



WHATSAPP APPLICATION AS AN ONLINE TOOL IN SSCE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Poor standard of English Language usage among youths in Oyo State and Nigeria at large has become a hydra-headed problem. There has been the introduction of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) tool by Herring (2001) in the U.S. However, scanty study exists in literature on the use of CALL and the use of WhatsApp application in the English language pedagogy in Oyo State of Nigeria. Hence, this study attempts to fill this research gap by using the

INTRODUCTION

The fallen standard of English Language usage in Nigeria has become exacerbated. 2020 WAEC Chief Examiner's Report on English Language states that many students failed the subject. It has become very common-place to see Nigerian tertiary institution students who cannot speak the English language fluently and cannot write same lucidly. As a result, the teaching and learning of the English language must be improved through the introduction of modern automated or digital approaches. Therefore, this study focuses on examining the use of WhatsApp application as an online tool in the pedagogy of Senior Secondary School English language in Oyo State, Nigeria.

WhatsApp is a free cross-platform messaging service. It makes users of iPhone and Android phones, smartphones and Mac and windows PC to be able to call and exchange text and photo across the globe for free, regardless of the recipient's device. It is also characterized by the following features. In the first instance, WhatsApp is often used in sending simple but reliable messages to friends, colleagues and families for free. Secondly, there is also what is called 'WhatsApp on the WEB' and desktop which often keeps the conversation going. Thirdly, WhatsApp voice and video calls often make the cell phone users to speak or converse freely. This is what can be used in the teaching and learning processes. It allows students to see physically what is



theoretical framework of Herring's (2001) Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as well as Hymes' (1972), Halliday's (1978) and Canale's (1983) Communicative Competence (CC) in examining how the use of WhatsApp application in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination students in English Language in Oyo State secondary schools could help develop poor standard of the English Language usage in Nigeria. Questionnaires were administered among 240 students from 12 purposively sampled senior secondary schools in Oyo State. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Simple percentage statistical tool was used in analyzing the data. The findings revealed that WhatsApp application helps develop learners' communicative competence in their use of English as a second language, improves the poor standard of English usage in Nigeria, develops the nation scientifically and technologically, facilitates students' understanding of what they are taught and motivates the learners to learn how to develop their language skills. It was recommended that government should supply tools like ipads, iPhones, smart phones and Android phones to enable the teachers use WhatsApp application to teach SSCE English Language in Oyo State secondary. schools

Key Words: WhatsApp applications, CALL, English Language pedagogy, Communicative Competence

taught and helps them understand. It is an academic platform where participants in the classroom academic setting can engage in an open conversation and academic discourse. New vocabularies can be learnt through WhatsApp application through an online lexicographer called 'Grammarly'. Reading skill can be developed through the teaching of comprehension via an internet tool called WhatsApp application. Also, composition writing can be taught through the giving of sampled essays on the screen through WhatsApp. Each student participant is made to be in possession of an iPhone or Android cell phone to facilitate the pedagogy of English as a second language in Nigerian socio-cultural contexts.

The use of WhatsApp application is often engaged in language pedagogy in Philipines, the United States, Britain, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa, Hong- Kong, Brazil, Kenya, Egypt, India, Ghana, Germany, China, etc. In the U.S., WhatsApp application is often employed in teaching the English language in conjunction with the use of an electronic board and the down-linked equipment and the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) package called video-conferencing (Herring, 2001).



The use of WhatsApp as an online package being used to engage in conversation and send messages started during the GSM Revolution of President Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999 in Nigeria (Taiwo 2012, P.7). Prior to this era, Nigerians were not exposed to the use of mobile cell phones. Post and Telecommunication Department (P&T) and Nigerian External Telecommunications Limited (NET) were in full control of telecommunications in Nigeria (Taiwo, 2012). With the formation of Nigerian Communications Commission in 1992 by the military government and the formation of Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), Nigerians heaved a sigh of relief (Taiwo, 2012). People could use land phone. But immediately Obasanjo came to power as a democratically elected president, there was a liberalization of communications in Nigeria which brought about the formation of four telecommunication companies: MTN, ECONET, NITEL a Nigerian-based company called Communications Investment Limited (CIL). Nigerian-based company called Communications Investment Limited (CIL). Nigeria-based CIL quickly lost out because they couldn't meet the necessary financial requirements (Taiwo, 2012). According to Taiwo (2012), in 2011, there had been several mobile service providers in Nigeria such as Mobile Telephone Network (MTN), Globacom, Airtel, MTel, etc. The spreading of cell phones usage in Nigeria through the 'revolution' in communication in Nigeria introduced the wide spread usage of WhatsApp applications in communication and sending messages.

