

THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF ICT IN LEARNING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of ICT in learning Arabic and French in Lagos State University of Education. The sample size of the study consists of one hundred and fifty (150) students from two hundred and five (205) undergraduate students studying either Arabic or French languages. Descriptive statistics and an independent sample t-test were used to answer the research questions. The results of descriptive analyses and the independent sample t-test show that the students responded positively on their attitude and lecturers' encouragement in the use of ICT with a significant difference but responded negatively on their activities in the use of ICT with a significant difference. They also responded negatively on the availability of the necessary ICT tools provided for the teaching of the target languages without any significant difference. Certain recommendations for the better use of these gadgets were given, which will assist the lecturers and students in improving their language teaching and learning skills.

Keywords: Arabic language; French language; Information Communication Technology (ICT); Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL); Lagos State University of Education (LASUED).

ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات في تعلم اللغة العربية والفرنسية في جامعة ولاية لاغوس للتربية. يتكون حجم عينة الدراسة من مائة وخمسين (١٥٠) طالبا من مائتين وخمسة (٢٠٥) طلابا جامعيين يدرسون اللغة العربية أو الفرنسية. وتم استخدام الإحصاء الوصفي واختبار (ت) للعينة المستقلة للإجابة عن أسئلة البحث. وأظهرت نتائج التحليلات الوصفية واختبار (ت) العينة المستقلة أن الطلاب استجابوا بشكل إيجابي على اتجاهاتهم وتشجيع المحاضرين في استخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات بفارق كبير ولكن استجابوا سلبا على أنشطتهم في استخدام تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات بفارق كبير. كما أجابوا سلبا على مدى

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توفر ادوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات للإستخدام اللازمة لتعليم اللغات المستهدفة دون أي اختلاف كبير. وتم تقديم بعض التوصيات للإستخدام الأفضل لهذه الأدوات، والتي ستساعد المحاضرين والطلاب في تحسين مهاراتهم في تدريس اللغة وتعلمها.

Introduction

Variety of Technologies used in education system has shaped the system of education all over the world. Technology has become an integral part of modern education system through the design of curriculum and its implementation. It also serves as a means of providing an effective and efficient ways of teaching and learning by producing different platforms, packages and functions for both teachers and students. More so, the public lunch of internet in the year 1993 has made a great revolution in the history of educational technology. As a result of this, the world view of educational technology has changed from the analogy system to monolog appliances through the integration of different types of technological advancement into teaching. This has also changed the learning paradigm and consequently, face-to face learning has started to give way to web-enhanced instruction via internet based resources and systems. More so, these new trends in education technology also have great impact in the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The Internet and its use through several devices like personal computers, smart phones and other devices have become commonplace for both language teachers and students. The use of ICT in teaching languages has made global communication of the target language possible for both language teachers and students. It also gives room for cultural and linguistic knowledge to be more effective and comprehensive rather than teaching grammar, memorization and learning rules and vocabulary in isolation from rote (Paudel, 2022). This assertion made Eaton (2010:37) to conclude that —Today's language classrooms are drastically different from that of the mid to late 20th century.

A lot of enhancement and productivity has been realized as a result of the new inventions into the field of language teaching which include the followings: Computer-assisted language learning (CALL), Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Computer Aided Assessment and Multimedia Language Laboratory. Moreover, it is has become imperative for both the teachers and students of foreign languages to be more familiar with all these applications for the effective teaching and learning of the target languages. Therefore, this study investigate the ICT use, and the importance of ICT for learning and teaching Foreign language and extent of the use of the necessary language learning aids in the teaching and learning of Arabic and French languages in the Department of foreign languages in Lagos State University of Education, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Design

Quantitative paradigm was explored in this study in which the researchers used the positivistic ideology which claims that reality should be objective and measurable through the use of properties that are independent of the researchers and their instrument. Therefore, descriptive survey research design was adopted in an attempt to gather information from the students about their perspectives on the use of ICT in a foreign language class. The rationale behind the use of descriptive survey is that it will enable the researcher to describe the characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied which will enable the information obtained from the representative sample of the population to be generalised. More so, an independent sample t-test was used to test the four hypotheses so as to determine the significant difference between the sample means of the Arabic and French students.

