

Original Research Article

The Teaching of Poetry through Information Technology Systems in Secondary Schools

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Abstract: A problem in poetry teaching at the introductory level with second language students is that a large number of difficulties occur simultaneously. The fact that the demands of the Examination bodies' literature syllabus have compelled many teachers and students to study poetry does not seem to have made it as acceptable as it should be. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in secondary and higher education can revolutionize the education sector in Nigeria, thereby making its impact felt in other areas like governance, economy, and administration. Today in the fast pacing world where everything is digitized, the education sector should not lag, because it is education that ensures the future of the citizens and the progress of the country. The use of ICT tools in the so-called 'traditional' subjects of history, literature, political science, economics, and other areas of humanities? The analysis of the data indicated that the majority of students had positive attitudes toward the use of visual aids to reading literary texts. Also, observation by the researcher showed the use of visual aids during the lecture was effective. The use of the ICT tools enhanced the students' motivation to enjoy the lecture processes better and to achieve the lecture goals higher. The study concludes that the use of visual aids enables the students to engage closely with literary texts. That suggests that literature taught by visual aids helps to enhance students' creative and critical thinking skills. Therefore, this study proclaims that teachers changed their attitudes, as well as the students, had positive attitudes for the use of visual aids, the lecture processes would be more interesting and creative. In this paper, we focus on how the use of ICT in the teaching of English literature can make it interesting for students, teachers, research scholars and how the dynamics of the subject can come alive, for the study of literature is studying several subjects in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary modes and ICT can provide a fitting platform of convergence for that.

Keywords: ELT, EFL, Visual Aids, ICTs, Motivation, Literary Texts, English literature.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to identify the merits and demerits associated with ICT in teaching poetry in secondary schools and the process offers suggestions on how to overcome attitudes that have become fossilized and almost precluded any meaningful appreciation of poetry. Linguistically, communication is a system of communicating by the use of sounds or conventional symbols.

Information and Communication Technologies is popularly known by its acronyms ICT which is a combination of three powerful words- Information, Communication and Technology. In the following details, it has been described what these words mean regarding ICT.

The word "Information" has been derived from the Latin word "Informare" which means "the formation of mind or teaching". Information is any fact provided and or learned about something or someone. Information technology (IT) is the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data, often in the context of education or other enterprises.

The word "Communication" has been derived from the Latin word "Communicare" which means "to share". "Communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium or the successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings or a letter or message containing information or news, or means of sending or receiving

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information, such as telephone lines or computers." Any computer has any potential to link up with other computers through communication systems such as telephone lines or satellite. This link-up facilitates the exchange of memos, reports, letters, data/information, and even having meetings among people in geographically dispersed locations.

The word "Technology" has been derived from the Greek word "Tekhnologia" which means "systematic treatment". "Technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry or machinery and devices developed from scientific knowledge." The term technology has been given various definitions by previous literature. According to Kumar *et al.* (1999) technology consists of two primary components: a physical component which comprises of items such as products, tooling, equipment, blueprints, techniques, and processes and the informational component which consists of know-how in management, marketing, production, quality control, reliability, skilled labour and functional areas. The early concept of technology as information holds that the technology is generally applicable and easy to reproduce and reuse (Arrow, 1962). However, Reddy and Zhou (1990) contend that the early concept of technology contradicts with a strand of literature on international technology transfer which holds that "technology is conceived as firm-specific information concerning the characteristics and performance properties of the production process and product design".

Information Technology Communication is defined as the convergence of audio-visual, telephone and computer networks through a link system. It is a combination of all these elements, capped by a vision of how technology can help an organization to reach its goals. In a broad sense, the term is used to refer not only to the information and communication technology (ICT) that an organization uses but also to how people interact with this technology in support of business processes.

In today's modern era, almost every country is harnessing the utilities of ICT for improving the standards of life of its citizens. Nigeria is no exception to this phenomenon. Nigeria government is promoting "Digital Nigeria" programmed with full enthusiasm in different fields including education. Day-by-day, the use of ICT is increasing in the field of education especially in teaching different subjects. ICT may be a powerful and flexible tool for teaching English literature also. English literature, like the literature of many other languages, has a vast variety of elements of music, emotions, actions and dialogues.

