events, give a critical analysis of events as well as interpreting and organizing historical information. Grolond (1968), Joff (1986), Okapala, Onocha & Oyedeji (1995) in Emeke (2002) opined that essay makes testees to select, relates and organize to create essentially news patterns and use language to express new ideas. Through internet, learners do check the guidelines of essay writing.

Stories (History) are told to a live audience which play some dramatic roles. The history teacher here is the *Direction* of the play, he gives imaginary characters to students to play and the rest of the class plays the audience. This is a replica of what takes place in the English language class as drama texts are read or acted as roles are given to students in the class. ICT helps learners better when they watch texts being acted on television or video. This develops films production, script-writing and so on in the learners.

Though, History means an explanation and investigation of the 'past' but atimes, the summary is required to briefly remind the listeners of what has happened. This skill is required in English language's WASCE and NECO. The knowledge of summary actually comes from story-telling skills as the story-tellers only makes use of the available time for him to bring home his point. Atimes, he cuts-off some irrelevant aspects. Skills on summary are taught through ICT (Radio, Television and Internet) from time to time.

Again, comprehension passages are usually given in WASSCE/NECO. Stories are told not mere superfluous, but with meaningful intentions and purposes. While reading comprehension passages, the candidate must possess the ability to know the surface (Dictionary) meaning and the Deep (Literary) meaning of the word just like historians do exhume materials from the ground. Reading comprehension involves strategies like questioning, inferring, relating and evaluating which are tools of history. ICT could therefore be likened to the instrument used by historians to exhume materials or relics from the ground while linguistics use it to analyse difficult words

from the passage which might also be given through ICT (Internet or printed page).

Treatment of culture is another aspect of relationship between History and English

language. Culture is the belief system, way of life and customs that are shared and accepted by the people. (Longman, 2005). Components of culture cover all aspect of human life ranging from economic and social systems of a society to its technology, religion, language and political dimensions. (Oyeneye and Shoremi, 1985). Language, here, is a tool of culture. So, the relationship between language and culture has been celebrated in many writings. Language is seen as the vehicle of culture, they are symbolically related (Emananjo, 2001). ICT (Internet research) helps to know the culture of ethnic groups in Nigeria and nations of the world.

By and large, it is vividly clear that history and English language are two subjects that are closely related and cannot be separated in any form even more with the use of ICT.

Thus, as highlighted earlier in this work, there is a strong relationship between English language and History. This is further accentuated by Emanayo, 2001, that language (English) and Culture (History) are symbolically related. Furthermore, ICT increases students knowledge in their various subjects. That is why the lecturers ask their students to use ICT to do assignment as such would help them to locate the information they need. (American Library Association, 1989).

Conclusion

There is no gainsaying the fact that technology has revolutionized office information processing functions in today's world, therefore students, as well as lecturers, would do well by acquiring (albeit through training) the skills in the areas of world processing telecommunication, power point presentation, reprography and micrographic systems. They should be able to use world processors, computers micrographic equipment, internet facilities, and so on. When students as well as lecturers acquire these competency leverage, it

will equip them with necessary knowledge, skill and attitude for effective teaching and learning process and positively skewed their cognitive development.

Therefore, the symbiotic association between English Language and History would be further agglutinated with the available and effective use of ICT which would in turn help in the study of English Language and History. (Emenayo,2001). So, all the departments are expected to be equipped with ICT appliances for effective teaching and learning on one hand and the enhancement of students cognitive development on the other hand.

Recommendation

For an improved cognitive development to be properly enhanced and guaranteed among the students of History and English Language as highlighted in this paper, it is recommended that:
The school authority should integrate the use of electronic gadgets and ICT equipment to the teaching and learning of History and English Language.

Students should be encouraged as well as the lecturers to be well equipped and conversant with the basic skills required in ICT.
ICT gadgets necessary for power point presentation should be provided to enhance teaching and learning process in the class.
A properly equipped virtual library as well as information and management centre should be provided for the use of both the students and their lecturers.

A functioning Language Laboratory should be provided for the use of English Language students to make them acquainted with pronunciation and its application.

Appropriate in-service training should be given to the lecturers so that they can integrate electronic learning into their institutional assignments.

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