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IMPROVING POOR READING CULTURE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA THROUGH COMPUTER MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC)

Dr. Degboro, Olufunke Damilola¹, Dr. Idakwo, Ocholi Victor²

Department of General Studies
Federal Polytechnic Ilaro (Now Federal University of Technology, Ilaro)
oluwafunke.degboro@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng
2348032255385
ocholi.idakwo@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng / idakwocholi@gmail.com
+2348035036486

Abstract

There is a growing concern about the diminishing in the reading culture among students of tertiary institutions. Stakeholders are worried that this will impact negatively on the performance of students in academic engagements. Traditionally, English language instructors deploy comprehension passages as pedagogical tools for exposing students to texts from diverse fields. Predictably, students show low interest on this approach, especially when the printed text is used. This study therefore considered a change of approach, where Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) tools are used to promote reading among undergraduates in Ogun state. It advocates the use digital tools to replace outmoded materials to transmit educational content. The methodology used is a hybrid of the quantitative and qualitative descriptive research design, where a structured questionnaire and software were developed as instruments for the collect data. The population consists of 10,880 students of the Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun state Nigeria as at 2021/2022 academic session. Stratified sampling technique was used in the selection of students for inclusion from the five school (faculties) in the polytechnic. An aggregate sample size of 386 was estimated, using the Taro Yamani sample size calculator at 5% margin of error. Out of this sample, about 198 students participated fully in the survey, having a response rate of 51.3%. Findings revealed that the students were motivated when computer-based tools were introduced for reading as evidenced from 61% of them that have high level of interest. The study discovered that the learning culture of the students through the use of computer is improved. It therefore suggests that digital tools should be used to engage students to comprehension passages and other educational materials.

Keywords: Poor reading culture, computer mediated communication, reading.

I. Introduction

The task of effective teaching language skills is a major concern to all language instructors. The teaching and the developing of basic language skills for communicative competence in learners of English as a second language in Nigeria has been a continuous practice for all stakeholders.

Language skills never stand out as individual areas but they form a chain cycle, where the breaking of one ring would cause the entire chain to collapse (Manaj, 2015). For this reason, students are often purposely exposed and equipped with the basic language skills in an integrated manner to establish the relevance of the English language to the positive maximization of local and international opportunities. In Manaj's words, "the skills will make you academically sound and miracle it will have when you enter into the word as an adult is magical in an adventure (Manaj, 2015,

There are four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are arranged in two functional pairs, where listening and speaking are paired together as constituting the oral aspect of language, while reading and writing are paired as constituting the written aspect. In another sense, listening and reading are regarded as receptive language skills, while speaking and writing are considered as productive language skills. The skills require active involvement of the interlocutors (Kolawole 2009:390

The aim of this study is to promote reading among students in tertiary institutions for the purpose of extracting meanings from the written language. It involves the three processing of letter identification: word identification, and meaning identification. It is the process of giving significance intended by the writer to the graphic symbols by relating them to ones experiences.

Statement of the Problem

Recent studies have observed a general decline of reading culture among our youths across the globe. Some indicated that youths have started clipping the perception of information and have replaced thoughtful reading of the work to short messages, hyperlinks and clicks. This ugly development indicates a rejection of the traditional good reading culture. This study therefore anticipates a paradigm shift of the traditional method of teaching reading comprehension into a computer-based method of teaching the reading comprehension.

II. Theoretical Framework

The Social Information Theory otherwise known as the Information Processing, propounded by Joseph Walther in 1992, provides an explanation for how aspects of the communication process interact with technological features of the media to foster the development of affinity and attraction in online 898. It also explains how communicators who meet through text-based Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) develop interpersonal Impression sand relationships.

Some outstanding characteristics of the SIP theory is that it accepts the limitations of sender and receiver relationships cues but opines that the texted messages ,the emails and feedbacks of the communication would act as motivation to form relationships online. Test of the theory Communications developments .For example when a candidate applies for admission online from JAMB and anticipates results which he/she expects with feedback from JAMB. This substantiates the fact that communication is open ended. This further substantiates Stepters View of CMC for friendship formation online in all (1992)

In support of the theory are: Computer Mediated Communication, non-verbal Verbal (action speaks louder than voice), penetration, uncertainty reduction and the power of the Law of practice theories Newell and Rosenbloom (1981)

Media Richness Theory, also known as (Media Richness) was pioneered by Draft and Lengel (1986) in an article was termed the most popular in the new media for its new theory of information and technologies. They argued that Managers can improve performance by matching media characteristics to the characteristics of the task.

