

**CREATIVE USE OF THE INTERNET AS ICT RESOURCE FOR THE TEACHING AND  
LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS****Febisola Olowolayemo Bright**Department of English, College of Education Azare, Bauchi State,  
Nigeria**Abstract**

*Observation and previous research works have shown that the important status accorded to English language in many countries of the world has made many educators strive to make their students attain proficiency in the language. Not only that, the Internet as an ICT resource has proved to be a very great avenue for sourcing for numerous relevant materials for the teaching and learning of English language at all levels of education. Against these backdrops, this paper aims to create the awareness of teachers of English to internet resources that can be creatively utilized for the teaching and learning of English. This will be achieved by exposing teachers of English to the Internet as ICT resources that could be creatively utilized for the teaching of English language. This paper will also guide teachers of English on how to creatively utilize discussed internet resources such as electronic books, e mails, social media, and websites among others to improve their students' proficiency in the language. It is believed that if these resources are judiciously utilized, there will be a great level of students' proficiency in English language and less failure in the subject in Nigerian schools.*

**Introduction**

For many years, English language in Nigerian schools has been taught with many approaches, methods, techniques and trends. The most recent and advanced trend is technology through the use of ICT through numerous Internet resources. As observed by Njamanze (2010), the emergence of ICT use in teaching/learning of English in Nigeria came on board as a result of the need to create; while adapting to the new dimensions of communication in the 21st century. This aims at changing the attitudes, values and aspiration of the language learner in line with the current global benefits of modernization. As observed by her, ICT has transformed education in Nigeria and made it more interactive. It has empowered teachers/students practically and theoretically in the use of technological facilities. She emphasized the fact that the uses of technological facilities in language teaching fill the gap in internal and external delivery, and it could be used within the immediate environment or by distance education.

The Internet as an ICT resource has proved to be an avenue for finding information, training opportunities, methodology-related materials and creating professional relationship through networking. Many research works have revealed that various educative materials can be sourced on the Internet for the teaching of English language. Examples of such materials



are: educative pictures and materials useful as instructional materials and games together with the use of videos containing recordings of important English lessons aimed at improving the teaching and learning of English language most especially in second language contexts.

Due to the important status accorded to English language in Nigeria and other countries where it is used as a second language, there is a need to find out ways of improving its teaching and learning in order to make learners of the language achieve proficiency in it. In view of this, this study has conducted a research on how to creatively utilize the Internet as an ICT resource that can facilitate the effective teaching and learning of English language at all levels of education in Nigeria and other countries where the language is used as a second language.

## **Methodology**

The study adopts a descriptive research methodology. The study researches into the means of using Internet resources to generally improve the teaching of English language. The information presented in the study was gotten from Internet resources, text books, journals and magazines.

## **The concept of ICT and its usefulness in the teaching of English Language**

Andrews et al (2006) describe ICT as stand-alone computers, networked technologies with a multimodal interface, mobile phones with the capacity for a range of types of communication, and other technologies which allow multimodal and interactive communication. Hew & Brush, (2007) describe ICT as any use of “computing devices such as desktop computers, laptops, software, or Internet for instructional purposes”. According to Kandasamy, Parilah & Shah (2013), ICT is used to describe exciting and innovative ways to provide learners with global access to information, learning and support. It is an umbrella term that includes any communication devices or applications, encompassing, radio, television, cellular phones, computer network, hardware, software, electronic mail, facsimile, satellite systems as well as the various services and applications associated with them. More specifically, Inan & Lowther, (2010) defines it as the use of technology by teachers for instructional preparation, instructional delivery and technology as a learning tool for students. Iwu and Umeh (2013) citing Iwu and Ike (2009) defines ICT as the acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of vocals, practical, textual and numerical information by a microelectronic based combination of computing and telecommunication. From the definitions, it could be deduced that ICT simply means the use of computer based information systems and communication systems to process, store and transmit data. It can also be described as exciting and innovative ways to provide learners with global access to information, learning and support. In summary, it encompasses various technologies that are used for facilitating communication such as Internet service provision, telecommunications equipment and services, information technology equipment and services, media and



broadcasting, libraries and documentation centres, commercial information providers, network-based information services, and other related information and communication activities.

Research findings over the past 20 years provide some evidence on the positive effects of the use of ICT on pupils learning. According to Kandasamy, Parilah & Shah (2013) Information Communication Technology (ICT) is an important element in the education scenario that prepares the citizens for the future. They add that the quality of teaching is often related to the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Law et al, (2002) states that Advancement in computer technology, coupled with the pervasive use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in every facet of life, has made computer technology an important feature of the educational landscape, particularly in the developed countries. In a related study, Majeed & Othman (2012) observes that, the impact of globalization and the rapid growth of Information and Communication Technology have brought an opportunity in the teaching sector to implement the use of computers in the classroom. They further observe that, this helps students think better with analytical mind by getting access for more information, thus improving thinking skills. They add that the use of ICT also enhances students' inter collaboration through improved communicative skills, helps students to think better with analytical mind by getting access for more information, thus improving thinking skills.