"Technology will not replace teachers but teachers who understand technology will replace those who do not." - Dr Ray Clifford. ICT (Information and

Communication Technology) is vital to complement the old-style model of teaching. Here, the word "complement" is significant because technology cannot replace teachers as such but can surely supplement or add to their traditional mode of teaching. In the contemporary phase of technology and information thriving, sometimes, the old-style model of teaching different subjects including English literature seems monotonous. In many schools, colleges and universities of Nigeria, English literature is taught in the traditional model where teachers keep on talking for about an hour or so and students keep on earshot and jotting down the notes. Shortly, both, teachers and students get exhausted from this monotonous routine of teaching and learning English literature, in the same way, every day. So, ICT may be a very significant tool for providing variety to the teaching of English literature by eliminating the element of tedium from it and pervading in it sparkle every day and every moment. It may revolutionize the way the subject- English literature is considered to be taught. The role of the teacher is unquestionable of immense importance in the teaching of English literature but ICT may also make it energetic by making students fascinated as well as engaged in what is being taught.

METHODOLOGY

Observation is the best method or approach to collect data about the interaction, behaviour or personality characteristics of an individual. Useful observations in this case study were made when the researcher attended the literature components. The researchers stayed at the back of the classroom throughout the lesson and took notes to describe the settings and the transactions that took place as well as making comments on any remarks made. The A questionnaire is another research tool used as a quantitative approach to collect data. It was prepared and distributed to secure responses and information about certain conditions or practices, of which the recipient is presumed to know. The questionnaire is considered to be the most flexible of tools and possesses a unique advantage over others in collecting information.

The multimedia presentations suggest an interactive, dynamic and communicative model of perceiving literature, as well as a new reading approach. The ICT facilitates the comprehension of the multidimensional character of literature and transforms technology into a tool for reading and creative writing, in other words, a tool that enhances literacy. In this way, critical thinking, as a part of critical literacy, makes students able to experiment through creative writing and reveal artistic skills.

Furthermore, critical literacy is developed, as students attempt to create surrealistic poems enriched with music and painting. This reading and didactic approach do not intent to a high-quality artistic product

or to lead students to become poets. It is expected that students' poetic creations would be inferior to the original poems. However, the creative writing that combines the advantage of the word processor software with the fluid form of the poetic text can emerge the playful aspect of literature. Word replacement, coloring, or reassembling the text structure, are activities that help students understand the constructive techniques of the literary content and the efficacy of literary language (Nikolaidou, P.77, 2009).

Moreover, the encouragement of self-expression and free-thinking, the observation of works of art and the liberation from the initial stimulus, make students deliberate their creative imagination.

Thus, students experientially approach surrealist poems, because they become familiar with the automatic and non-conscious writing, the bold linguistic combinations and the game of non-logical thoughts, the dreamy and unconscious excess of reality. So, the abolition of poetical conventions shows the conflict with the traditional poetry, defines, from the beginning, the way fine arts refer to what is 'real', establishes a new way of thinking and a new attitude towards life (Athanasopoulou, P88 2009).

The paper focuses on the learner-centered teaching model. Students take an active part in the lesson, which gives them the opportunity to the self-acting and critical thinking process. The new knowledge is constructed over the older, according to the cognitive theory of constructivism (Raptis & Rapti, P85 2006). When students collaborate, work in groups and compose a text, as one of the activities included in the worksheets, they think and create in an environment of feedback. The personal thoughts and ideas of one student become food for thought for the rest of them.

Significance of Literature

The first pertinent question we may ask ourselves is "Why bother about the study of literature?" Education aims at the complete development of the A subject such as literature would play an important role in the achievement. While it is agreed that some other subjects contribute to the making of the whole man; for example; music, history, mathematics, science and philosophy, the study of literature has traditionally been felt to have unique effectiveness in opening the mind and illuminating it, purging the mind of prejudices as it makes it free and active.