Population and Study Sample

The population of this study consists of all the first and second year students of both Arabic and French languages in the Department of Foreign languages of Lagos State University of Education, Lagos State, Nigeria. This is as a result of the transmutation of the two colleges of education owned by the Lagos State Government into degree awarding university. Therefore the University has only first and second year students across all the departments and the admission list of the Foreign Language Department shows that there are two hundred and five (205) students studying either Arabic or French languages in the Department.

Consequently, the study adopts a convenient random sampling of one hundred and fifty (150) students as respondents. This sampling satisfies the sample size criteria of Krejcie, & Morgan (1970) and helps the researchers to determine with 95 per cent certainty of what the results would have been if the entire population had been surveyed. This sampling is also in line with Cohen's Statistical Power Analysis (1998).

Research objective

This study proposes to empirically evaluate the use of Information Communication Technology in a foreign language class. The study sets four main objectives which are to:

- investigate the attitudes and the degree of the acceptance of technological change by the foreign language students at Lagos State University of Education.
- determine the extent of the use of technologies during studies, analysing the types of technology, and online communication used by foreign language students at Lagos State University of Education.
- investigate the teachers' attitude in encouraging the foreign language students of

Lagos State University of Education to use ICT in learning foreign languages.

- analyse the degree of the availability of the instructional and technological aids provided for the foreign language students at Lagos State University of Education

The following research questions were used as guide for the research:

- How do the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education accept the technological change of ICT in learning the target language?
- How do the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education use ICT tools in learning the target language?
- How do the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education perceive their teachers' efforts in encouraging them to use ICT in learning the target language?

- How do the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education report the degree of the availability of the instructional and technological aids provided for them by the school to learn the target language?

The study also has two hypotheses to test the significant difference of the Arabic and French languages in their responses to each research question as stated below:

- H₀-There is no significant statistical difference between students studying Arabic and French using ICT at the Lagos State University of Education
- H₀- There is no significant difference between the Arabic language students and French Language Students of Lagos State University of Education in their report of the availability of the instructional and technological aids provided for them in the school to learn the target languages.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for the study was adopted from the questionnaire on ICT tools entitled: —Use of ICT Tools Questionnaire developed by Nagy & Habók (2018). The reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. The study adopts fifty items from the instrument which were used to answer the four research questions. The items were divided into five parts. The first part is the demographic data of the respondents. The second part asks about the Students' Attitude toward ICT with 15 items and four levels: items 1-6 consist of Internal Affective ICT Strategies, items 7-11 consist of Internal Meta-Cognitive Strategies, item 12&13 consist of Internal Importance of Mobile Tools and item 14 stands for the Internal Personal Significance of ICT. The third part of the instrument investigates the Teachers' Involvement in ICT with six items in three levels: items 15&16 consist of External Curriculum-Based Limitations, items 17-19 consist of External Task-Centred Strategies and item 20 stands for the External Motivating Role of ICT. Each item was weighed on 4 likert- type scale response format of 1- disagree to 4- Agree. The fourth part of the instrument itemised the Students' Activities with ICT. It has twenty items and each was categorised according to their usage in the foreign language class. The items were weighed on a 4 likert- type scale of 1- almost never to 4- almost always. The

fifth part analysed the degree of the Availability of ICT in the University. It has 10 items that were weighed on 3 likert- type scale of 1- Yes, and I use it to 3- No, Not Available.

Procedure of Data Analysis

The data was analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) 18.0 Edition by calculating the means and standard deviation to depict the responses of the respondents to a particular view. It was also assumed that items no 1 to 40 with a mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted and hence regarded as a positive answer, while item 41 to 50 with a mean score below 1.80 was rejected and hence regarded as a negative answer. The four hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test to check if there are any significant differences between the Arabic and French students in their responses to the four research questions.

