THE ROLE OF VIRTUAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TVET

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Abstract

This paper explores the roles of virtual English language environment as an important factor in TVET. It focuses on how to find effective and better ways for the teachers and learners of TVET in the delivery and dissemination of knowledge by the means of Virtual Learning Environment. The study adopted a quantitative research methodology where a number of 54 structured questionnaires were prepared and administered to 27 departments that have both National Diploma and Higher National diploma in the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, who were randomly selected and 52 were returned making 96 percent retrievals. The results obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings showed that virtual English language teaching and learning is among the major keys to achieving the aim and objectives of TVET, which will also help in fulfilling the purpose which TVET is to serve among the students. Virtual English language programmes were also found to be lucrative and profitable investment in TVET, in businesses and to all professionals , it will complement the traditional way of teaching and learning and goes along with the existing development in Information Technology. Hence, the researchers recommend that the government and the ministry of education should enforce Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) and inculcate the method of virtual learning where English language will play a major role in communicating its effectiveness.

Keywords: Virtual English Language, TVET, Teaching

Introduction

Virtual education has grown rapidly and globally in the past decades. It is generally referred to as instruction in a learning environment where teacher and student are separated by time or space, or both. The course contents are conveyed through IT applications, multimedia resources, the Internet, videoconferencing and so on and so forth. It is still new in developing countries and viewed as an alternative for traditional education, especially in English language learning and teaching. It works independently as Online English courses, online English institutes and virtual Universities and online educations. It can be seen as a turning point in education. Virtual learning offers many benefits that the traditional TVET could not such as accessibility from anywhere at any time, asynchronous discussions with classmates, immediate feedback on tests and flexibility. Virtual education as an innovation provides education access to education beyond the classroom walls. In the field of English language teaching, vocabulary development, the study of lexis and its meaning which entails the use of terms such as decomposition, semantic fields, denotation and connotation can be taught. Levels of language study such as the phonetics and phonology, morpheme, word phrase (group), clause and sentence (syntax) and discourse can be taught in virtual classes.

Three forms of Virtual Courses can be identified in virtual education depending on the nature of instructional interaction between the teacher and the learner, particularly at the time of occurring interaction and these are: asynchronous, synchronous and hybrid online courses. We shall discuss them one after the other.

Asynchronous online Courses: This means the instructor and the students in the course all engage with the course content at different times and from different locations. It allows you to learn on your own schedule within a certain time frame. Students are more self-directed, doing coursework's and assignments and so on and so forth. There is no appointed time frame; it is for students with time constraints and busy schedules.

Synchronous Online Courses: This is an online learning class in which the instructor and the students in the course engage with the course content at the same time but from different locations. It requires the instructors and the students to interact simultaneously .The students receive instructions from their teacher and interact with their teacher and course-mates through texts, audio-chats, video-chats in a virtual classroom. It enables students to participate in a course from home in real time class environment.

Hybrid Online Courses: A hybrid online learning combines the traditional face-to face learning in the classroom with online learning that students complete outside the classroom. It is also known as computer-based communication in between those face-to face sessions. It therefore means that hybrid or blended type of virtual learning can be both asynchronous and synchronous, and face to face

According to Ilori (2011), TVET in Nigeria is defined as those aspects of educational process, involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economies and social life. TVET aims to provide semi-professional workers to cater for demand of the technical workforce in various industries.

Also Technical and Vocational education (TVE) is the type of education designed to provide skilled manpower that will be enterprising and self reliant; thus have the greatest potential to generate employment ;reduce poverty and eliminate socials miscreants known as Area Boys (Orija, 2011). In all these laudable potentials of (TVET), the place and the role of English language as the vehicle to carry out the courses and instructions cannot be underestimated since the demand for quality graduates of TVET and good performance are needed in the workplace. The future of work will likely be characterized by rapid technological advancement, heightened competition for jobs and a demand for new and specialized skills, which will require parallel shifts in the world of learning. Specialized skills and knowledge will continue to be important, but the workers will also ICT/digital, transversal and 21st century skills and must be able to apply their skills and knowledge to solving real world problems.

