Teaching and Learning of the Igbo Language Using Google Classroom in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri

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Abstract

The study focused on the teaching and learning of the Igbo language using Google classroom in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri. The study was conducted using a descriptive survey design and was a qualitative research work. Three objectives and three research questions were formulated to guide the study. A sample of Fifteen (15) third year students and Twenty (20) female Igbo lecturers were carefully selected. Twenty items designed by the researchers for the purpose of instrument was employed for data collection from the respondents physically through questionnaire. Data collected from the survey were analysed using the Likert Five (5) points scale. The theories used for the study were Learning and Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (LTPCK) and Stimulus Response (SR) theories. The findings revealed that the female Igbo language lecturers found it more difficult using Google classroom teaching and learning methods than the normal method of teaching. It was also discovered that a good number of students could not afford smart phones and laptops for effective Google classroom teaching and learning. More so, most female Igbo lecturers in Alvan were not computer based. However, it is recommended that the lecturers as well as the students in higher institutions should upgrade their skills in the use of computer and Google classroom teaching and learning. Secondly, the Federal Government should equip schools with the digital tools required for online teaching and learning.

Keywords: Google classroom, Online teaching, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education.

Introduction

Language plays a vital role in communication, cultural preservation and identity formation. The Igbo language, one of Nigeria's major indigenous languages being studied in our various schools, both primary and secondary schools play a significant role in the cultural and historical heritage of the Igbo people (Nwosu, 2024). Notwithstanding, in recent times, there has been a noticeable decline in its usage, consistency and proficiency, particularly among the younger generation. This decline has raised concerns about the future of the language and has necessitated the adoption of innovative teaching and learning methods to promote and sustain its relevance. However, with the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing integration of digital tools into education system, e-learning platforms have become essential in modern teaching methodologies, which Google classroom is inclusive. Google classroom has gained widespread recognition for its effectiveness in facilitating online learning, collaboration and engagement. As an educational technology tool, Google classroom provides an interactive environment that enhances teaching and learning by allowing teachers to create, distribute and as

well assess assignments while fostering communication between the students and the instructors (Chukwunyere et al, 2023).

More so, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, is a leading institution in classroom in the teaching and learning of the Igbo language. The institution is renowned for its commitment to teacher training and language education. This makes it a suitable environment to examine the impact of digital tools in language instruction. In other words, by integrating Google classroom into the Igbo language education, lectures and students can engage in interactive and flexible learning experiences that extend beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Wilson-Ojukwu, Ezemonye and Okonkwo (2022) opines that in time past, teaching and learning were done when people know nothing about digital learning innovation. Things were progressing, education at the same time gained grounds as it was before. It was during the COVID-19 era that digital teaching and learning via Google classroom came into existence all over the world, which Nigeria was not an exception. In 2020, between the months of March and July, the government introduced some initiatives to ensure that students of all levels of education continued to learn, notwithstanding the ugly lock down during the period. Google classroom is a free web-based learning management system (LMS), which was developed by Google for schools, teachers and students; it also streamlines the process of creating, distributing and grading assignments in a paperless environment. Google classroom also integrates with other Google tools such as Google Drive, Docs, Sheets, Slides and Meet, thereby making collaboration and communication easy. Nigerians being what they are, being the kind of people, have interest in embracing other people's culture and tradition leaving theirs to fade away completely.

Google classroom is an online application of 21st century classroom teaching and learning of all languages, especially the Igbo language in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Imo State. However, there is no gainsaying that online applications transform education to a greater level. The problem is not the introduction of the so-called digital teaching and learning strategies but the tenets. For tertiary institutions to achieve this, a lot of things need to be put in place, especially in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education.

This paper analyses the teaching and learning of the Igbo language using Google classroom teaching and learning to showcase the state of the Google classroom teaching and learning, especially the Igbo language. This study aims at finding out the prospects and challenges of teaching and learning the Igbo language using Google classroom in tertiary institutions with Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education as a case study. The objectives are to:

i. examine the effectiveness of Google classroom in enhancing the teaching and learning of the Igbo language in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri.
ii. assess students' engagement and participation in Igbo language learning through Google classroom.
iii. identify the challenges faced by lecturers and students in using Google classroom for Igbo language instruction and suggest possible solutions.