Analysis of the Study

Research Question One: How do the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education accept ICT in learning the target language?

The result of the Mean and Standard Deviation on the students' acceptance of ICT shows that the students responded positively in their attitude towards the acceptance of ICT in learning the target language, and this is based on the assumption that items no 1 to 40 with a mean score of 2.50 and above would be accepted and regarded as a positive answer. The item with the highest mean in this level is —Using ICT tools for learning makes me happy. M=2.87; STD=1.03 and lowest means is —Using a computer for learning is very important to me. M=2.73; STD=1.13. They showed a positive response towards Internal Meta-Cognitive Strategies of ICT as it is indicated between items 7 and 11. They believed that using ICT for learning will go a long way to help them develop their cognitive skills which will aid their academic performance. The highest means in this level are item 9 —I can remember what I've learnt better if I use ICT tools. M=2.87; STD=1.01 and item 11 —ICT tools improve my grades. M=2.86; STD=1.06 while the lowest mean is item 8 —I can focus on learning more if I use ICT tools. M=2.71; STD=1.13. The students showed their passion and interest for Mobile Tools in learning the target languages. Item 12 —Using a smart phone for learning is very Important to me. M= 2.79; STD 1.09 and item 13 —Using a tablet

for learning is very important to me|| M=2.85 STD=1.00. This indicates that the students' sensitivity in the Internal Importance of Mobile Tools is very high. They also responded positively to item 14 —ICT tools play an important role in my learning process||. M=2.81 STD=1.13. This is an indication that the students recognised the Internal Personal Significance of the ICT.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the Arabic language students and French language students of Lagos State University of Education to accept the technological change of ICT in learning the target language. To test hypothesis one, the data collected on items 1 to 14 were subjected to t-test analysis and the result is presented in Table VIII.

Table i: T-test analysis on the Arabic students to that of French students' acceptance of the technological change of ICT in learning the target language.

Language	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value	P value	Decision
Arabic	33	2.48	1.10	148	-2.05	0.04	Significant
French	117	2.90	1.04				

The result in the t-test Table VIII shows that there is a significant difference between the Arabic language students and French language students of Lagos State University of Education to accept ICT in learning the target language. [t=-2.05; p<0.05] This implies that hypothesis one is rejected.

Research Question Two: How do the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education use ICT in learning the target language?

The result of the Mean and Standard Deviation on the students' use of the ICT technologies shows that all the items' responses were sometimes used by the students and this indicates that the students' do not use the ICT regularly. The result shows that all the means of the items are below 2.50 which is the value set for the positive response. Therefore, all the items were negatively responded and this denotes that the students used some of these ICT technologies intermittently. Furthermore, the highest mean among the item used is item 27(Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)) M=2.15; STD=0.08, followed by item 38 (Smart phone apps) M=2.12; STD=1.05 and item 25(Target language encyclopaedias/ lexicons e.g. Wikipedia) M= 2.12; STD 1.04. This indicates that most of the students are more

conversant with the social media networks and encyclopaedias/lexicons through the use of their smart phones. Other items that the students use in learning are: item 28 (Films/videos with Arabic/French subtitles) M= 1.93; STD= 1.03 and item 29 (Films/videos with original subtitles) M=1.96; STD =0.99. The students also reported that they used to engage in instant message through social media network and note taking through the note taking software as it is shown in items 32 (Instant messaging/text chat e.g. Face book, Messenger, Hangouts) M=2.05; STD 1.06 and item 33 (Note-takings software(e.g. OneNote, Evernote) M=2.05; STD=0.98.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the Arabic language students and French Language Students of Lagos State University of Education in the use of ICT technologies in learning the target language. To test hypothesis two, the data collected on items 21 to 40 were subjected to t-test analysis and the result is presented in Table VI.

