
REPOSITIONING IGBO LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS THROUGH INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

The study analyzed the repositioning of Igbo language instruction in secondary schools through information and communication technology in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. Three research questions guided the study. Questionnaire instrument with 39 items was used. A total of 97 Igbo language teachers were purposively used for the study. The study revealed that ICT facilities are not adequately available for Igbo language instruction. Also, Igbo language teachers' ICT knowledge and skill are very limited. It was therefore recommended among others that government should make effort to provide the needed ICT facilities in secondary schools for Igbo language teaching and learning as well as train and retrain the Igbo language teachers on ICT usage through seminars and workshops.

Key words: Igbo language, Information and communication technology, Language teaching and learning.

The world has become so technology conscious that people are no longer satisfied with the traditional talk and chalk-based method of instruction. Corroborating this, Nwosu and Ogbomo (2012) noted that educational systems around the world are under increasing pressure to use the new information and communication technologies (ICTs). The premise that ICTs are important for bringing changes to classroom teaching and learning is the basis for this pressure. Thus, there has been widespread research interest in the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education. This is because according to Zanker (2002), one of the indices of the world's leadership is a nation's capacity to integrate newer technologies into the various sectors of her economy (including education sector).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has been defined as the acquisition, analysis, manipulation, storage and distribution of information; and the design and provision of equipment and software for these purposes (deWatteville and Gilbert 2000). This definition shows that ICT encompasses both the machinery and their utility. Nwosu and Ogbomo (2012) further stated that ICT includes communication devices or applications, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, networks, software, and satellite systems, as well as the various services and applications associated with video conferencing and distance learning. This proves that ICT can be used in various ways to facilitate teaching and learning. Confirming this, Tinio (2002) remarked that ICTs are powerful enabling tools for educational change and reform. When used appropriately, different ICTs help expand access to education, strengthen the relevance of education to the workplace, and raise educational quality by creating an active process connected to real life. Mikre (2013) in agreement pointed out that ICTs are dependable tools in facilitating the attainment of one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which is achievement of universal primary education by the year 2015. According to Mikre (2013), Kofi Anan, the former United Nations Secretary General, pointed out that in order to attain the goal of Universal Primary Education by the year 2015; information and communication technologies (ICTs) must be used to unlock the door of education systems. This indicates the growing demand and increasingly important role that (ICTs) could play in education. ICTs provide greater opportunity for students and teachers to adjust learning and teaching to individual needs. There is therefore every need for the integration of ICT into every aspect of the educational system in Nigeria, including the teaching and learning of languages.

Language teaching and learning involves concerted effort by the teacher and the learner to help the learner imbibe knowledge and skills that would enable him (the

learner) to communicate with other users of the language effectively. Hartoyo (2008) asserted that language teaching has been shaped by a desire to find a better way of teaching than the existing method. This desire has led language teachers to move from one teaching method to another. One of the latest methods that are developing is Information and Communication Technology-based Language Learning otherwise known as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). The method focuses in ICT utilization to enhance language learning. The ICT tools are flexible, rich and interactive. It has the ability to present materials in more diverse ways than books. In affirmation, Manuelamargan (2009) opined that the use of ICT in language teaching and learning can give students ample opportunity to learn a language in a new and pleasant way, not just by interacting with the teacher and reading from the book. For instance, in such programmes as computerized teaching in the form of multimedia, students can listen to recordings, watch videos, speak into the microphone, record their progress or learn words by clicking on pictures and hearing their pronunciation. Teachers can only intervene with their own ideas as facilitators. The application of ICT gives more opportunities for communication between learners, they can exchange information in real time, they can participate in blog discussions, work in teams on different projects, exchange e-mails and search for information, Manuelamargan (2009).

Again, by using the authentic material provided by the Internet, one will have a better insight into the culture of the country and people whose language one studies. The Internet also offers a wide variety of reference materials like online dictionaries, e-encyclopaedias and search mechanisms very helpful for developing students` individual work. They can find, alone, the missing information, the meaning of new words, synonyms, antonyms or can communicate with the rest of the group online, via e-mail or in any other ICT environment.