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Methodology

The research design adopted in the study was a survey research design using stratified random sampling technique for the study. Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, was where the study was carried out. All the final year degree students in the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages were fifteen (15) students in number while the lecturers were twenty (20).

Conceptual Framework

Google Classroom History

According to Martin (2021), Google classroom was first announced on the month of May 6, 2014 and was released publicly on the 12th of August, 2014 with a preview available for some members of Google suit for education program. In the year 2015, Google announced a classroom Application Programme Interface (API) and as well a share button for websites, allowing school administrators to access and engage with Google classroom. In the year 2015, Google integrated Google calendar and field trips into classroom for assignments on due dates. Google opened classroom to allow any personal Google users to join classes without a requirement of having its suit for education account in the year 2017. Google suit allows personal Google users to access and teach a class. In 2018, it introduced a redesign to classroom, among which were adding a new class work section, improving interface, reusing of class work from other classes and adding features for teachers to organise content by topic. In 2019, Google introduced about 78 new illustrated themes and the option to drag and drop topics and assignments in the class work session. Furthermore, in the same vein, Google added better integration with Google Meet (GM) for teachers to have a unique meet link for each class.

Google classroom, according to Wilson-Ojukwu, Ezemonye and Okonkwo (2022), is a free web-based, blended learning platform developed by Google for educational institutions. In their words, it is the educational software whose primary purpose is to streamline the process of sharing files between the teacher and the learners (students). Google classroom integrates Google suit for education account with other Google services such as Google documents, Google sheets, Google slides, Gmail and Google calendar into a platform to manage student and teacher communication. It is generally used by schools and teachers for the purpose of simplifying, creating, distributing and grading students' assignments. They add that teachers can as well store class materials in Google Drive for students to have an easy access to the materials. According to them, since Google classroom is online-based, it can be accessed from any device with a web browser. In addition to their ideas, there are device specific applications for the link of IOS and android while it also works on Mac Chrome books. One of the advantages of Google is that, on most devices, works can be done offline; it works perfectively when uploaded where there is internet connectivity.

Online Teaching

Online teaching, according to Pallof and Pratt (2007), is also known as e-teaching or virtual teaching, which is a complex and multifaceted concept that has been defined and interpreted in various ways by different scholars. Online teaching refers to the process of educating students remotely through digital platforms, tools and technologies. It also involves the intentional facilitation of learning, guiding students to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes

and also fostering their cognitive, emotional and social development (Anthony and Ramnath, 2023).

Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education
Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Newsletter (2023) states that Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education is located along Amakohia, Orlu road in Owerri North Local Government Area of Imo State. Alvan has a rich history of advancing teacher education, established in April 1963 as the Advanced Teachers' Training College by the defunct Eastern Nigeria Government; it initially operated on the grounds of the Old Shell Camp in Owerri. It was renamed Alvan Ikoku College of Education in honour of Alvan Ikoku, who was a renowned educationist and founder of the first African-owned secondary school in Nigeria, Aggrey Memorial Grammar School. He also served as the President of the Nigerian Union of Teachers for many years.

The College expanded its academic programmes over the years. According to Lemchi (2020), it was later affiliated with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka to award Bachelor of Education (B.A.Ed) degree. In the year 2007, the Federal Government took over the institution and renamed it Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. On 20th May, 2015, the Federal Government of Nigeria under President Goodluck Jonathan upgraded the school to a full-fledged university to be called Alvan Ikoku University of Education. However, under President Muhammadu Buhari administration, it was on hold. In October 2023, the school was upgraded again to a university and became Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education. The school offers a range of programmes such as National Certificate in Education (NCE), Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) and Bachelor of Education degrees.