Table ii: T-test analysis on the Arabic students to that of French students' use of ICT technologies in learning the target language.

Language	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value	P value	Decision
Arabic	33	2.24	0.97	148	2.06	0.04	Significant
French	117	1.86	0.91				

The result in the t-test Table VI shows that there is a significant difference between the Arabic language students and French Language Students of Lagos State University of Education in the use ICT technologies in learning the target language[t=-2.06; p<0.05]. This implies that hypothesis two is rejected.

Research Question Three: How do the teachers encourage the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education to use ICT in learning the target language?

The result of the teachers' encouragement in using the ICT shows that despite the fact that the students agreed that their teachers encourage them to use ICT in learning the target language through the External Task-Centred Strategies as it is indicated in item 17 (Teachers support the use of ICT tools for learning) M=2.71;

STD 1.10 and item 18 (Teachers give us guidance on how to use ICT tools for learning tasks to be completed at home) M=2.79 STD=1.09. They also agreed in their teachers' motivation of the use of ICT through the External Motivating Role as it depicts in item 19 (Teachers give us guidance on how to use ICT tools for learning) M=2.87; STD 1.03. However, the students lamented that the External Curriculum-Based Limitations of their programme of study is very low and this made them to agree that the materials used for the task in learning the target language both at home and in the class do not allow the use of ICT. This is clearly shown in item 15 (The material covered does not allow for the use of ICT tools in class) M= 2.85; STD 1.10 and item 16 (The material covered does not allow for the use of ICT tools at home) M=2.81; STD=1.08. Moreover, they advised strongly in item 20 that (Teachers should incorporate the use of ICT tools into their teaching) M= 2.81; STD=1.12.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the Arabic language students and French Language students of Lagos State University of Education teachers' encouragement in use ICT in learning the target language. To test hypothesis three, the data collected on items 15 to 20 were subjected to t-test analysis and the result is presented in Table VIII.

Table iii: T-test analysis on the Arabic students to that of French students on the teacher's encouragement on the use of ICT technologies in learning the target language.

Language	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value	P value	Decision
Arabic	33	2.48	1.12	148	-2.02	0.04	Significant
French	117	2.90	1.04				

The result in the t-test Table VIII shows that there is a significant difference between the Arabic language students and French Language students of Lagos State University of Education on teachers' encouragement to use ICT in learning the target language[t=-2.02; p<0.05]. This implies that the hypothesis three is rejected.

Research Question Four: How do the foreign language students of Lagos State University of Education report the degree of the availability of the instructional and technological aids provided for them in the school to learn the target language?

The result of the degree of the availability of the instructional and technological aids provided for the student shows that the students reported 90% of non-availability of the instructional and technological aids expected of them in the school to learn the target languages. The analysis of the result indicates that none of the means of the technology is 1.80 which is the value set for the positive response because of the 3 likert-type scale of the items. The item with the highest mean are items 43, Tablet computer (e.g. smart phones, androids, iPad, BlackBerry PlayBook™) and item 47, —Ebook reader>, e.g. Amazon® Kindle™ M=1.60 STD=0.68 while the lowest mean item is 50 —Functional Multi Media Language Laboratory M=1.39; STD=0.59. This indicates that the school has a data base which consists of E-books materials in the library and the students always make use of their personal smart phones for social media activities and to surf for information, while the school does not possess any form of Multi Media Language Laboratory.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference between the Arabic language students and French Language students of Lagos State University of Education in their report of the availability of the instructional and technological aids provided for them in the school to learn the target language. To test hypothesis four, the data collected on items 41 to 50 were subjected to t-test analysis and the result is presented in Table X.

Table iv: T-test analysis on the Arabic students to that of French students' report the availability of the instructional and technological aids.