English literature is hundreds of years old and continues to be one of the most popular courses of study in schools, colleges and universities not only in England but also in the whole world. It is the study of literature written in the English language. In it, the writers do not necessarily have to be from England but can be from all over the world. It not only represents writers from different parts of the world and periods but also covers

every major genre and style of writing. There are five genres of English literature commonly taught in the classroom- poetry, drama, prose, non-fiction and media.

Communication is a process of transmitting information through speech, writing, illustration, gesture and other media. These varieties of information dissemination processes are context-based, hence the adoption of the Multi-media aesthetics of "fabulous theatre" in this paper (Abubakar: 2006:189-206). It is a device used to access and assess the adoption of different media of communication of ideas, visions or criticism of vital socio-political and cultural issues of modern African writers.

Most students find that literature is hard to be understood and that it is difficult to be read since learners are not interested in reading literature through books. This generation of learners is called e- learners. They believe in what they see and hear. They are not much interested in what is written. Thus learning literature requires to be integrated with the use of ICT tools to make what is written be seen and heard and therefore it may be attractive and motivating.

Attitudes to Teaching Poetry

For many years researchers and teachers have detected the difficulties that arose when poetry has to be thought in Secondary Greek Schools and they asked themselves questions about the fact that students' understanding is narrow and their response is limited and inadequate. It is a common belief among teachers and scientists that teaching poetry is the most challenging of all literature Kinds (Thompson, 1996). The major difficulties derive; (1) from the nature and the special features that language acquires when it becomes poetic; (2) from the ambiguity that occurs in our days, concerning the answer to the question of what poetry is; (3) from the fact that experts are unwilling to agree to a common definition. So, teaching poetry becomes more and more difficult (Kaplani, P.67 2006).

The reasons many students and teachers find Poetry difficult are manifold. J. P. Clark, an article on "The Communication Line Between poet and Public" puts his finger on one of the main reasons why moderns African poetry is so forbidding for readers.

But more often than not, the fault in this failure of communication is traceable not to the poet but the public. The average reader and teacher of poetry in Nigeria, trained only in the appreciation of traditional English poetry, exhibits very strong reactions against modern Nigerian poetry, indeed against all modern poetry, and therefore easily accommodate novelty. Possessed of reflexes conditioned as those of Pavlov's dog, he reacts readily to any item out of the double vistas of the classics and the Bible, which according to Grierson inform English poetry. But the slightest

reference to the religion, history and oral tradition of his peoples leaves him sniffing at once for explanations.

The reflexes that Clark diagnoses are superficial and eclectic, lacking in proper foundation, in as much as the counters are not adequately grasped and therefore cannot be functionally and independently applied outside their original context. The best way to eliminate the problem is by a complete orientation upon the application of ICT towards instruction.

All literature teachers in secondary schools realize the importance of evaluation in teaching and learning. Much experimentation in measuring the ability to interpret and react has been attempted in recent years, but since the factors affecting responses to literature are so varied, the teachers will certainly never achieve the same refinement of measurement they can achieve in testing the rate of comprehension. Whatever happens, growth in the vital areas of literature learning can be evaluated if teachers will be more painstaking in their preparation of tests and ensure that their tests reflect all the objectives of teaching and learning literature.

The group method has gained many grounds in the teaching of literature, especially via ICT. Observation has shown that this approach is not used in the teaching of literature in general, and poetry in particular. The occasional use of the group method enables the teacher to spend more time with the weaker students. Group work is very vital in the teaching of poetry because apart from aiding learning, it instils confidence in children, and gives room for variation thereby arousing interest.

A great flaw noticed in the teaching of poems in secondary schools is that creativity. Of all the schools visited, only two encourage creativity. Creativity in a classroom situation is therefore not existent. This unfortunate situation arises because the teaching of poetry in schools takes no cognizance of creativity. To improve and bring variation into the teaching of poetry, various expression works should be used in teaching situations. Such expression works include demonstration and imitation of characters, interpreting drawn sketches, making life charts of the hero, role-playing, reporting, and writing simple literary works. Teachers of literature especially poetry must therefore encourage creativity if they are to succeed at making poetry studies through ICT as a discipline that would stimulate exercise and train the students.