The use of virtual learning environment (VLE) to support teaching and learning (most especially in English language) just like in what face-to-face teaching can offer in order to foster learning such as prompt information delivery, peer support, group work, self assessment, formative/summative assessment, teacher-student communication and tutorials. Also, virtual education helps institutions to extend their outreach to those students who wish to have access to the education from a distance thereby helps the institution to increase the student's intake. It helps to reduce cost of staffing as well as cut down travelling budget of staff mobility.

In addition, virtual teaching and Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) application can clearly diversify the delivery methods thereby enriching the teaching experience for the institution and urges the teachers to learn new tools and applications to enrich both the contents and the educational activities of their lessons.

On the part of the students, virtual education can help TVET students to access different courses and programs of their choices; it is a dynamic alternative for self motivated students that can constantly stay on task and monitor their learning goals, it is cost effective and flexible. Students can enjoy schedules, conveniently fits their time and location, and it is common too that online courses reduce tuition fees, materials and travel expenses compared to traditional courses.

Moreover, it provides such accessibility from anywhere at any time, asynchronous discussions with classmates, immediate feedback on tests and flexibility. Flexibility so as to better suit a student preferred learning style and student centered .It creates opportunities for active learning. In addition, with good rronline applications or software, students have opportunities to participate in the discussions, express opinions, and share knowledge equally, regardless of classroom size and time. Students can create their own learning environment and teachers are able to monitor, directly engaged or be an observer of the learning process. However it is not easy to implement.

The theoretical frameworks adopted for this study are theories of Constructivism and Cognitivism proposed by Rogger Shark (1977) which believes in existing knowledge by the learners together with the added facilitation by the teacher will help them better equipped in the working world. For Cognitivism, it is said to dominate Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It also utilizes the concept of that hypothesizes mental activity level in order to understand human social action especially to achieve meaningful learning. In this theory, emphasis is on the learner's perception of the learning process, the interpretation, and store and memories the information. Constructivism on the other hand is the theory that supports the student-centered approach as it proposes human being constant construction of knowledge by interacting with their surroundings. This theory helps students to discover new things on their own and relate its importance with their learning environment and learning needs. Constructivism in the 21st century requires that the learner construct new understanding pursuant of his/her existing.

Knowledge, collaborates with his peers using technology efficiently and effectively; it is a learner-centered approach in which students are actively involved in the learning process and emphasis is laid on the application of knowledge outside the classroom context; the teacher using many techniques in the curriculum

The main objective of this study is to find the importance of Online English teaching and learning in TVET. Others are to investigate the comparison of traditional and online teaching methods, to create the awareness of the effects of internet-based English language learning roles on its traditional roles and to find the possibility of complementing TVET sessions of teaching English with online mode

Review of Existing Literatures

Scholars believe that the teachings of English language is no longer on the basis of chalk and talk, even though among those who are doing TVET courses the learning environment nowadays has evolved with the emphasis on the usage of Information Communication and Technology (ICT). Such scholars can be seen both at the international and national scene.

According to Mchrdad (2021), he wrote on the virtual teaching of English language during COVID-19 pandemic in Iran: views and attitudes. The study focused on the importance of online English teaching as well as to get the views of the learners and trainers views. He got 220 responses from academic English learners and trainers from twenty three universities. The selected universities were from main regions of Iran and all the participants were from the department of English. His findings showed that online English language teaching is a key to advanced technology and success. He recommended that new technologies and online teaching should be done after the COVID-19 pandemic. His study found that a fruitful and effective online English language program should be matched with real sessions of teaching.

Doan (2020) investigated the advantages and disadvantages of Virtual learning. The study took place at the department of languages of Hong Kong with 205 students and 16 lecturers during second semester of the academic year 2019/2020. 205 questionnaires were collected and used for the analysis of data. The survey was carried out with 206 English-majored students from the first year to the fourth year. Her research findings showed that only 7 students had previous experiences with online learning. On the final assessment, the lecturers indicated high demand for further and continuing training on pedagogies of Virtual teaching such as designing online lessons, assessing students' work and managing virtual classrooms. The study brought the issue of digital inequalities among the students. It also showed that quality of WI-FI connection is varied from place to place of access and dependent on the types of devices been used. The study found out that students use two devices for their online learning which are smartphones and laptops, she enumerated advantages of Virtual learning such as the protection of individual health and community safety, saving the travel time, exposure to new form of learning, keeping up with the original plan of the semester, leaving extra time for self study and having access to online resources. She recommended adequate investment from the institution, the teacher and the student.