Language	N	Mean	SD	Df	t value	P value	Decision
Arabic	33	1.61	0.69	148	1.15	0.25	Not Significant
French	117	1.47	0.60				

The result in the t-test Table X shows that there is no significant difference between the Arabic language teachers and French Language teachers of Lagos State University of Education report of the degree of the availability of the instructional and technological aids provided for them in the school to learn the target language [$t=1.15$; $p>0.05$]. This implies that hypothesis four is failed to be rejected.

Discussion

It is very important to study the attitude of students towards the use of ICT because different studies have showed that the attitudes of learners toward a particular technology can be predictive of its future acceptance (Rogers, 2010; Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006). The significant difference between the Arabic and French students in the acceptance of the of ICT usage in learning the target language as shown in Table VIII of the T-test is an indication that despite the fact that the respondents of this study showed a positive attitude towards the usage of ICT but their perceptives towards the adaptation of the ICT is different. This is in consonance with Ngo & Eichelberger (2019) who assert that the attitudes of students towards ICT are greatly influenced by their perceptions of ICT attributes, including relative advantage, compatibility, simplicity and adaptability. It is also in consistence with other study which suggested that lack of experience in using ICTs in Foreign Language classrooms can lead to different perspectives and attitudes in FL learners (Dang & Nguyen, 2014). Moreover, it must be noted that the significant difference in their positive attitude is in tandem with Rogers (2010) who asserts that the expression of students' perceptions whether favourable or unfavourable may be as a result of their beliefs, feelings, experiences and actions with the usability of ICT whether at school or at home.

Therefore, the accessibility of ICT and technical knowhow determine the direction of the attitude of students toward ICT, and teachers of foreign language must take this into account before adopting any type of ICT application in the teaching of the target language. This is in agreement with Makinde (2003) who reveals that attitude affects what is learned in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains since it is the attitude of an individual to learning that determines his or her desire to perform, thus making it relatively important to determine the individual attitude of foreign language students to the use of ICT

in the FL class. Furthermore, the study clearly shows that the most commonly used ICT appliances by the respondents in learning the target language is the social media networks and encyclopaedias/lexicons through the use of their smart phones. This is a common phenomenon in many countries that lack the adequate provision of ICT facilities in their school. This is in consonance with the research carried out by Obiegbu (2016) who investigated the use of ICT among the selected twenty-two out of the seventy-four secondary schools in the two local government areas in Awka metropolis in which it was discovered the commonest ICT facilities that are available to the students in Nigerian schools are mobile phones and the computer. He further reiterated that these facilities could be maximized in teaching every aspect of FL, even in the rural areas. This is because many types of software that treat various aspects of FL can be downloaded into these gadgets and used in the classroom.

Further studies on the issues of social media for teaching and learning FL highlight some of the advantages and disadvantages. Gurcan (2015:2) in his analyses of the advantages and disadvantages of using social networks in the foreign language class stressed that —social media zips through the campuses. The most commonly used social media network by the students are: Facebook, We Chat, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. He espoused that Facebook platform assisted students in developing their grammar, vocabulary, and writing, as it helped them share information and acquire new knowledge. This is also buttressed by Swain (2005) in his study on Facebook and foreign language leaning; he concluded that Facebook is a useful tool for enhancing language skills such as writing and reading. In writing, users may gain experience through composing various messages, and in reading they have the chance to read a variety of new messages.

Thus, they have the opportunity to learn new words in authentic contexts. However, Lamy and Zouron (2013) argue that social networking sites like WhatsApp causes addiction to the students as they are prone to their phones for unwarranted messages. They are extremely obsessed with sharing of selfies, videos and audio files with their friends and colleagues. As a result, they are not able to focus on important tasks. In addition, Obi et al (2012) observed that the use of these networks also affects students' use of grammar, particularly; writing and speaking because it creates undesirable reading and writing habits due to

common use of abbreviations and unusual jargon, thereby damaging pupils' ability to apply formal literacy skills. Therefore, language teachers should take note of all these issues and make sure that the students maximise the use the network to enhance their learning of the target language.