WhatsApp is often used by Nigerians in social interaction, political discourse, religious discourse, and for commercial purpose. Also, it has been discovered by these researches that there is a dwindling in the standard of the English language usage in Nigeria. This paper therefore focuses at studying how WhatsApp application in Internet or online tool could be used in SSC English language pedagogy in Oyo State so as to improve the learners' communicative and linguistic competence in this Nigerian lingua franca.

Statement of the Problem

The students' poor performances in the English language in external examinations like UTME, WASSCE, SSCE (NECO), etc. has become hydra-headed. Students of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Nigerian socio-cultural contexts lack communicative and grammatical competence in this target language. Coupled with the foregoing, teachers of English as a second language in Nigeria use different methods in the English language teaching such as audio-visual and audio-lingual methods, bilingual approach, communicative competence approach and grammar-translation method. However, despite the use of these methods in the English language pedagogy in Nigeria, the fallen standard of the English language usage in Nigeria continues unabated. Hence, this paper has suggested the utilization of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) approach through the use of WhatsApp application in the teaching and learning of Senior Secondary Certificate English language in Oyo State.



Also, different scholars have carried out researches on ICT methods of teaching the English language in a Nigerian ESL context. For example, Gbeyoron & Galti (2014) study the utilization of Mobile Assisted Language Use (MALU) for the learning of English in Nigerian universities, while Goteng (2014) examines the use of digital approaches and resources in the teaching of English in Nigerian universities. Are (2014) studies the integrating the skills requirements for reading electronic materials into reading instructions in schools while Onisabi (2014) examines the problems and prospects of integration of ICT into language teaching and learning. Aremu (2014) studies the impacts of the use of ICT in English language pedagogy on Nigeria's national development through the administration of questionnaires among 180 students' respondents from eight purposively sampled Nigerian federal government colleges. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the sampled the students' respondents. The findings revealed that ICT usage in Nigerian education reduces illiteracy and also improves the nation's technology, there is significant relation between ICT in education and national development, and ICT in English language pedagogy helps develop Nigeria's economy. Durrant and Green (2001) examine the way to correcting the literacy challenges in the new literacy and new technologies in school education, Egbe studies aspects of grammar of SMS text messages, while Aremu (2015) examines the students' perception of the use of electronic media in ELT large classes in the South Western Nigerian colleges of education. However, it has been discovered by these researchers that scanty literature exists on the use of WhatsApp application as an online automated tool in the teaching and learning of SSCE English language in Oyo State. As a result, this study attempts to fill the existing research lacuna (or gap) in Computer Mediated Language Learning (CMLL). Besides, the study equally attempts to extend research on language teaching in the specific and Computer-Mediated Communication in general.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study hinges on Sussaine Herring's (2001) Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Hymes' (1972) and Halliday's (1978) Communicative Competence. Herring's CALL is also termed Computer Mediated Communication in Language Pedagogy (CMCLP). Computer-Mediated Technology (CMT) is a novel tool used in language teaching and learning. It refers to the use of computer, iphones, ipads, Android phones, laptops, and other automated tools and gadgets in engaging in the commercial, religious, social, cultural, political or educational communication. This is also referred to as Internet Communication Technology (ICT) or computer Mediated Discourse by Sussaine Herring (2001). Virtual community is where the youth use blogs in engaging in social or commercial interactions. Bloggers use different online portals such as Nairaland, Naijabookofjokes, or Naijahotjobs in sending different



postings from different forums. These blogs have participants who engage in job seeking, jokes, dating, etc. This Computer-Mediated Interaction (CMI) of Herring (2001) has now been extended to the educational field called Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) by Herring (2004) and Crystal (2001). Blogs can now be used for educational purpose in teaching language skills, sciences, and commercial subjects. Also, WhatsApp online application can be used in the teaching and learning of comprehension and summary and in the teaching and learning of grammar in English as a Second Language (ELS) in Nigerian social and cultural contexts. Hence, Herring's (2001) CALL was used along with Halliday's (1978) communicative competence as the theoretical framework for this study.

