CHALLENGES TEACHERS FACE IN USING EDUCATIONAL APP FOR IMPROVING PUPILS SPEAKNG SKILLS IN ENGLISH STUDIES IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study was designed to determine the challenges teachers face in using educational app for improving pupils speaking skills in English Studies in Awka South Local Government of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 665 public primary school teachers in 45 public primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. A sample of 200 primary school teachers was used for the study using simple random sampling technique. The researchers developed an instrument titled "Challenges Teachers Face in using Educational App for Improving Pupils Speaking Skills (CTFEAIPSS)" Questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency and co-efficients of 0.77 and 0.79 were obtained with an overall co-efficient of 0.78.Data collected were analyzed using weighted mean to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views. Findings of study revealed that teachers are faced with challenges in using educational apps; lack of teacher's knowledge or proficiencies on the use of educational app and non-availability of educational apps in schools among others. The study also disclosed that making educational apps available in schools, providing adequate training for teachers on the use of educational apps and giving teacher's opportunities to select/choose educational apps that they feel most comfortable with among others are the possible solutions to the challenges teachers encounter. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Anambra State Government in conjunction with Parent Teachers Association (PTA) should make available the educational apps and its essential connectivity in primary schools in order to enable pupils diversify their knowledge in technology and be able to compete with their counterparts whether locally or internationally

Key words: Challenges, English Studies, Speaking Skills, Primary Education, ICT and Educational App

Introduction

Education is the process of imparting knowledge and skills through teaching and learning. The goal of education is to help individuals develop their intellectual, physical, and social potential. (Crow, & Crow, 2017). It can take place in formal settings, like schools and universities, or informal settings, like homes and workplaces. Education can be done by trained educators, like teachers and professors, or by people who aren't formally trained, like parents and friends. The Nigerian education sector is categorized into three which includes; the basic education, secondary education and tertiary education. Among the categories of the education the basic education is the bed rock upon which all other education is built on. The basic education includes the Early Childhood education and primary education. Primary education is the first stage of formal schooling, where children learn basic skills and knowledge. This usually takes place in primary school or elementary school. Primary education is typically divided into lower primary and upper primary. Lower primary focuses on basic literacy and numeracy skills, while upper primary expands on those skills and introduces more complex concepts.

Primary education is the first formal schooling system a child is exposed to after home education. It welcomes the child to the process of socialization under the tutelage of a teacher. Primary education is a pupil-centred education that prepares and grooms the mind of a child for future academic endeavors. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2013) defined primary education as the education given in an institution for children aged six to 11 plus. It went further to explain that the rest of the education system is built upon it and is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. Primary education refers to the first stage of formal schooling, where children typically learn basic academic skills such as reading, writing, and mathematics. Primary education is the education given to children between the ages of 6 to 12years. The primary education stage is important for establishing a foundation for lifelong learning by providing learners the opportunities to acquire literacy, numeracy, creativity and communication skills so as to face challenges posed by technology, (UNESCO, 2020).The use of technological tools cannot be overemphasized by pupils in primary schools. In primary education children get to know about Information, communication and Technology (ICT).

ICT stands for information and communication technology. Information and Communication Technology (ICT), is a broad term that refers to the use of technology for communication and information management. ICT is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of technologies, including computers, the internet, social media, and mobile devices (Nwanna 2015). This can include technologies like computers, the internet, mobile devices, social media, and more. ICT is used in many different fields, including

education, business, healthcare, and government The National Policy on ICT in Education (2010) noted that the attainment of qualitative education requires improving on teaching, learning and educational administration which in turn requires introducing ICT into the educational system. It refers to the use of digital technologies for communication and information management. With the aid of ICT different forms of educational apps can be used to help pupils teaching and learning process.