Since ICT has been found to be effective in teaching and learning of other languages, it is likely going to be as well in the teaching and learning of Igbo language. Igbo is a 'kwa' language and is predominantly spoken in the Eastern states of Nigeria. It is one of the three major Nigerian languages and is therefore a core subject in Nigerian curriculum for secondary schools. However, teaching and learning of Igbo language in secondary schools has been faced with many challenges ranging from inadequate number of trained teachers, non availability of instructional materials, lack of interest on the part of the learners to poor method of teaching. Among these challenges, poor method of teaching has been proved to be a major constraint in Igbo language teaching and learning (Umo, 2001; Omeje, 2009). In affirmation, Offorma, (2009) noted that a teacher can have a good content to teach, as well as good evaluation process, but if the method of teaching is not effective, it may mar the entire teaching process. Hence, there is every need that effective method(s) like the integration of

Information and Communication Technology be employed in the teaching and learning of Igbo language. However, it is not certain whether the facilities for ICT are available for Igbo language teaching. Even if they are available, it is in doubt whether the Igbo language teachers have the requisite knowledge and skills that will facilitate their usage. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the availability and use of Information and Communication Technology in the teaching and learning of Igbo language. Three research questions guided the study.

1. What are the available Information and Communication Technology facilities for Igbo language teaching and learning?
2. To what extent are the available ICT facilities utilized for Igbo language instruction?
3. What ICT skills do Igbo language teachers possess?

Method

The study adopted a survey design. Ninety seven (97) Igbo language teachers in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State made up the population. There was no sampling because the population was manageable.

The instrument for generating data was a self-made questionnaire named Repositioning Igbo Language through Information and Communication Technology Questionnaire (RILICTQ). The instrument was face-validated by experts in language education and those in measurement and evaluation at the University of Nigeria. It is made up of three clusters with thirty nine items. The items in cluster A have responses such as Available (A) and Not Available (N A). Those in cluster B has response options as Very High Extent (VHE) =4, with mean above 4.99, High Extent (H E) =3, with mean 3.50-4.99, Low Extent (L E) =2, with mean 3.00-3.49 and Very Low Extent (V L E) =1, with mean 2.50-2.99. Cluster C has responses as Very Efficient (V E) =4, Efficient (E) =3, Less Efficient (L E) = and Not At All (N A A) =1.

Means were used to answer the research questions and a mean score of 2.50 and above are accepted while those below 2.50 are rejected.

Results

Results of the study are presented based on the research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the available information and communication technology facilities for Igbo language teaching and learning?

Table 1: Mean Scores of Respondents Showing the Available Information and Communication Technology Facilities for Igbo Language Teaching and Learning

S/N	Items	N	X	SD	Decision
1	Computers	97	2.74	.90	A
2	Cable satellite	97	2.06	.89	NA
3	Internet	97	2.10	.82	NA
4	Television	97	3.30	1.10	A
5	Video CD	97	2.44	1.10	NA
6	Slide projector	97	1.94	1.03	NA
7	Overhead projector	97	2.32	.93	NA
8	Multimedia projector	97	2.01	.95	NA
9	Scanner	97	2.21	1.12	NA
10	E-blackboard	97	2.27	.98	NA
11	Printer	97	1.92	.92	NA
12	Speakers	97	2.62	.83	A
13	Adobe flash	97	2.82	.94	A
14	Uninterrupted power supply	97	2.36	.71	NA
	Grand mean		2.37	0.94	

Decision= A→Available, NA→Not Available

Table 1 shows that only items number 1, 4, 12 and 13 are available for Igbo language instruction because their mean scores are 2.74, 3.30, 2.62 and 2.82 respectively. Conversely, items number 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 14 are not available because their mean scores are below 2.50. Therefore, the accepted available Information and Communication Technology facilities for Igbo language instruction are computers, television, speaker and adobe flash.

Research Question 2: To what extent are the available ICT facilities utilized for Igbo language instruction?