The theory contended that the media varied in format richness which accounts for its media richness is defined as the ability to change understanding within a time interval. According to the theory, the use of Richness Media (e.g face to face conversations) enables users to communicate more quickly and to better understand difficult messages compared to learner media (e.g written memos).The theory believes that the use of Richeness Media would lead to better performance of the tasks that have multiple and possibly conflicting interpretations of the available information. The theory also posits that the media (writing memo) better for low equability tasks because rich media provides communication with too much information and superfluous messages whereas learner media does not.

Several studies have used controlled tests to examine the central propositions of the Media Richness Theories, and findings showed that matching of the media richness to task equivocally improves. Up to till the preset moment, ICT still enjoys high face validity among managers.

Reading Culture in Nigeria

According to Kolawole (2019), reading is such an important phenomenon in the life of everyone in the society. Fakeye (2010) opined and observed that the English Language scripts on reading among Secondary schools in Nigeria emphasized the import of reading to the falling standard in the English language subject. Sadykova et al (2019) also observed the problem of reading among the young people is one of the urgent problems of our time. Report from public examination bodies reveal that students performance in English language is poor and this has been traced to perceived wrong instructional strategies adopted by most teachers of English language.

Russian scientist emphasized the importance of reading in human development. In that it contributes to the development of full intellectual and emotional person capable of self-development and self-realization. (Valeer of Baranova, 2013 & Sagitova, 2014). It had also been reported of good reading skills perform better in various fields of work and this make them essential commodity in the society. Reading is also essential to literacy and it is an emancipator tool that liberates one from ignorance, disease, and poverty as well as providing one with the liberty for all round development (Fabunmi et al., 2011).

According to Odusina et al (2020), reading can be considered as a process of creating meaning via vigorous communication among the readers existing knowledge, the information proposed by the text being read and the setting of the reading situation. It is one of the greatest skills for learning that strengthens the students 'language skills, as students who read more have larger vocabularies do better in test or grammar and write better.

To Fabunmi et al (2020), reading is a term used to refer to an interaction by which meaning encoded in visual stimuli by an author makes meaning in the mind of the reader. It involves the recognition of printed or written symbols which serve as stimuli for the recall of meaning through the intellectual manipulation of concepts already possessed by the reader. This is corroborated by Degboro (2000) that reading is the ability to respond verbally or silently to the printed materials

and a process of giving significance intended by the writer to the graphic symbols by relating them to their own experiences and the meaningful interpretation of the printed or the verbal symbols.

The Teacher-Centered Strategy

This is a method of teaching the teacher dominated the class and passes information to the students while the students listen passively .In this type of teaching and learning method ,emphasis is laid on the students ‘who most of the time students hear the teachers speak but responsibilities are suppressed or ignored .Some scholars describe this teacher –centered method learning as being based upon a model of active teacher and a passive student’. It is an approach where in the class is centered on the teacher; the teacher is an effective model of various methods he/she among others employs are: direct instructions ,flipped classrooms, kinesthetic, The Learner –Centered Strategy inquiry-based ,expeditionary ,personalized and game-based method.

The Learner-Centered Strategy

Also, like the teacher-centered teaching learning approach according to Sotiloye (2019), the Learner-Centered approach is the method in which students are actively involved in the learning process and emphasis is laid on the application of knowledge outside the classroom context. In this method, the teacher uses many techniques in the teaching process to guide the student to arrive at his /her own answers. The learner that creates the new knowledge and the understanding for himself /herself while the teacher coaches, moderates and suggest learning activities which require the students’ full participation (Sotiloye et al 2019)

The learner is made to construct rather than being given knowledge and made to supply information in practical terms situations, interact with other learners as well as with teacher who provides good interactive online instructions. In this way, learner –centered teaching and learning process can then be defined as an individual’s way of organizing and using a particular set of skills in order to learn content or accomplish other tasks more effectively in schools as well as in non – academic settings (Schmaker & Deshler, 1992). It is a type of learning strategy a learner prefers to think it quietly first and left to see how it works. Also known as student-centered learning is where the instructor focuses on the individual learner instead of the curriculum as a whole and where the teaching shifts from the teacher to the student. It is the strategy of students taking active role in their education. Examples of student –centered practices include: advisory, service learning and project based learning. It is by engaging with the students, teaching problem –solving skills, getting students to think about thinking, allowing students to have control and encouraging

collaborations. It is focusing on facilitating learning by inspiring the learner process rather than providing information. It allows the student to write a choice of a book report along with presentation, or making a personal model based on a book has read in a class and the ability to allow a student choose which country to study rather than being assigned to a country.