An important benefit derived from the use of ICT in a language classroom according to Kumar and Tammelin (2008) is based on the opportunities it affords for cooperation and collaboration with one's peers. As described by them, another major benefit of the use of ICT in blended language learning classrooms is the opportunity that ICT-based tools give to language teachers so that they can tutor their learners more effectively. They opined that with the help of ICT-based tools and the constantly growing number of available educational resources, language teachers are able to give individual and personalized guidance to the learners. This is due to the use of several media—audio, video, authentic contexts, and real-world experiences that help language learners with different learning styles to assimilate the content according to their needs. They add that in a blended learning environment that uses ICT tools, it is easier for the language teacher/tutor to use different approaches with students and accommodate different learning styles and the different needs of fast, slow, or handicapped language learners.

### **The Internet as a creative ICT resource**

The Internet has been referred to as “a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet protocol suite to serve billions of users worldwide. Jayaranjan (2013) citing [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet) defines it as a network of networks that consists of millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies. The Internet carries an extensive range of information resources



and services, such as the inter-linked hypertext documents of the World Wide Web (WWW) and the infrastructure to support email. According to Olomo (2011), it is an international computer network that connects other networks and computers across the globe.

The Internet is a creative ICT resource due to the numerous benefits gotten from its usage. For instance, Warschauer, Shetzer, & Meloni, (2000) present five benefits of using the Internet for teaching. These benefits are:

- (a) Its provision of authentic language materials;
- (b) Its enhancement of the student's level of literacy in conducting on-line communication;
- (c) Its enablement for students to interact with native and nonnative speakers for 24 hours on end;
- (d) The making of learning process lively, dynamic, and interesting;
- (e) The opportunity of giving both the student and teacher the power to work more efficiently.

As observed by Becker & Ravitz (1999), along with word processing, the Internet may be the most valuable of the many computer technologies available to teachers and students. As stated by Kumar and Tammelin (2008), the Internet provides language learners with the opportunity to use the language they are learning in meaningful ways in authentic contexts. They state further that the Internet provides an easy and fast access to the use of current and authentic materials in the language being studied, which is motivating for the language learner.

Rajasekaran & Palaniappan (2009) present other benefits of using the Internet for teaching English language. As observed by them, the Internet enables teachers subscribe to mailing lists related to TEFL/TESL and exchange information with other teachers. It also allow them subscribe to electronic journals or newsletters either by e-mail or by using the World Wide Web, keep up with new trends of English language teaching and find new or interesting publications. They add that the Internet enables teachers consult with publishers on teaching materials and enable them select appropriate materials for their students' interests and level of English proficiency. In a related study, Qureshi, Shahzadi, Iqbal & Islam (2012), state that the Internet has lots of benefit for students, parents and teachers. As observed by them, the interactive learning that the Internet provides can help students and parents with little or no skills learn. They add that the Internet can make parents become more involved in their children's education by connecting the school with homes, libraries or other access ports and help learners adjust to the different learning styles in the classroom. According to them, the benefits of the Internet in the teaching process are: Flexibility and variety in mode and appearance, ease and low cost of access for learners worldwide, ease of putting students' information online, ease of updating course information, increase in ubiquity and indispensability and access to interactive and dynamic material on a daily basis.



According to Jayaranjan (2013), the Internet makes learning easier with its multi-faceted programs and information pages which make the process of learning beneficial. As observed by him, if the learner is ready to spend some time with it seriously, then incredible results will be reaped. Also, as observed by Solanki (2012) a teacher of English language can take advantage of various Internet resources or technological resources such as the Radio, TV, CD Rom, Computers, C.A.L.L., Electronic Dictionary, Email, Blogs and Audio Cassettes, Power Point, Videos, DVD's or VCD's to teach the subject.

## **Internet resources that could be creatively utilized for the teaching of English language**

The internet can be used in a variety of ways to improve the teaching and learning of English language. For instance, a teacher of English can create a bulletin or notice board that contains his or her class information, students' email addresses, links to materials, and educative blogs among others. Any of the following Internet resources can be utilized to improve the teaching of English language:

### **1. Electronic Books**

Electronic books are book length publications in digital form that consists of texts, images or both that are readable on computers or other electronic devices. Electronic books can also be defined as the electronic version of printed books. Electronic book or e-book utilizes computer technology to deliver multimedia information in a compact and dynamic manner. E-books can integrate impressions, sound, graphics, images, animations and other multimedia elements such that the information presented is richer than conventional books. With this technology, hundreds of books can be stored in a single piece of solid disc/compact disk. Electronic books are found in e-libraries. E-library has reduced congestion in traditional libraries and made it possible for students to obtain library materials anywhere. The major advantage of e-libraries is that students may be referred to a material available in the library which they can access at any time and place convenient to them other than the classroom. For instance, a teacher of English can visit or direct his or her students to any of the following e-libraries to download useful textbooks in English language: <http://library.douglas.bc.ca/>, <http://www.teachit.co.uk/?home=1>, [http://guides.libraries.uc.edu/teaching\\_ESL](http://guides.libraries.uc.edu/teaching_ESL), <http://www.teachit.co.uk/>, <http://gen.lib.rus.ec/>, <http://en.bookfi.org/>, [www.freebookspot.es/](http://www.freebookspot.es/) and <http://bookboon.com/> among others.