Theoretical Framework
The Stimulus Response Theory (Behaviourist) guided this study. John B. Watson (1924) reveals that learning theories are conceptual frameworks that describe how students absorb, process and retain knowledge during learning. He maintains that there are three basic types of learning theories known as Behaviourism, Cognitive and Social Learning theories. In practice, there is interplay of the theories of learning as it is impossible to make an exposition independently from behaviourist theory while dealing with cognitive theory or independently from cognitive theory while dealing with social learning theory.

Behaviourism refers to a psychological approach, which emphasises scientific and objective methods of investigation. This systematic approach is only concerned with observable stimulus-response behaviours and states that all behaviours are learned through the interaction with the environment (Mcleod, 2017). In other words, all behaviours are either reflexes produced by a response to certain stimuli in the environment or a consequence of that individual's history. These include reinforcement and punishment respectively, together with the individual's current motivational state and controlling stimuli. Although behaviourists generally accept the important role of inheritance in determining behaviour, they focus primarily on environmental factors.

Stimulus Response Theory (SRT), which stems from behaviourism, refers to the belief that behaviour manifests as a result of the interplay between stimulus and response. It is any form of conditioning in which a specific stimulus comes to be paired with a particular response

in the mind of the subject. The most common applications of Stimulus-Response Theory are in classical and operant conditioning. The pioneers of this theory include Ivan Pavlov, John B, Watson, Edward L., Thorndike and B. F. Skinner.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK) theory was proposed by Mishra and Koehler (2006). The theory specifies the difference between technology, pedagogy and content knowledge in education. It also emphasises that effective teaching in a digital environment requires a balance of application to the Igbo language and Google classroom. This implies that technology knowledge (TK), lecturers and students at Alvan must be proficient in using Google classroom and related digital tools in order to facilitate the Igbo language teaching and learning. It explains that knowledge on teaching and learning of the Igbo language requires interactive methods such as phonetic drills, grammar exercise and storytelling. The theory also highlights that the Igbo language instructors must have an in-depth knowledge of syntax, semantics, phonology and literature in order to create an engaged digital material.

Prospects of Google Classroom Teaching and Learning

1. This gives an opportunity for the Google classroom to mix asynchronous and synchronous teaching to improve students' language acquisition and accessibility to resources.
2. It helps students to access audio, video and text materials, which enhance pronunciation and cultural appreciation.
3. It also gives room for collaboration and engagement on discussion forums, quizzes, assignments which allow students to practice Igbo beyond the classroom setting.
4. Cultural Exposure: As students engage on online storytelling sessions, folklore, wellerism, idiom, etc, Igbo proverbs can be shared digitally thereby preserving cultural authenticity.
5. This encourages group discussion and reviews Igbo practice in real time.
6. Learners can comfortably record and share voice notes, videos where the Igbo language is used, as this will promote oral proficiency.

Challenges of Google Classroom Teaching and Learning

1. Limited Digital Literacy: A good number of Igbo language lecturers and students may find Google classroom navigation difficult as digital teaching methods.
2. Cultural Linguistic Constraints: It is evidenced that Igbo is a traditionally learnt language through the use of oral transmission and face-to-face interaction, which Google classroom teaching setting may not allow.
3. Technical Barriers: Unavailability and high cost of personal laptops and smart phones, poor internet and incompetent operation of these gadgets by some of the lecturers and students may as well hinder active participation.
4. Glitch in network is cumbersome.
5. It lacks physical interactions.
6. Lack of student motivation issues: Some learners are likely to lack self-discipline to engage actively without physical classroom suspension.

Materials and methods

The instrument the researchers adopted for this study was a semi structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in the English language which has up to twenty questions. The questionnaire was distributed physically and all were collected back after examining the students

and lecturers of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages Department, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education.

Variables	Values
Strongly Agreed (SA)	5
Agreed (A)	4
Strongly Disagreed (SD)	3
Disagree (D)	2
Undecided (UD)	1

Using Likert type rating scale of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, mean was then calculated with formulation:

X   = $\Sigma fx/N$
Σ   =   Summation
F   =   Frequency
X   =   Assigned value
N   =   No. of Respondents

Questionnaire for Lecturers

Table 1: To what extent does the teaching and learning of Igbo language in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri achievable?