III. Methodology

The study area for this research is limited to The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State being one of the most populous Nigerian Polytechnics and rated the best Polytechnic by webometrics in West Africa. The design adopted for this research is a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods, where a structured questionnaire and software was developed to collect data. The students were subjected to the reading of comprehension passages. Thereafter, they were assessed through a quiz competition in order to confirm their level of understanding using the CMC approach. See Appendix ... for the interface of the software (app) developed for this study.

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A finite population-type was adopted for this study. The population consists of all the students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State in south-west Nigeria. The Polytechnic consists of five (5) schools (faculties) namely: Applied Science, Management Studies, Engineering, Environmental and Communication. The population of the respondents (students) from each school can be evidenced in table III(i)

Table III(ii): Target Population of the Study (South-western Polytechnics):
Primary Data

S/N	School name	Population of the Respondents from each Polytechnic
1.	School of Pure and Applied Sciences	2160
2.	School of Management Science	3690
3.	School of Engineering	2280
4.	School of Environmental	1500
5.	School of Communication.	1250
Total		10,880

Source: *Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro Records and Data Unit, 2021*

The research study adopted stratified sampling technique to make the sample selection in this study to be proportionally allocated. Since a total of 10,880 respondents made the entire population, 386 were sampled using Taro Yamane (1967) sample size calculator at 5% margin of error.

Sample size of the study based on each stratum using the proportional allocation technique is as shown in table III(ii)

The questionnaire was carefully designed to accommodate two sections. Section A personal data which are (demographic characteristics) which will generate proper data regarding the respondent characteristics like sex, age, educational qualification and marital status and the second Section B are questions related to the research questions.

Table III(ii): Target Population of the Study (South-western Polytechnics)
Primary Data

S/N	School name	Population	Samples
1.	School of Pure and Applied Sciences	2160	77
2.	School of Management Science	3690	131
3.	School of Engineering	2280	81
4.	School of Environmental	1500	53
5.	School of Communication.	1250	44
Total		10,880	386

Source: *Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro Records and Data unit, 2021*

IV. Results and Discussion

Analysis of participants' demographic information

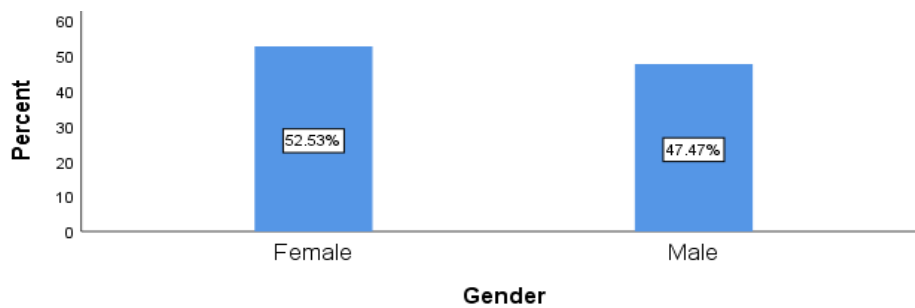


Fig. IV(i): Gender Distribution of participants

Fig. IV(i) depicts the graphical representation of the participants distribution based on gender. Result indicated that majority of participants were females which represents 52.53% of the total respondents while 47.47% of them were males.

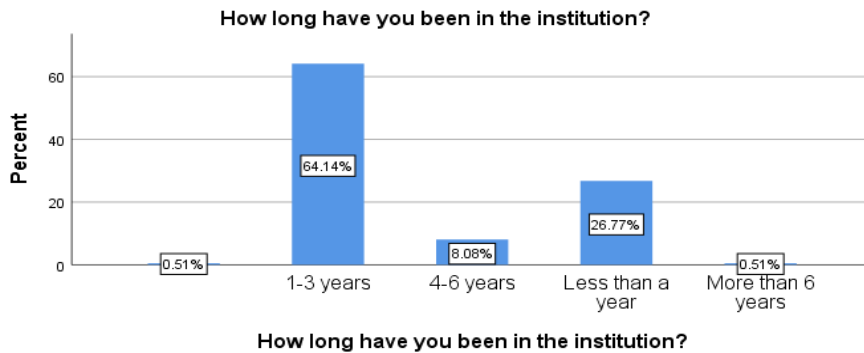


Fig. IV(ii): Distribution of participants by years of study experience

On the years the students have been in the institution, result of fig. 4.2, result indicated that majority of the participants have spent between 1-3 years, representing 64.14%, 26.77% of them have been in the Polytechnic for less than a year, 8.08% have spent between 4-6 years in the institution while 0.51% each of them have spent more than 6 years. This implies that majority of the participants were not new to Polytechnic education ways of traditional/computer mediated teaching.