Kyria et al. (2014) examined technology, English language and internalization at a crossroad: insights from the analysis of a virtual learning environment in Brazil.

25 Brazilian undergraduate students of the Federal University about My English Online (MEO). The data collected, using descriptive statistical analysis found out those students, after attempting the questionnaires complained about the difficulty in feedback of some difficult areas on English language such as the written text and oral production skills. The inability to get feedback, either they are right or wrong was the bane of the MEO online program adopted by the government.

They also found out from the students that face-to-face classes still be added to complement the online English language program for them to have a proper mastery of the subject. The paper recommended that Brazilian foreign language and internalization policies should undergo a major restructuring to include the development of productive skills in the target language in primary and secondary schools and the recognition of the role of English as an international language.

Setha & Usa (2016) examined their paper titled: Is online learning suitable for all English language students? 246 participants participated in the research work which were university students completing a compulsory online English course. Findings showed how English proficient students lacked online learning skills and experiences in self directed

learning and may not be ready for learning English online. They mentioned that despite the benefits of online teaching and learning environment, students taking online course could face difficulties they might never have encountered in a traditional teaching and learning environmental and these difficulties could have a negative impact on their learning performance which are: cognition, meta-cognition, technical anxiety and learning styles and preferences. They recommended that sufficient and effective access to the internet and twenty four hours connectivity of the internet be provided and the design and content of learning tasks must be evaluated and revised from time to time among others.

Sinhachalam (2016) investigated the role of E-learning and virtual learning environment in English and itemized the links between the VLEs and their usages in the classroom such as communication tools can handle email, discussion board, live chat, and content delivery with lecture support notes, images, audio, video, PowerPoint presentations and assessment tools, online grades under assessment and interactive whiteboards, file exchange and calendar and task list under miscellaneous, he mentioned factors to be considered before and when using VLE such as having a clear purpose in mind for using VLEs, having a clear plan for using a VLE to support your teaching, getting used to using the teaching before introducing the students to it, giving students time to get used to using it and making sure the students understand why they are using it and want the advantages will be. He rounded up by listing some benefits of using e-learning such as saving of time and money, wider access to limited resources, better access for student (widening participation), faster delivery of assessment and improved communication links

Ima (2020) examined online learning for English language teaching using a qualitative research methodology, he explained the online learning application for English language teaching and learning in many ways. He explained learning styles such as: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. All have to do with image and 'picture thinking' of tutor sitting in front of the classroom and more of learners listening as the information goes on and more of active in the hands-on approach. He mentioned the merit of online learning such as accessibility, personalized learning, developing cognitive abilities, cost effectiveness, basic computer skills, and globalization. He itemized the application tools that can be used for English language teaching online (online learning application in English language teaching) such as Edmodo (useful for downloading resources need in the era of 21st century), WhatsApp (about the text, video call and voice message), Seesaw (application for English language to support students in remote learning, Sway (a Microsoft office for learning for interactive response, personal stories), Zoom (it provides a video and web conferencing of about 500 participants can be viewed at a later time), email(used for sending and receiving messages with email address anywhere in the world), class Dojo (used for sharing photos, videos, class story with teachers-student and parent in classroom communication. And an application that can translate more than 30 languages, bringing all families into the classroom, others are show my homework, goggle classroom, blogs, survey monkey in Apps survey. Smartsurvey and blog. He concluded that all those can be used to cover the four skills in English language namely writing, reading, listening and speaking.

Mohammed & Maslawati (2021) investigated English language competency in enhancing technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) graduates' Marketability in the Malaysian workplace, their study stressed the importance of English competency and the challenges of teaching English language in Technical institutions, the study measures to be implemented in enhancing TVET graduates marketability. The paper stressed the importance of communication skills in workplace and the ability to speak and converse in English language. The study mentioned the way English is just given as a requirement and not classified as the main subject contact as a challenge. The paper counseled TVET graduates to attend training school in language skills and encourage teachers to use English to deliver their lectures. The paper advised TVET graduates to understand their jobs have to do with foreign investors whose language is English and so TVET graduates must master communication skills, language proficiency and leadership skills. They mentioned graduates are hired for certain level of communications, social, emotional and critical thinking skills. Findings of the researchers show some TVET graduates in Malaysia have problems in communication skills and language competency which can make their employees depend on foreign investors. They opined that the study would give a significant awareness and a comprehensive understanding of what could stakeholders do to address the issue of TVET graduates especially in the mastery of the English language.