An education app, or educational app, is a software application designed to help learners learn new skills or knowledge. They can be used for various purposes, such as teaching a language, improving reading or math skills, or providing information on a specific topic. Educational apps are software applications designed to support learning, usually on mobile devices. They can provide content and interactive exercises, games, and assessments, and they may also track and assess learners progress (The National Education Technology Plan 2022). Education apps can be used on mobile devices or computers. . Interactive, engaging, and customizable, e-learning apps have become the conduits through which traditional classroom boundaries are transcended, opening doors to new modes of learning that are dynamic and adaptable (Smith & Johnson, 2019).Some popular education apps include Duolingo, Khan Academy, Quizlet, ABCmouse, Busuu, Babbel, Lumosity, Prodigy, Kahoot among others. Education app has been of great value to children because it has helped to enhance development skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Speaking skill, or oral communication skill, refers to the ability to communicate effectively through spoken language. This includes the ability to speak clearly and confidently, to organize and express thoughts coherently, and to listen effectively and respond appropriately. Speaking skill is an important aspect of communication and is often taught and evaluated in educational settings. Speaking skill, is the ability to communicate effectively by speaking, using verbal and nonverbal language. Speaking skill includes the ability to choose appropriate language for the audience and purpose, to organize and express ideas coherently, and to adapt language to different situations. (Brown & Yule, 2018). The significance of speaking and listening skills is central to the educational process for the acquisition of language skills, particularly speaking and listening skills. Proficiency in these skills is essential not only for academic success but also for effective communication and social integration (Williams, 2017). These skills provide the means for pupils to express their thoughts, engage in discussions, and comprehend the perspectives of others. As the education landscape shifts toward promoting holistic development, the cultivation of speaking skills through the use of educational app has assumed paramount importance but still teachers seems to be faced with some challenges that hinders them from using these educational apps in teaching/learning process. The use of educational apps has a huge potential to positively impact pupils speaking skills but it is difficult to effectively integrate the use of

educational apps if teachers are not knowledgeable enough on how to use these apps which will negatively affect pupil's performances in school (Alice, Rosana and Okello, 2016). Therefore, it is against this background that this study was designed to determine the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the promising potential of educational apps as a panacea for enhancing pupils' speaking skills, there exist significant challenges and barriers that hinder their effective implementation within primary education. These challenges encompass a range of factors, including technical limitations, pedagogical concerns, and disparities in access to technology. Additionally, the utilization of educational apps demands a restructuring of traditional teaching methods, raising questions about their compatibility with existing curricular frameworks and teacher readiness to embrace this innovative approach. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of these challenges is imperative to unlock the transformative benefits that educational apps can offer in advancing pupils' speaking proficiency and, subsequently, their overall language acquisition journey. Educational apps are increasingly being used in schools to help students improve their speaking skills, but there is limited research on the effectiveness of these apps. It is not clear how well they work, or how to best use them to improve pupils' speaking skills.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area.

2. Determine the possible solutions to the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study;

1. What are the challenges teacher's faces in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area?

2. What are the possible solutions to the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area?

Methods

The study was designed to determine the the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Two research questions were raised for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 665 public primary school teachers in the 45 public primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area. Using simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement, 200 teachers were selected as the sample for the study.10 teachers each were selected from 20 schools out of the 45 public primary schools in the area. The researchers developed an instrument titled "Challenges Teachers Face in using Educational Apps for Improving Pupils Speaking Skills(CTFEAIPSS)." Questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 16 items on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree(SA-4 points), Agree (A-3 points), Disagree (D-2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD-1 point) for the two clusters. Face validity of the instrument was determined by three experts; two in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundation all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha was used to obtain reliability coefficients of 0.77 and 0.79 with overall coefficient of 0.78 for the two clusters of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean ($\bar{x}$) to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views. In analyzing the mean ($\bar{x}$), value of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed and value below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Challenges Teachers Face in using Educational Apps for Improving Pupils Speaking Skills.
(N = 200)

S/N	Challenges teachers encounter in the use of educational app for improving speaking skills includes;	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
1.	Inadequate time	3.15	0.98	Agreed
2.	technical issues such as connectivity problems prob a challenge for teachers in the use of educational app.	2.92	0.44	Agreed
3.	inadequate knowledge of teachers on the use of educational app for instructional delivery.	3.26	0.65	Agreed
4.	limited access to devices and technology resources	3.16	0.65	Agreed

	for teachers and pupils.			
5.	non availability of the educational apps in school for instructional delivery.	2.90	0.45	Agreed
6.	teachers preparedness and readiness on the use of education app.	2.86	0.41	Agreed
7.	teachers interest and attitude on the use of educational app	2.73	0.97	Agreed
8.	teachers overwork/workload poses a challenge on the use of educational app	2.56	0.53	Agreed
Cluster Mean		**2.94**	**0.55**	**Agreed**

Table 1 shows the mean scores of the respondents on the challenges teachers encounter in the use of educational app for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South L.G.A. The cluster means score of 2.94 implies that the respondents agreed that teachers encounter challenges in the use of educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills. This is because the mean scores of all the items were above decision mean of 2.50.The standard deviation which falls between 0.41 to 0.98 shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their opinions.