From observations made during visits to some schools, it was found that teachers never give students outlines to guide their reading. Outlines are very helpful while reading foreign literary materials. The use of outlines through social media could be essential to direct students' attention to the most vital aspects or

incidents; this will help in the teaching of poetry in the lower classes.

Interest is very important if the study of poetry is to have a permanent effect on the students. To arouse interest, each poem must be introduced interestingly to encourage the children to read it. Any of the ICT tools could be used to read or sing out any of the songs. Students will be more interested if lessons are introduced in different ways.

As a result, modern poetry communicates and works together with the arts, intervenes in their field, while the arts take advantage of poetry for their purposes. Poetry cannot be read-only with the eyes; words have sounds that constitute the indispensable element of poetic speech. The sound contributes to the enjoyment, provokes association of ideas, images, underlines the musicality of the text and reminds the connection between poetry and music (Elliot, 1982). The choice we made to involve music in our proposal and take advantage of its benefits rely on the strong relation and the positive attitude students have towards music, especially songs. Songs come first in the life of a child and are still popular, so that the communicative effectiveness is beyond question (Kaplani, P.56, 2006).

Nigerian secondary school students do not read enough literary works, for they only concentrate on the set poems. This habit prevents extensive reading which literature should encourage at the secondary school level. To encourage private reading, therefore, an e-library should be provided in addition to the visible or school library.

It is important to stress that one basic obstacle that stands in the way of an intelligent appreciation of Nigerian poetry is the superficial knowledge of what we may call the elements of poetry, some of which are rhyme, rhythm and metre, however, ICT application in handling such aspects will be fascinating and hitch-free in comprehending above mention concepts or points.

A study conducted by Hirvela and Boyle shows that the main aspects causing particular trouble in literary reading include interpretation of theme, vocabulary, cultural differences, literary style and structure. Consequently, teaching and learning English literature for EFL students seems difficult since the EFL students have a lack of language proficiency and inadequate supply of teaching to comprehend better and easily any literary text. According to previous studies, most EFL students have a negative attitude towards reading English literary books. Therefore, teaching and learning English literature may need the integration of a new tool that is the integration of ICT. There are numerous benefits in using ICTs in teaching English literature which is of great importance to improve reading interest among students. The use of visual aids in teaching literary texts creates strong engagement

between students and the texts. The use of ICTs such as pictures, videos and projectors encourage students to read the literary texts with interest, which make it easier for them to understand the abstract ideas in the text.

This means while teaching them students are supposed to be transformed from the era of writing to the era of images to attract learners' attention to read and engage in such genres. ICTs can facilitate teaching literature by doing away with boredom and making the student interested in what is being taught. A motivated reader is the one who has fun and excitement about what he is reading; students have to enjoy the book they are supposed to read.

The integration of ICTs can motivate and keep the students engaged because ICT tools work at different levels- the students can have an opportunity to see, read, visualize, hear, ponder, discuss, interact and learn. This can be achieved through various means involving ICT.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

An experiment was formulated to collect data. The data collection instrument was observing two literature teachers by the researcher. Firstly the participants in group A were taught a literary text with the use of ICTs while group B was taught the same literary text without the use of ICT tools to answer the research questions. The teacher with group A taught the students the romantic poem adopting different types of ICT tools.

The teacher put up on the screen the poem through slide shows accompanied by its corresponding painting. This widely simplified the poem for the learners who seemed more interested in learning such literary text. Another ICT tool used by the teacher was an audio version which was played where the poem was recited by the native speaker. This listening to the poem's recitation would help make an impact on the minds of the students and would enjoy responding to it. The picture of the poet was also shown and other different pictures in varied settings were related to the poet's biography, and while the pictures were played, the biographical details were discussed by the teacher similarly to give a feeling of the romantic age.