### **2. The e-mail**

The e-mail is a method of exchanging digital messages from an author or individual to one or more recipients. Email can be used by a teacher to reach many students at a distance once the students provide their e-mail addresses. The teacher can use the e-mail to send learning materials to students, give assignment, assess and post the feedback to the students' email boxes. The e-mail could also be a means of communication between teachers and students in large classes. Communication in this situation takes place when the teacher uses



this medium to attend to and solve students' individual problems. Through the use of e-mail for instance, the students are opportune to interact with their lecturers and friends at a distance. The e-mail also enables the sharing of files and makes students collaborate and work together with their lecturers and colleagues. In this way, there is transformation from traditional teacher-centred approach which makes learners passive receivers to students-centred or democratic approach which makes learners active discoverers and explorers. Through an exchange of e-mail, students can expand their vocabulary, structures and expressions.

### **3. The Website**

The website is a group of World Wide Web pages that contains hyperlinks to each other and is made available online by an individual, company, educational institution, government or organizations. The website is an internet technology that can be utilized to facilitate the teaching and learning of English Language due to its numerous advantages. According to Sharndama (2013) it can be used to solve the problem of distribution of prepared or developed learning materials in large classes in tertiary institutions. Not only that, it gives the teacher an opportunity to own a website and then post material(s) to his/her website for the students to download for use in the classroom. In addition to the fore mentioned, teachers of English can use their personal websites to post assignments or exercises for their students. Also, the website enables teachers direct their students to sites that make them more motivated to learn English language.

Website materials for teaching English language may include texts for reading such as novels, plays poems or samples of writing tasks such as letters, essays, memorandums or e-mails. Beginning teachers may as well browse websites for teaching English to find prepared materials that are relevant to the topic being treated. Website materials that English Language teachers can download include printable English worksheets, English lesson plans, dialog ideas, crossword puzzles, colour pictures, texts for reading and gap filling, vocabulary and grammar exercises, class management instructions among others. For instance, lesson plans, exercises and reading materials are available on English language teaching websites such as [www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk), <http://www.usingenglish.com/>, [www.onestopenglish.com](http://www.onestopenglish.com), <http://www.everythingsesl.net>, <http://www.englishclub.com>, <http://www.vocabulix.com/framer.html>, [www.teflnet.com](http://www.teflnet.com), [www.esltopics.com](http://www.esltopics.com), <http://www.eng.cilacapedu.com>, <http://learnenglish-britishcouncil.org> among others.

### **4. Social media and other Internet based social networks**

Social media refers to interaction among people whereby they are opportune to create, shape, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Kaplan and Micheal (2010) define it as a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. In fact, several researches have shown that social media



sites promote creativity, interaction and learning if utilized in a positive manner. Usually, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss and modify user generated content. Social media take forms such as magazine, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro blogging, wikis, social networks, podcast among others.

Social networks are the commonest form of social media. They are web-based sites which facilitate the creation of social networks or social relations among those who share common interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections. As observed by Mason, Robin, Rennie and Frank, (2008); Buzzetto-More, (2010) Social network services have been found to provide new opportunities for enriching existing curriculum through creative, authentic and/or flexible, non-linear learning experiences. Examples of social network sites are: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, MySpace, and YouTube among others. Through these mediums, teachers of English find ICT tools that can be used for developing innovative activities in the language classroom. For instance, on the Facebook social network sites, many pages and groups are purposely created for teachers and learners of English language. Examples of such pages are: *Technology in English language teaching*, *Cambridge Dictionaries Online*, *English Grammar Revolution*, *Songs for teaching*, *English Club*, *English Idioms*, *Learn English Teens -British Council*, *English is fun*, *National Council of Teachers of English*, *Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)*, *English Conversations*, *Learn English as a second language* and *Teaching English-British Council* among others.

The URL links to these pages in other of appearance are:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Technology-in-English-language-teaching/148739365144043>,

<https://m.facebook.com/CambridgeDictionariesOnline?fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/EnglishGrammarRevolution?fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=118205941217&fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/englishclub?fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=126170778993&fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/LearnEnglishTeens.BritishCouncil?fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/tesol.assn?fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=258050719393&fref=none&refid=17>,

<https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=178130982237728&fref=none&refid=17>)



## Conclusion

This paper has discussed several means the Internet as an ICT resource can be creatively utilized for the teaching and learning of English language. It harnessed several views of scholars which establish the fact that the ICT and Internet resources are indispensable tools that facilitate the teaching and learning of English Language at all levels of education. It is therefore recommended that Internet resources should be judiciously utilized by English language teachers as complements to physical classroom activities to enable more effective transmission of knowledge. Finally, to improve the teaching and learning of English through Internet resources, teachers of English are advised and encouraged to have a positive attitude to the Internet and encourage their students do the same. They should direct their students to websites that improves the learning of English language and guide them in using the resources in these websites improve their proficiency in the language rather than visiting other websites that are of no educational benefit to them.

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