Communicative competence of Hymes's (1977) and Halliday (1978) refers to the ability of a second language user to effectively use a second language in all real life situations. According to Hymes' (1977), communicative competence implies the ability of a second language user to know who speaks what, to who and how in a second language. It differs from Chomsky's (1965) linguistic competence which refers to ability of second language user to have grammatical competence (i.e knowing the grammatical rules). According to Alo (2003, p.116) cited from Ogunsiji (2004, p.21), Canale (1983) identifies four components of communicative competences which are grammatical sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. Grammatical competence implies the mastery of the formal rules of language, while the sociolinguistic competence concerns with the understanding of the social and conventional rules of language use. That is, knowing what to say, how to say it, when and where to say it and to whom. Discourse competence signifies the ability to manipulate language form and rhetorical devices in achieving specific communicative purpose. It implies the knowledge of the written or spoken text construction. The strategic competence, on the other hand signifies the ability of second language user to overcome specific communicative and situational or contextual problems as they arise through the manipulation of linguistic forms and resources as well as the use of extra-linguistic or paralinguistic cues or devices. Aremu (2010) in explaining communicative competence posits that apart from four components of communicative competence of Canale (1983), the pragmatic competence is also a part of the communicative competence. Pragmatic competence could be explained through what Kecskes (2010) terms Situational Bound Utterance (SBU) which states that utterance or discourse could be interpreted from 'outside-in' and 'inside-out'. That is, an utterance is to be interpreted through the use of lexical patterns (wordings) and the use of body moves, gestures as well as the 'conditions' of the environment in which the language is used. When one has the ability to understand this in a second language pedagogy, one has got the communicative competence in the second language. In this paper, Sussaine Herring's (2001) Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as well as Canale's (1983),



Hymes' (1972) and Halliday's (1978) Communicative Competence form the theoretical framework on which the analysis and discussion in this study hinges.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant at improving the communicative competence of learners of English in the senior secondary schools in Oyo State to be specific and Nigeria by extension. It also expands research in English language teaching and learning. It gives recommendations to education policy makers in Nigeria to fund English language pedagogy in the senior secondary schools through the procurement of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) gadgets like ipads, Android phones, laptops, projectors, etc in senior secondary schools. When the novel approach of the utilization of WhatsApp application is introduced in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Nigeria, it will facilitate the pedagogy of English as a lingua franca as well as improving the fallen standard of learners' performances in English in UTME, WASSCE and other external examinations. Besides, the use of CALL in the English Language teaching in Oyo State and Nigeria at large will improve the nation's technology and economy.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine how WhatsApp application as an online tool can be used in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Oyo State senior secondary schools.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- (i) Study how WhatsApp can be used in teaching SSCE English language in Oyo State,
- (ii) examine the problems that could be encountered through the use of WhatsApp application in teaching SSCE English Language in Oyo State,
- (iii) investigate how WhatsApp application could be an effective tool in the teaching of SSCE English in order to improve learners' communicative competence,
- (iv) observe the skills that teachers need to possess in using WhatsApp application in teaching SSCE English language in Oyo State schools,
- (v) investigate the advantages that the use of WhatsApp application in the teaching of SSCE English language could bring to Oyo State and Nigeria at large, and
- (vi) examine the automated tools needed to be provided by the government in order to make English language teachers use WhatsApp application to teach SSCE English in Oyo State schools.



Research Questions

This study is designed to provide possible solutions to the following research questions:

- (i) How can WhatsApp application can be used in teaching SSCE English Language in Oyo State Senior Secondary Schools?
- (ii) What problems could be encountered through the use of WhatsApp applicaton in teaching SSC English language?
- (iii) How could WhatsApp application effectively used in bringing learners’ English communicative competence in Oyo State senior secondary schools?
- (iv) What basic skills do SSC English language teachers need to possess to be able to use WhatsApp applicaton in the teaching of English as a second language in Oyo State schools?
- (v) Which advantages can be brought about by the use of WhatsApp application in teaching SSC English language in Oyo State?
- (vi) Which automated tools must be provided by the government to make teachers use WhatsApp application to teach SSC English language in Oyo State?