More so, the issue of language teachers encouraging the use of ICT in the class is an essential factor in the teaching of FL. Many researchers argue that teachers' attitude towards the application and utilization of ICT tools in the teaching process will also affect the attitude of the students (Dyck & Smither, 1994; Teo, 2008). If teachers show positive attitude towards ICT then they can easily provide useful insights about acceptance and usage of ICT in teaching students. Teo (2008) stated that the success of students in using ICT depends largely on teachers' attitude towards ICT. Therefore, the result of this study on teachers encouraging the use of ICT is in tandem with different research studies that observed that the effective use of computers by the students depends largely on the teachers' intentions, personal beliefs and attitudes towards teaching with technology and ICT use (Divaharan & Ping, 2010; Ozdener, 2007).

Moreover, lack of adequate ICT tools needed to learn the foreign languages as it is observed in this study is a common phenomenon in almost all Nigerian universities that offer both Arabic and French as courses of study. A research carried out by Lawal (2017) on using ICT for teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in Nigeria Schools observed that among the challenges in using ICT for learning Arabic language in Nigeria is the lack of efficient infrastructure and trained manpower to use ICT facilities. He observed that in some of the schools where some of the facilities are available, the challenges encountered are lack of the technological knowhow among the lecturers and students and the problem of erratic power supply endangering the use of the ICT tools.

Recommendations

- The University Management should explore all meaningful avenues to provide the necessary ICT tools needed for the teaching and learning of foreign language.

- University management should provide a stable power supply such as, standby generator or solar system to ensure appropriate use of the ICT tools in the multimedia language laboratory.
- University management should make appeal to ICT companies such as HP, Zinox, Toshiba, Samsung, etc. to assist the university in the provision of computer instructional gadgets.
- The governments of Arabic and French speaking countries can be contacted through their embassies in Nigeria for the necessary assistance.
- An experienced language laboratory technician should be employed by the management for proper maintenance of the hardware facilities as well as provision of suitable educational software for the use of staff and students.
- All the staff in the foreign language department (academic and non-academic) including the students should be trained on the use of ICT media for the teaching and learning of foreign language.
- Some of the academic staff in the department should be sponsored for special training on the pedagogical skills involved in the use of ICT for foreign language teaching. This would go a long way in check-mating underutilization of ICT resources in the Department.

Conclusion

The result of this study has clearly showed the importance of the use of ICT in the teaching and learning of foreign languages as courses of study in Nigerian Universities. The positive response of the students in their attitude towards the acceptance of the ICT in learning the target language is an indication that despite the fact that all the tools stated in this research are sometimes used by the students. However, they still have passion for the use of the ICT in learning the target language. More so, the students agreed that their teachers encourage them to use ICT in learning the target language but they realised that the curriculum and the materials designed for the task in learning the target language both at home and in the class do not allow the use of ICT. However, the study concluded that the significant difference in the T-test on the three out of the four research questions may be influenced by the attitude, perspectives and individual differences of the students towards the use of ICT. The negative response of the students towards the availability of all the ICT tools stated in this research is an

indication that many of the universities in Nigeria do not have adequate ICT facilities to teach Arabic and French languages. However, it is pertinent to note that the National University Commission, the body that supervises and accredits the programmes of study in all Nigerian Universities has made the teaching of ICT as part of the general courses for the fulfilment of the award of first degree in all the universities in Nigeria. Furthermore, The Lagos State Government is aware of the importance of teaching languages through the means of Computer-Assisted Language Learning and this is the essence of establishing the Multilingual International Resource Centre at Maryland, Ikeja. The ultimate aim of this centre is the training and retraining of French and Arabic language teachers to prepare the students ahead of an evolving multi linguistic global work environment. Therefore, it has become imperative to ensure the application of information and communication technologies to education so as to achieve the effectiveness of the educational process for teachers, students, and other interested parties who are directly or indirectly involved in the educational process.

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