Research Question 2: What are the possible solutions to the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South Local Government Area?

Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings on the Possible Solutions to the Challenges Teachers Face in using Educational Apps for Improving Pupils Speaking Skills. (N = 200)

S/N	Challenges teachers encounter in the use of educational app for improving speaking skills includes;	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
9.	adequate time should be provided for teachers so they can apply the use of educational app in teaching.	3.00	0.60	Agreed
10.	adequate connectivity should be provided.	2.64	0.57	Agreed
11.	teachers should be adequately trained on the use of educational app for instructional delivery.	3.50	0.30	Agreed
12.	access to devices and technology resources for teachers and pupils should be provided.	2.50	0.78	Agreed
13.	educational apps should be made available in school for instructional delivery.	2.96	0.64	Agreed
14.	teachers should be prepared and ready to use educational app at all times.	2.60	0.88	Agreed

15.	teachers interest and attitude on the use of educational app should be motivated	2.55	0.97	Agreed
16.	experts teachers on the use of educational app should be employed to reduce teachers workforce	3.01	0.40	Agreed
Cluster Mean		**2.84**	**0.64**	**Agreed**

Table 2shows the mean scores of the respondents on the possible solutions to the challenges teachers encounter in the use of educational app for improving pupils speaking skills in Awka South L.G.A. The cluster means score of 2.84 implies that the respondents agreed to the possible solutions to the challenges teachers encounter in the use of educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills. This is because the mean scores of all the items were above decision mean of 2.50.The standard deviation which falls between 0.30 to 0.97 shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their opinions.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study in table 1revealed that primary school teachers are faced with challenges of using educational apps in primary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State.These challenges include; inadequate time, inadequate knowledge of teachers on the use of educational app, non-availability of educational app in schools, teachers preparedness and readiness to the use of educational apps, teachers attitude and interest on the use of educational apps among others.This finding is in line with Roblyer (2003), Newby, Stepich, Lehman and Russell (2006) as cited in Alice, Rosana and Okello (2016)posits that teachers sometimes view the use of educational app as a burden to their simple teaching life. The authors also opine that lack or insufficient understanding/knowledge of teachers in the use of educational apps poses a challenge to teachers. The authors further posits that teachers are not prepared or poorly prepared to the use of educational apps is also a challenge that teachers encounter in the use of educational apps for improving pupils skills.

Moreso, the findings of the study in table 2 revealed some of the possible solutions to the challenges teachers face in using educational apps for improving pupils speaking skills. These solutions include; making educational apps available in schools, providing adequate training for teachers on the use of educational apps, giving teacher's opportunities to select/choose educational apps that they feel most comfortable with, providing of adequate connectivity when using educational apps among others. This finding is in accordance with Johnson, Jacovina, Russell and Soto(2016), who posits that for effective speaking skills to occur, teachers skills and knowledge on educational apps should be improved. They further opines that effective educators must not only be domain experts, but also understand how to flexibly use affordance of different pedagogies that is technology-based. The authors further revealed thatgiving teachers

more freedom of choice to select technology that they feel most comfortable with will help them to retain the very important sense of classroom control. Also Alice, Rosana and Okello, (2016) posits that teachers need to develop a more positive view of knowledge in term of technology if they desire to remain relevant and competitive in digital era.

Conclusion

Teachers and learners are important subset of the educational system, and the interaction between them with the use of technology goes a long way in improving pupils' skills especially speaking skills. Technology is perhaps the strongest factors shaping the educational landscape today. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers observed that primary school teachers are faced with challenges in using educational apps. In addition, primary school teachers lack the requisite instructional competencies to use educational apps for instructional delivery and for improving pupils speaking skills. It was concluded among other that teachers attending in-service training will help them in improving their knowledge on how to use various types of educational apps.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Seminars, workshops and skills training should be organized for teachers regularly on the use of technology especially educational app in order for them to integrate them in teaching.
2. Anambra State Government in conjunction with Parent Teachers Association (PTA) should make available the educational apps and its essential connectivityin primary schools in order to enable pupils diversify their knowledgein technology and be able to compete with their counterparts whether locally or internationally.

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