The combined effect of the visual and hearing aids would make students experience what is being taught. In the second and third sessions, the themes images and movement of the poem were discussed through the different slides boring. As it was observed there was no motivation among the students to respond to the poem. Indeed most of the students didn't share any answers. This demonstrates that the absence of ICT tools in teaching English literary texts cause a lack of motivation among students. The observation results revealed that the method used in teaching the poem with group A, that is the integration of the ICT tool, effectively motivated the students. As it was observed that the visual aids of the voice clips used to recite the poem presentation of the poem including the corresponding pictures and painting, boosted and motivated the students to respond to the poem successfully and in a short time after the start of the lecture.

The students seemed interested in reading the text. This was illustrated by the students' responses to the poem when the majority of them shared their answers to the designed activities given by the teacher at the end of the classroom and they created communicative conversation. This is because the use of the audio version in reciting the poem was effective. All this demonstrates that the visual and audio aids provided enhanced the students' motivation to learn English literature since they contributed to making the students interested in reading the poem and understanding the abstract ideas in the poem because these tools simplified and facilitated the most difficult genre in literature that is poetry.

On the other hand, the observation results gathered during teaching the same lecture by the same teacher with group B revealed that the absence of the ICT tools in teaching the poem made the students feel bored. The students seemed not interested in learning the literary text that it seemed boring. As it was observed there was no motivation among the students to respond to the poem. Indeed most of the students didn't share any answers. This demonstrates that the absence of ICT tools in teaching English literary texts cause a lack of motivation among students. Table1. Students' attitudes for the use of ICT tools in learning literature components.

Table-1: Students' attitudes for the use of ICT tools in learning literature components

S/N	ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
1	Learning Literature is fun		6(21.6%)	21 (64%)	3(14.4%)
2	Using ICT in learning literature is interesting		3(14.4%)	23(66.3%)	4 (19.3%)
3	It is beneficial using ICT to learn literature		6(21.6%)	21 (64%)	3(14.4%)
4	Using ICT has improved my language skills		2 (12%)	24(69.3%)	4(19.4%)
5	My teachers use ICT in teaching literature	6 (21.6)	20(59.1%)	4 (19.3%)	
6	I like learning the literature		2 (12%)	24 (69%)	4(19.3%)
7	I like learning the component without the use of ICT tools	4(19.3%)	22(61.4%)	4 (19.3%)	
8	Literature can be taught effectively without the use of ICT	4(19.3%)	22(61.4%)	4 (19.3%)	

KEY- SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

The first questionnaire results analysis showed that the majority of students have a high positive attitude towards the use of ICT tools in learning literature. The results demonstrated that (60%) to (70%) of the students in group A agreed on the use of ICT tools. From this, it could be interpreted that the students felt positive towards the use of the visual aids during the lecture. A high percentage of students agreed (69%) and strongly agreed (19.3%) on the item "I like learning the literature component with the use of ICT" and (69%) of the students agreed and (19.3%) strongly agreed on the item "Using ICTs has improved my language skills". And (66.3%) of the students agreed and (30.7%) strongly agreed on the item "Using ICTs in learning literature is interesting" and (64%) agreed and

(14.4%) strongly agreed on the item "It is beneficial to use ICTs to learn literature". This demonstrates that students like learning literature with the integration of ICTs and that they are aware of its importance in facilitating literature. This was probably because students realized that learning literature visually helped them in their personal growth, cultural enrichment and most importantly language development. This is supported by the following items that showed a majority of the students above (80%) disagreed on "I like learning literature component without the use of ICTs", "Literature can be taught effectively without the use of ICTs ". This means that students are in great need of the use of ICTs in teaching literature.