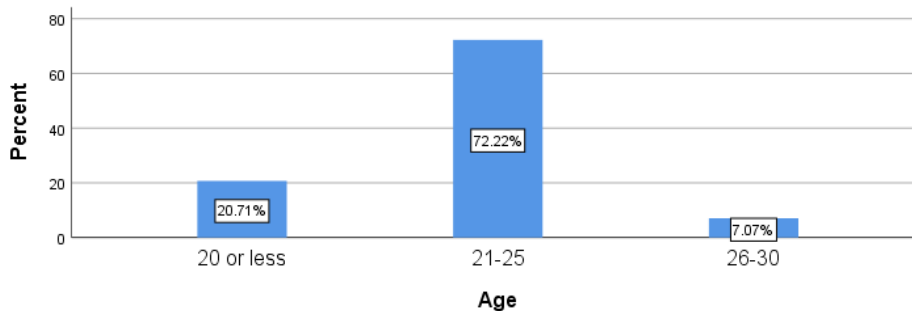


Fig. IV(iii): Age Distribution of participants

Fig. IV(iii) depicts the distribution of the participants. Results showed that majority of the students representing 72.22% fall between age brackets 21-25 years, 20.71% were less than 20 years of age while 7.07% were between age brackets 26-30 years. This implies that majority of the participants were in their mid-20's, signifying the common ages of students pursuing first degree or its equivalent in Nigeria.

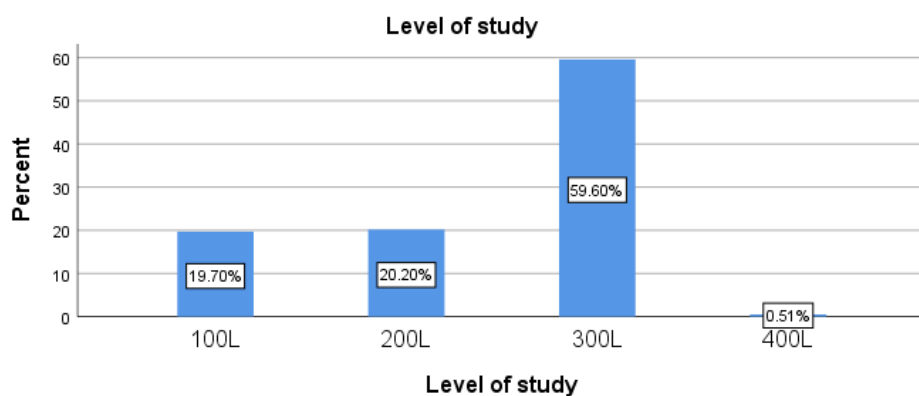


Fig. IV(iv): Distribution of participants by level of study

On the participants' level of study, result showed that 19.07% of them were in 100L, 20.2% of them were in 200L, 59.6% were in 300L while 0.51% signifying the minority were in 400L. This implies that majority of the participants were in 300L, which is hereinafter referred to as HNDI taking the Polytechnic education into consideration.

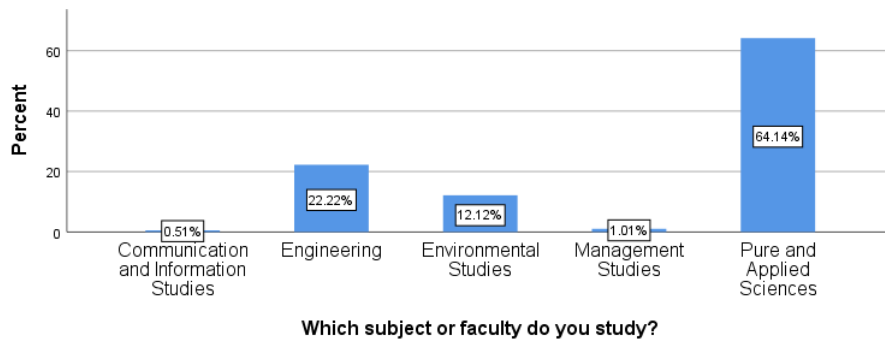


Fig. IV(v): Distribution of participants by level School of study

These participants were mainly from the school of Pure and Applied Sciences which represent 64.14% of the total respondents, 0.51% of them were from the school of communication and information studies, 22.22% were from the school of Engineering, 12.12% were from environmental studies while 1.01% was from the school of management studies. The non-evenly distribution of the participants based on schools was attributed to the fact that the participants were at the verge of writing their semester exams and the few available ones