Angela (2017) investigated the role of Virtual educational environment as one of the valuable factors in Master students of non-linguistic major English for specific purposes course effective learning in Federal university, Russia. The study adopted survey research design in the form of a questionnaire, interviews and classroom observation. The research involved 60 students from the computer engineering department aged 22 and 26 years of male and female gender. Findings showed that students were told to have meetings with a teacher at the office, group collaboration, presentations, and round table discussion in a face-to-face class after using Edmodo internet education portal which

allows students to take part in activities connected with team work, abstract paper, article writing, critical reading and text on special discussion, creating presentations and project based assignment. The study concluded that VLE plays a valuable role as a part of the integrated ESP coursework at the University, using Edmodo and the communicative competence of the students improved their specific purposeful learning.

2 METHODOLOGY

The study was designed to find the role of virtual English teaching and learning in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) as well as creating awareness of the effects of internet-based English language learning roles on its traditional roles and the research study area was limited to the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria being one of the best Polytechnics in Nigeria and ranked as number one in West Africa by Webometrics.

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology where a structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The study population comprised students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria. 54 respondents were selected randomly from all the 27 departments that have both HND and ND in the school. A structured questionnaire was administered and retrieved through online method to collect data for this study.

The questionnaire was into two sections. Section A consisted of the respondents' personal information and background knowledge of the respondents about TVET and section B was structured with questions to determine the Role of Virtual English Teaching and Learning in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). The questionnaire used for this study was closed-ended questionnaire and five-point likert-scale questions ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), strongly disagree (SA) was adopted. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentages.

3 RESULTS

Table 1: Background information Analysis of the respondents

SN	Items		Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	27	51.92
		Female	25	48.08
		Total	52	100
2	Age	15-20years	19	37.25
		21-25years	26	50.98
		26-30years	6	11.76
		31-35years	0	0.00
		Total	52	100
3	Educational Qualification	HND	16	38.3
		ND	36	51.1
		Total	52	100
4	Are you familiar with TVET?	Yes	11	21.15
		No	35	67.31

		Sometimes	3	5.77
		Never	3	5.77
		Total	52	100
5	Are you aware that e-learning English language is among the inevitable course/requirements in TVET?	Yes	34	65.38
		No	17	32.69
		Sometimes	0	0.00
		Never	1	1.92
		Total	52	100
6	Do you believe that online English programme can facilitate and improve the status of English language education in TVET?	Yes	47	90.38
		No	4	7.69
		Sometimes	0	0.00
		Never	1	1.92
		Total	52	100

Table 2: Role of Virtual English Teaching and Learning in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)

SN	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I believe online English programs to be most useful for the youths who are not able to attend the real TVET programmes	28.85	63.46	5.77	1.92	0.00
2.	I believe that online English language programmes would be a step forward in the educational development of the society	38.46	53.85	3.85	3.85	0.00
3.	I know that advanced technology is the key to success in TVET programmes	30.77	63.46	5.77	0.00	0.00
4.	I support the idea that online English programmes should support the traditional method in TVET	25.49	58.82	15.69	0.00	0.00
5.	I know that online learning is students-centered learning approach	22.92	66.67	10.42	0.00	0.00
6.	I believe that online English language programmes would marginalize the traditional role in English teachers	26.00	58.00	14.00	2.00	0.00

7.	Online English programmes should complement real session of teaching TVET	28.00	58.00	14.00	0.00	0.00
8.	I know that online English language programmes would threaten the efficacy of the private sector and governmental institutions	30.61	36.73	22,45	10.20	0.00
9.	I know that cultural considerations are the primary barriers against the success of online programmes in TVET	16.33	65.31	14.29	4.08	0.00
10.	I find the idea of online English Language programmes useful and not a waste of time but innovations	39.58	56.02	4.17	0.00	0.00
11.	I believe that online English language programme is profitable for business and for long term training for other professionals	46.94	51.02	2.04	0.00	0.00