Table-2: Students' attitudes for learning literature components without ICTs

S/N	ITEM	SD	D	A	SA
1	Learning Literature is fun		6 (21.6%)	21 (64%)	3 (14.4%)
2	English literature is important		2 (12%)	24(69.3%)	4(19.3%)
3	English literature is boring and not interesting		2(12%)	23(66.3%)	4(19.3%)
4	Learning English literature is difficult		6 (21.6%)	20(59.1%)	4 (19.3%)
5	English literature is hard to understand		6(21.6%)	21(64%)	3(14.4%)
6	My teachers use ICT in teaching literature	3(14.4%)	24(69.3%)	3(14.4%)	
7	I like learning literature		4(19.3%)	24(69.3%)	2(12%)
8	I like learning the literature component with ICT		1(12.1%)	23(66.3%)	6(21.6%)

KEY- SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree

The second questionnaire results revealed that students were in negative attitudes toward learning English literature without the use of it. Even though they believed "Literature is important" (69.3%) agreed and (19.3%) strongly agreed as well as "I like learning the literature component "students found "English literature is difficult" (59.1%) agreed and "English literature is hard to understand" (64%). This might imply that students need a suitable tool to be interested in reading literary text to better their understanding. This is illustrated by the item "I like learning the literature component with ICTs" whereby (66.3%) agreed and (21.6%) strongly agreed.

This demonstrates that the absence of ICT tools in learning English literature leads to the absence of motivation (69.3%) of students who disagreed on "my teacher use ICTs in teaching literary texts". Perhaps the students knew that learning English literature effectively needs the use of visual and audio versions to be easily understood. Consequently, motivation among students could be enhanced in reading literary texts by the use of visual aids.

As it was argued by Chacko, learning literature is not easy. Due to that, students should look up alternatives to engage themselves better in the lesson. Muller (2006) claimed that the use of films, for instance, helps the students to visualize the literary theory and cultural aspects embedded in the texts. Moreover, literature deals a lot with abstract ideas and thus it needs the students to do a lot of critical analysis.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are useful not only for the lecturers who teach students of English literature and trainee teachers at the teacher training colleges, universities and other educational institutes but also to the teacher of English at schools. This study investigates using visual aids to improve students' motivation in reading English literature.

It was found that the teachers' integration of ICTs in teaching English literature lectures had a great impact in motivating students to read literary texts since teachers' implementation of visual aids in teaching helps their students concentrate on the lecture and be aware of the expectations and needs in literature teaching. When the teachers know how to grab students' attention, teachers can provide a friendly and interesting atmosphere for the students to learn. Using ICT tools such as PowerPoint slides and audio versions was valuable in addressing learners' needs such as language difficulty.

The traditional lecture method in teaching literature components made students not feel interested in learning it. Furthermore, the integration of ICTs in teaching English literature is less time-consuming. As a result, the teachers will have more ample time to create enjoyable classroom activities and conduct an effective teaching-learning process.

Through ICT, problems of the students can be attended to easily. The way online shopping sites respond to customer grievances, through ICT student grievances too can be answered. Teaching is an art but it can be effectively improved with the help of science i.e. ICT. A lot of efforts have been put to harness the utilities of ICT in the field of education in general but very few in the teaching of English literature particularly.

English literature can be taught with great ease and joy with the help of ICT to suit students' needs and interests. Therefore, more research is required to support the pedagogical use of ICT for improving the teaching of English literature. So, let's promote the teaching of English literature with ICT for understanding it more effectively, more interestingly and, ultimately, more successfully. Thus we may conclude that ICT is an important tool that has the potential to make the teaching and learning of 'traditional' subjects like English literature or to be broader, literature in any language a lived experience. It would help in revitalizing the importance of such subjects by various means.

The appealing communicative aspect of technology could be incorporated into the learning process that is why we propose to create "the blog of poetry class" where students can participate in a virtual readers' community throughout the project.

When students post their creations and at the same time have the opportunity to comment on somebody else's publication, they are educated as writers and readers. Alternatively, the multimedia creations can be applauded on social networks or emailed, so that poetry becomes the common ground of commentary and communication.

From the findings of this study, both groups were aware that ICT tools facilitate and motivate learning English literature even though it is difficult to learn. Here are some implications in literature: ICT provides changes in literature teaching methodology from traditional text-based learning to text plus multimedia. The use of multimedia creates an opportunity for teachers to recast their understanding of the role of text in the teaching and learning of literature, and, accordingly, their own beliefs about and roles in the teaching and learning process.

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