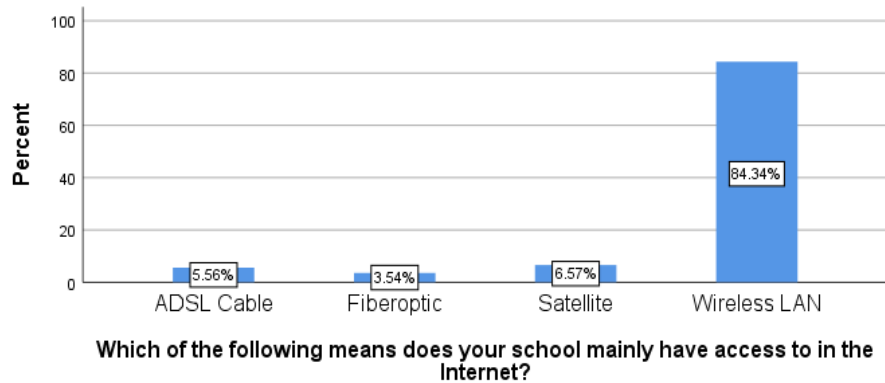


Fig. IV(vi): Means of institution accessibility to internet

Based on the participants opinion on the means of the institution's accessibility to internet, majority of the respondents representing 84.34% of the opinion that their institution uses wireless LAN mostly, 5.56% of them said that they use ADSL cable, 3.54% said that they use fiberoptic

while 6.57% said that they use satellite. This implies that the institution uses wireless mode in connecting their communication gadgets to the internet for teaching and learning.

Computer-based method as an improvement in students reading method compared is the traditional method of reading. Findings from the survey carried out indicated that computer-based method of learning/reading will improve students reading method than the traditional method (see table IV(i). Although, respondents argued that the computer-based method of reading is expensive to implement in tertiary institution compared to its traditional method, especially in African countries which Nigeria is not exempted as government does not give education priorities in terms of proper funding to compete with their international institutions.

The use of computer and arousal of students' interest in Reading. Findings from table IV(ii) indicated that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that provision of tools for computer-based readings will arouse their interest if proper tools are put in place. The findings is in line with the work of Mizrachi and Shomam (2003) where computer attitudes and library anxiety among undergraduates of Israeli B.Ed students were examined using Hebrew translation of Loyd and Gressard's Computer Attitude Scale (CAS), which consists of 30 Likert-type items that present statements of attitudes toward computers and the use of computers. They concluded that the students' confidence in the use of computer for learning in the library increases as their library anxiety decreases. Also, the findings also corroborate with the work of Amir (2010) where investigation was made on the improvement of reading comprehension through computer assisted language learning in Iranian Intermediated EFL using pre-test and post-test experimental design with the selection of thirty out of sixty students and found out that there is statistically significant difference between the reading comprehension of the two groups at 5% level of significance. The study concluded that the use of computer assisted educational techniques can improve students' reading comprehension.

Improvement in the reading culture of students with the use of new technologies

Empirical analysis of result findings indicated from the responses of the participants implies that reading comprehension can be improved upon through the provision of information communication technologies such as sufficient computer systems for learning, digital camera/data projector among other facilities that aid reading. The findings corroborate with the work of Olafare et al. (2017) where investigation was made on Colleges of Education lecturers attitude towards the

use of information and communication technology (ICT) in Nigeria, in support of UNESCO (2014) that technology can go a long way in bridging the gap (in education) and helps to achieve the aim through higher education particularly in developing countries like Nigeria where closing the development gap requires substantial effort, innovation and investment.

Furthermore, the result also support the work of Aina et al(2014) where technology to support reading in digital age was examined on both students and teachers and concluded that concluded that technology can be a tool for mitigating many literary challenges in different ways to address the full rages of skills both in the procedural and conceptual required for improving students literally

V. Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of the study, it can be logically concluded that Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro students learning culture through CMC is high, but not all the students that participated in the survey were able to have proper understanding of the use of computers to learn. This was due to fact that sufficient tools that aid learning CMC were not in place. The creation of policies to use CMC is a furtherance in improving the students reading habit.

The findings of the present study have implications on the mode of teaching students on comprehension passage using CMC backed up with policies, theories and practice.

Computer-based education is relatively new in the Nigerian education in relation to reading comprehension. This also means there is no policy in place yet for schools to embark on computer-based test to reading comprehension in Nigeria. Also, students are not motivated with adequate home computer practice with in rural communities. African countries most especially Nigeria is still far behind in educational technologies usage in the classrooms.

Recommendations

Students should be reimbursed financially by the government in order to procure gadgets that would aid their reading comprehension ability. Reading skill with CMC tools should be made compulsory in schools in order to meet international competitiveness.

There should be English language practicals slated for improving reading skills through CMC tools.

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