4 DISCUSSION

Table 1 above shows the background information results of the respondents. Item 1 on the table shows the gender of the respondents, the results revealed that 51.92% of the respondents were males while 48.08% of the respondents were females. This implies that the majority of the respondents were males. Item 2 on the table depicts the age range of the respondents, the result indicated that 37.25% of the respondents were between 15-20years, 50.98% were between 21-25years, and 11.76% were between 26-30years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were between age range 21-26years. Item 3 of the table showed the educational qualification of the respondents, the result narrates that only 30.77% were HND, and the rest of the respondents were ND with 69.23%. Item 4 in the table shows 21.15% of the respondents were familiar with TVET, 67.31% of the respondents were not familiar with TVET, 5.33% of the respondents were sometimes familiar about TVET and the last 5.33% of the respondents were never familiar with TVET. This implies that the majority of the respondents were not familiar with TVET. Item 5 depicts that 64.71% are aware that online English language is among the inevitable course/requirements in TVET while 33.3% were not aware that online English language is among the inevitable course/requirements in TVET. This reveals that majority of the respondents were aware that online English language is among the inevitable course/requirements in TVET. Item 6 on the table makes it known that majority of the respondents (90.38%) believed that online English programme can facilitate and improve the status of English language education in TVET while 7.69% of the respondents do not believe that online English programme can facilitate and improve the status of English language education in TVET.

Table 2 reveals the respondents' knowledge on the role of virtual English teaching and learning in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). From the result, it is apparent that the majority of the respondents believe that the online English programmes to be most useful for the youths who are not able to attend the real TVET programme, strongly agree at 28.85%, agree at 63.46%, 5.77% were neutral about the statement and only 1.92% disagreed. Similarly, an accumulation of 92.31% of the respondents supported that online English language programmes would be a step forward in the educational development of the society, strongly agree and agree at 38.46% and 53.85% respectively while just 3.85% were both neutral and disagreed that online English language programmes would be a step forward in the educational development of the society. The respondents were evident to show that advanced technology is the key to success in TVET programmes. This is validated with the entire population of the respondents 94.23% who agreed and only 5.77% were neutral. However, it will be of interest to note that few numbers of the respondents, 15.69% were neutral about the idea that online English programs should support the traditional method in TVET; meanwhile the majority of the respondents, about 84.31% accepted the idea that online English programmes should support the traditional method in TVET. In the same vein, strongly agree at 22.92% and agree at 66.67% and neutral at only 10.42% neutral, that online learning is students-centered learning approach. This implies that the majority of the respondents were certain that online learning is students-centered learning approach. Data from question 6 shows that the majority of the respondents accept the fact that online English language programmes would marginalize the traditional role in English teachers as 26.00% strongly agreed and 58.00% agreed, 14.00% were neutral while 2.00% disagreed. Also, result from question 7 depicts positive acceptance the idea that online English programme should complement real sessions of teaching TVET. This is said to be true as

28.00% strongly agreed, 58.00% agreed while 14.00% remained neutral. A total of 30.61% and 36.73% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively that online English language programmes would threaten the efficacy of the private sector and the governmental institutions but 22.45% were neutral about the statement while 10.20% disagreed. A greater percentage of the respondents at 81.64% support that cultural considerations are the primary barriers against the success of online programs in TVET, a low percentage of 4.08% disagreed while 14.29% were neutral. Consequently, the response in question 9 denotes that a total of 95.83% ascertain that the idea of online English Language programs are useful, innovative and not a waste of time. About 4.17% of the respondents were undecided. Nonetheless, a total of 97.96% are in agreement that online English language programmes are profitable for business and for long term training for other professionals while meager respondents of just 2.04% remain neutral.

5. CONCLUSION

The study presents the important role of virtual English teaching and learning in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). The study concluded that TVET course should be compulsory right from the grassroots of technical schools, so that it will be well known by the study in the national diploma. Apparently, the study found out that virtual English language teaching and learning is among the major keys to achieving the aim and objectives of TVET and it will also help in fulfilling the purpose which TVET is to serve among the students.

Based on the findings in this study, the study elucidated that virtual English language programmes shall be a lucrative and profitable investment in TVET, in businesses and to all professionals as it will complement the traditional way of teaching and learning and goes along with the existing development in Information Technology.

The study recommends that the government and the ministry of education should enforce Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) and inculcate the method of virtual learning where English language will play a major role in communicating its effectiveness.

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