S/N	RESPONDENTS	SA 5	A 4	SD 3	D 2	UD 1	Σfx	N	X	REMARKS
1.	Is Google classroom one of the best teaching methods of Igbo language in Alvan?	-	7	-	8	-	44	15	2.9	Rejected
2.	Does Google classroom facilitate the teaching of Igbo language?	1	6	3	5	-	48	15	3.2	Rejected
3.	Do lecturers prefer old methods of teaching Igbo language to Google classroom	5	6	1	3	-	58	15	3.9	Accepted

X = $\Sigma fx/N$

Average Mean **X** = 11.3/3 (2.9 + 3.2 + 3.9). **X** = 3.3.

From table 1 above, which answers the research questions, the respondents have the average mean of 3.3, which indicates that lecturers prefer the use of old method of teaching to Google classroom teaching. This is in line with the researcher's opinion that lecturers are not suited to the use of Google classroom in teaching of Igbo language.

Table 2: How often do lecturers use Google classroom method in the teaching of Igbo language?

S/N	RESPONDENTS	SA 5	A 4	SD 3	D 2	UD 1	Σfx	N	X	REMARKS
1.	Does the inadequate number of lecturers of Igbo language who are computer literate affect Google classroom teaching and learning adversely?	7	4	1	3	-	60	15	4	Accepted
2.	Do every Igbo language lecturer have smart phones and computers which aid the Google classroom teaching method?	2	4	6	3	-	50	15	3.3	Rejected
3.	Has the Nigerian tertiary institution adopted the Google classroom teaching method?	5	9	-	1	-	63	15	4.2	Accepted

Average mean **X** = 11.5/3 (4 + 3.3 + 4.2). **X** = 3.8.

From table 2 above, which answers the research questions, respondents have the average mean of 3.8 which indicates that most Igbo language lecturers are not computer literate and majority of them do not have personal computers which aid the Google classroom teaching and learning method despite the adoption of the method as one of the 21st century teaching method.

Table 3: To what extent do Igbo language lecturers use Google classroom method of teaching and learning?

S/N	RESPONDENTS	SA 5	A 4	SD 3	D 2	UD 1	Σfx	N	X	REMARKS
1.	Does Google classroom teaching and learning work perfectly well in the Igbo unit?	-	5	3	7	-	43	15	2.9	Rejected
2.	Does the Igbo language lecturers have the capability of using their individual data anytime for Google classroom teaching and learning?	1	5	3	6	-	46	15	3.1	Rejected
3.	Does network failure constitute a major challenge to Google classroom teaching and learning of Igbo language?	11	-	2	2	-	65	15	4.3	Accepted

S/N		SA	A	SD	D	UD	Σfx	N	X	REMARKS
4.	Do you think all lecturers of Igbo language have adopted Google classroom teaching and learning in Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri?	-	4	3	8	-	45	15	3.0	Rejected

Average mean **X** = 13.3/4 (2.9 + 3.1 + 4.3 + 3.0). **X** = 3.3.

The table 3answers the researcher's questions, the respondents have the average mean of 3.3 which indicate that Google teaching and learning of Igbo language does not work effectively as most lecturers do not have adequate data for such teaching exercise and network failure has not been helpful either.

Questionnaire for Students
Table 1: To what extent do you think students would achieve much on Google classroom teaching and learning method?

S/N	RESPONDENTS	SA 5	A 4	SD 3	D 2	UD 1	Σfx	N	X	REMARKS
1.	Do you consider Google classroom is the best teaching and learning method of Igbo language?	-	2	16	7	-	70	25	2.8	Rejected
2.	Do you agree that Google classroom teaching and learning should be made mandatory in tertiary institutions in Nigeria?	4	6	6	9	-	80	25	3.2	Rejected
3.	Does the use of Google classroom method enhance teaching and learning of Igbo language?	3	10	1	11	-	80	25	3.2	Rejected

Average mean **X** = 9.2/3 (2.8 + 3.2 + 3.2). **X** = 3.1.