Table 2: Mean Scores of Extent of Utilization of Available ICT Facilities for Igbo Language Teaching and Learning

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1	Computers	2.74	0.90	U (VLE)
2	Cable satellite	2.06	0.89	NU
3	Internet	2.10	0.82	NU

4	Television	3.31	1.10	U (LE)
5	Video CD	2.44	1.10	NU
6	Slide projector	1.94	1.03	NU
7	Overhead projector	2.32	0.93	NU
8	Multimedia Projector	2.01	0.95	NU
9	Scanner	2.21	1.12	NU
10	E-blackboard	2.27	0.98	NU
11	Printer	1.92	0.92	NU
12	Speakers	2.24	1.04	NU
13	Adobe flash	2.82	0.94	U (VLE)
14	Uninterrupted power supply	2.36	0.71	NU
	N = 97			
	Grand mean/ SD	2.39	0.96	

Decision= U→Utilized, NU→Not Utilized

Table 2 indicates that only items number 1, 4 and 13 are utilized by the Igbo language teachers. Their mean scores are 2.74, 3.31 and 2.82 respectively. Other 10 items are not utilized because their mean scores are below 2.50. Although most of the listed ICT facilities are not available, item number 12 is available but not utilized because it has the mean score of 2.24. The available items number 1, 4 and 13 are utilized to Very Low Extent, Low extent and Very Low Extent respectively.

Research Question 3: What ICT skills do Igbo language teachers possess?

Table 3: Mean Scores of ICT Skills Possessed by Igbo Language Teachers

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1	Computer Appreciation	3.31	1.01	P
2	Booting	3.34	0.83	P
3	Internet browsing	2.05	0.84	NP
4	Knowledge of operating windows	1.89	0.75	NP
5	Knowledge of operating DOS	2.23	0.68	NP
6	Application of Microsoft word	2.80	0.89	P
7	Application of Microsoft power point	2.24	1.07	NP
8	Application of adobe reader	2.37	0.95	NP
9	Application of adobe flash	2.97	1.06	P
10	Application of e-blackboard	1.80	1.03	NP
11	Application of video conferencing	2.06	0.96	NP
	N = 97			
	Grand mean/SD	2.46	0.92	

Decision= P→Possessed, NP→Not Possessed

Apart from items number 1, 2, 6 and 9 that have mean scores above 2.50, others have mean scores below 2.50. The implication is that ICT literacy level of Igbo language teachers used for this study is very limited hence; they possess only the skill of computer appreciation, booting, application of Microsoft word and application of adobe flash.

Discussion

From the data analysis, the study revealed that ICT facilities are not available for Igbo language instruction. Of all the 14 items listed for Igbo language teaching and learning, only computer, television, speaker and adobe flash are available. The finding agrees with Ibenegbu (2011), who noted that Nigerian teachers and students do not have access to ICT facilities due to their unavailability.

The study also portrayed that three out of the 4 available ICT facilities are being utilized by Igbo language teachers. This is an indicator that if other ICT facilities are available, the teachers would be motivated to go and update their knowledge and skills on how to use them in their teaching. This finding is in support of Zanker (2002) who reported that non usage of ICT facilities may be caused by inaccessibility other than teachers' refusal or reluctance to use them. In fact, in the absence of ICT facilities, it is doubtful how teachers can use what does not exist and what they do not know how to use.

It was also discovered that most of Igbo language teachers do not possess sufficient skills on how to use ICT facilities in their instructions. This is worrisome because when teachers do not have the basic ICT operation skills, they are not likely to integrate them into classroom activities. This finding is in line with that of Newhouse (2001) who opined that it is not possible to implement the ICT curriculum without classroom instructors that are computer literate. Since teachers are the actual curriculum implementers at the classroom level, mastering basic skills in computer operations should be integrated into teacher training education of the 21st century.

Recommendations

Drawing inspiration from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

ICT facilities should be made available by government for teaching and learning of Igbo language in secondary schools.

Training and re-training of Igbo language teachers on how to use the ICT facilities in their instructions should be embarked upon through seminars and workshops.

Igbo language teachers should on their own try to update their ICT knowledge and skills, using the available cyber cafes around.

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