Research Methodology

The theoretical framework for this study hinges on Sussaine Herring’s (2001) Computer Mediated Communication in Language Learning (CMCLL) which is also called Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as well as Hymes’ (1972), Hallidat’s (1978) and Canale’s (1983) Communicative Competence. Besides, research questionnaire were administered among 240 randomly selected senior secondary school students from 12 purposively sampled senior secondary schools in Oyo State. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting these students’ respondents. Simple percentage statistical tool was used in analyzing the data.

Data Analysis

The following ‘Table 1’ reflects the variables generated from 6 research questions and the responses from 240 students’ respondents.

Table 1: Frequencies of students’ responses to questionnaires on different variables on the use of WhatsApp application in SSC English language pedagogy in Oyo State Secondary Schools.

S/NO	Variables	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
1.	WhatsApp application can be used to teach SSCE English language through the	70 (29.16%)	90 (37.5%)	10 (4.16%)	30 (12.5%)	40 (16.66%)



	provision of ipads, Android phones and electronic boards for students' use					
2.	You can use WhatsApp to teach English language without providing any automated tool	40 (16.66%)	30 (12.5%)	08 (3.33%)	90 (37.5%)	72 (30%)
3.	Students and teachers need to be trained on how to use WhatsApp in the English language pedagogy	92 (38.33%)	70 (29.16%)	10 (4.16%)	28 (11.66%)	40 (16.66%)
4.	Students and teachers don't need to be given training on how to use WhatsApp in English language pedagogy	32 (13.33%)	40 (16.66%)	08 (3.33%)	90 (37.5%)	70 (29.16%)
5.	WhatsApp voice and video call is used in the teaching of comprehension and summary, grammar, composition and other aspects of SSCE English language	92 (38.33%)	70 (29.16%)	08 (3.33%)	40 (16.66%)	30 (12.5%)
6.	Lack of computer literate English language teachers as well as epileptic power supply can mar the use of	102 (42.5%)	60 (25%)	08 (3.33%)	30 (12.5%)	40 (16.66%)



	WhatsApp application in teaching SSCE English					
7.	Government inability to provide ICT or automated tools like iPads, Android phones, smartphones and electronic boards for students' use could mar the use of WhatsApp application in the teaching and learning of SSCE English language	92 (38.33%)	70 (29.16%)	08 (3.33%)	30 (12.5%)	40 (16.66%)
8.	Students' lack of seriousness and the use of smart and Android phones in engaging in mundane things like cyberdating and cyberpooling can mar the use of WhatsApp application in the pedagogy of SSCE English language in Oyo State and Nigeria at large	102 (42.5%)	70 (29.16%)	08 (3.33%)	30 (12.5%)	30 (12.5%)
9.	Discipline among the students must be enforced before the introduction of WhatsApp	90 (37.5%)	70 (29.16%)	10 (4.16%)	40 (16.66%)	30 (12.5%)



	application in the pedagogy of SSC English language in Oyo State					
10.	There is no correlation between students' discipline and the use of WhatsApp application in the teaching of SSC English language in Oyo State schools	30 (12.5%)	40 (16.66%)	08 (3.33%)	92 (38.33%)	70 (29.16%)
11.	English Language Teachers Must Be Computer Literate, Highly Disciplined And Role Models To Be Able To Whatsapp Application In Teaching SSC English Language In Oyo State Secondary schools	90 (37.5%)	70 (29.16%)	10 (4.16%)	30 (12.5%)	40 (16.66%)
12.	There is no correlation between teachers' discipline and computer literacy the use of WhatsApp application in the pedagogy of SSC English language in Oyo State secondary schools	40 (16.66%)	30 (12.5%)	08 (3.33%)	70 (29.16%)	92 (38.33%)



13.	Use of WhatsApp application in SSC English language pedagogy in Oyo State facilitates students' understanding of what they learn and improves their linguistic and communicative competence in English as a second language	10 (4.66%)	70 (29.16%)	10 (4.16%)	20 (8.33%)	40 (16.66%)
14.	Use Of Whatsapp Application In teaching SSC English Language In Oyo State Secondary schools will develop the nation's technology and economy	92 (38.33%)	70 (29.16%)	08 (3.33%)	40 (16.66%)	30 (12.5%)
15.	There is no correlation between using WhatsApp application to teach English language and the development of the nation's technology (or economy)	30 (12.5%)	40 (16.66%)	10 (4.16%)	70 (29.16%)	90 (37.5%)
16.	There should be provision of power generator for charging smart and Android phones as	92 (38.33%)	70 (29.16%)	08 (3.33%)	40 (16.66%)	30 (12.5%)



	well as ipads and electronic boards by the government if the WhatsApp application would be used in teaching SSCE English language in Oyo State Secondary Schools					
17.	Government doesn't need to provide generating plant before introducing the use of WhatsApp application in English language pedagogy in Oyo State secondary schools	30 (12.5%)	40 (16.66%)	10 (4.16%)	90 (37.5%)	70 (29.16%)