From table 1 above, which answers the researcher's questions, the respondents have the average mean of 3.1, which indicates that the students do not consider Google classroom method of teaching and learning as a better option to the old method and they do not support making such option mandatory as it will reduce the morale of students as most of them lack the necessary tools for such exercise.

Table 2: To what extent do students participate in Google classroom learning with the availability of data and complete Igbo computer integration in the system?

S/N	RESPONDENTS	SA 5	A 4	SD 3	D 2	UD 1	Σfx	N	X	REMARKS
1.	Do students prefer Google classroom to old methods of teaching?	1	6	6	12	-	71	25	2.8	Rejected
2.	Is Igbo language completely integrated into computer system just like other languages of the world for digital teaching and learning?	5	6	9	5	-	86	25	3.4	Rejected
3.	Is data for Google classroom easily affordable by Igbo students of Alvan Ikoku Federal Univeristy of Education, Owerri?	-	7	9	9	-	73	25	2.9	Rejected

Average Mean X = 9.1/3 (2.8 + 3.4 + 2.9). X = 3.0.

From table 2 above, which answers the researcher's questions, the respondents have the average mean of 3.0, which indicates that students prefer old system of teaching and learning to Google classroom which is largely due to unavailability of data and integration of Igbo language into the computer system.

Table 3: How effective is the use of Google classroom teaching and learning to Igbo language students?

S/N	RESPONDENTS	SA 5	A 4	SD 3	D 2	UD 1	Σfx	N	X	REMARKS
1.	Does every student have smart phone for Google classroom activities?	-	4	6	15	-	64	25	2.6	Rejected
2.	Do Igbo language students understand Google classroom more than the old method?	1	1	10	13	-	65	25	2.6	Rejected
3.	Can a large number of students log into Google classroom without difficulty?	5	8	2	10	-	83	25	3.3	Rejected
4.	Is it possible to do Google classroom without internet connection?	2	0	12	4	-	54	25	2.2	Rejected

Average Mean X = 10.7/4 (2.6 + 2.6 + 3.3 + 2.2). X = 2.7.

From table 3, which answers the researcher's questions, the respondents have the average mean of 2.7, which indicates that the Google classroom teaching and learning is yet to have positive

impact on the students as most of them are ill-equipped with the necessary tools like smart phones together with poor internet connection and network failure.

Conclusion

Having discussed what the prospects and challenges of Google classroom teaching and learning is all about, it is shown it is good but there are still a lot of challenges for effective teaching and learning in our various schools today. It is obvious that our findings fully justified our stated objectives. The study has pointed out the potentials and barriers to using the Google classroom for the Igbo language teaching and learning in Alvan and showcased the prospects and challenges such as technical issues, lack of digital fluency, cultural limitations, high cost of laptops and smart phones, etc.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend that;

- The Igbo language lecturers in higher institutions should upgrade their skills in computer operations and also on Google classroom teaching and learning.
- Students in the Igbo language departments in higher institutions, especially, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, should improve on Google classroom teaching and learning.
- Network providers should ensure a reliable stable network for proper effective Google Classroom teaching and learning.
- There is also the need for both the teachers and the learners to update their knowledge on ICT, as to enhance teaching and learning.
- Workshops/seminars on Google Classroom should be organised periodically by the school management for both the lecturers and the learners.
- The federal government needs to improve on the allocations given to schools to meet the target/goals.
- The school authorities should ensure that data allowances are made available for both the lecturers and the students from time to time and also the availability of steady power supply if they want Google Classroom to be.
- Both the lecturers and the students should not overlook the old method of teaching and learning in our institutions today as Google Classroom has not become stable for now.
- The Federal Government should make provisions for smart phones/laptops for the lecturers and the students.

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