Discussion of Findings

Data analysis reflects that WhatsApp application could be used in the SSCE English Language pedagogy through the provisions of automated tools like smart phones, ipads, Android phones and electronic boards for students and teacher. Ninety (37.5%) of respondents strongly agreed. This signifies that more than 60% of the respondents agreed that for WhatsApp application to be used in SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State secondary schools, government need to provide the basic ICT package in our schools. Few respondents (12.5%) disagreed.

Secondly, the findings revealed that students and teachers need to be given the ICT training on the utilization of WhatsApp application in SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State senior secondary schools. Ninety-two (38.33%) of students' respondents agreed while 70 students (29.16%) asserted that they need to be given the basic automated training on how to use WhatsApp application SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State.

Third, many respondents (38.33% agreed while 29.16% strongly agreed) believed that WhatsApp voice and video call is to used in teaching SSCE English language in Oyo State secondary schools while few (12.5%) respondents disagreed. Also, many (42.5%) respondents agreed that lack of computer-literate English language teachers and



problem of epileptic power supply mar the use of WhatsApp application in SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State senior secondary schools.

Besides, many (38.33%) respondents held the view that lack of provision of automated tools like smart phones, Android phones, ipads and electronic board constitutes a problem against the use of WhatsApp application to the teaching and learning of SSCE English language in Oyo State senior secondary schools. Also, 42.5% of the students' respondents believed that students' unseriousness and the use of their cell phones in engaging in cyber-crime, cyberthefting, cyberbullying, cyberdating, and cyberpooling mar against the use of WhatsApp in the SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State senior secondary schools.

Coupled with the foregoing, many (41.66%) respondents held the perception that use of WhatsApp application in SSCE English language teaching and learning facilitates learners' understanding of what they are taught and improves their communicative competence in English as a second language. Many (38.33%) respondents believed that there should be the provision of power generator (or solar energy) for the charging of smart and Android phones used for engaging in the use of WhatsApp application in SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State senior secondary schools. However, few (12.5%) respondents held the notion that there is no need for provision of power generating plant to be able to use WhatsApp application in SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State Senior secondary schools.

Pedagogical Implications

It has been discovered through the findings in this study that the use of WhatsApp application in SSCE English language teaching in Oyo State leads to

- (i) development of learners' communicative competence in English as a second language,
- (ii) improvement in learners' motivation and interest in the learning of English as a second language,
- (iii) improvement in students' performance in their poor standard of English language usage,
- (iv) development of students' centered English language teaching and learning,
- (v) improvement in learners' readiness to develop their readings, speaking and writing skills in English as a second language, and
- (vi) development of learners' scientific and technological knowledge and skills.

As a result, educational policy makers in Oyo State and Nigeria at large need to provide automated tools or gadgets like smart phones, Android phones, ipads, iphones and electronic boards to introduce the use of WhatsApp application in the teaching and learning of SSCE English language in senior secondary schools.

Also, education policy makers in Oyo State and Nigeria at large to constantly organize ICT re-training programme for the English language teachers so as to make e-literate or computer-literate English language teachers. Besides, educational policy makers in Oyo State should organize functional PTA where parents would constantly conscientised on how to enforce discipline not only among students in the schools but also at their



different homes. When these are implemented in our schools, the use of WhatsApp application in teaching SSCE English language would yield positive results among students in Oyo State and Nigeria at large.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that the use of WhatsApp application in SSCE English language pedagogy in Oyo State improves the learners' communicative competence in the target language. Second, it also develops the learners' scientific and technological knowledge. Third, the introduction of this automated tool in the teaching and learning of English as a second language improves the poor standard of use and usage of the target language. By and large, the use of WhatsApp application in the pedagogy SSCE English language in Oyo State senior secondary schools will develop the nation's technical, scientific and technological knowledge.

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