ADVANCING EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (SP) OYO, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This research work investigated evidence-based solutions to the teaching and learning of language skills. A total number of one hundred and fifty students were selected from Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was a descriptive survey with a validated questionnaire titled Questionnaire on "Advancing evidence-based solutions to teaching and learning of language skills in F.C.E. (Special) Oyo, Nigeria." (AESIS) Three instruments were used for data collection. They are use of ICT questionnaire, mastery of language skills scale and comprehension of phonology scale. The data generated was analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentages and Independent t-test. The results indicated among others that students taught with ICT have better mastery of language skills than the students that were taught without ICT; the use of language laboratory is significant to comprehension of phonology and the use of classroom with Public Address System (PAS) has significant effect on the mastery of language skills. Thus, the paper recommends that government should guarantee accessibility of computer, language laboratory and public address system to the teachers and students in colleges for more effective teaching and learning of English Language. Since female students perform better in mastery of language skills than male; male students should be more up and doing in their learning of English Language. To ensure male seriousness in their language acquisition, parents and wards should endeavour to make available for them extra lessons; this is to strengthen their focus and language attainment while the number of the admitted students should commensurate with the number of language experts on ground.

Keywords: *Advancing, Evidence-based solutions, Teaching and Learning of language.*

Background of the Study
Effective teaching and learning of English requires evidence based outcome in the four basic skills of language: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills while speaking and writing are productive skills. To teach these skills effectively and for the learners to gain maximally, both the teacher and the learners have

to be committed to assiduous study and practices of these basic skills. Teaching is the major way of promoting learning and achievement of students. "Teaching and learning are what ultimately make a difference in the mind of the learner, and thus affect knowledge, skills, attitudes and the capacity of young people to contribute to contemporary society." Mary and Andrew, (2006).

In an attempt to proffer solutions to the problems of teaching and learning of basic language skills; learning is to help individuals and groups to develop the intellectual, personal and social resources that will enable them to participate as active citizens, contribute to economic development and flourish as individuals in a diverse and changing society. Teaching and learning should engage learners with big ideas with valued forms of knowledge. The teacher is to build on what the students already know. The teacher is to introduce activities that foster proficiency in the language skills. Like successful athletic coaches, the best teachers recognize the importance of ongoing assessments and continual adjustment on the part of both the teachers and the students as the means to achieve maximum performance (El Journal). In order to be able to achieve all these, teaching should be accompanied with concrete objects for maximum learning.

In recent times, teaching and learning of English are inseparable from language skills. In teaching, language skills are the springboard into effective teaching and learning of English. To proffer evidence-based solutions to learning of English, language skills need to be-x rayed. The four basic language skills in hierarchical order are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In teaching, these four language skills must be paramount to English language teachers. (Atolagbe, 2005). Listening is the primary of the language skills. According to Oloruntoba-Oju and Alebiosu (1998), "listening is the conscious effort to select the meaningful, important and relevant sounds and messages from the numerous sounds and messages that our ears perceive or receive." It is obvious from the foregoing that it is not everything we hear that is relevant or important. Nwigwe (2011) observes that when a learner listens purposively in the learning process and such a learner is able to use language to express his language needs, it can be summed up that learning is fast and retention is evident. Also, listening is purposeful with purpose-driven activity, embedded with effort and conscious intention of obtaining relevant information observable in the presentation of sounds and messages. This denotes listening as an active selector and conscious skill from hearing which is passive and indiscriminate sound. Oloruntoba- Oju and Alebiosu, (1998). It is noteworthy that the listening skill required from students must be the blend of all the types of listening such as attentive, critical, and appreciative listening. Students need to cultivate these listening types because of diverse workload of lectures, study, debates and other numerous issues that demand attention.

Speaking is a verbal mode of expression. Oloruntoba-Oju and Jolayemi, (1998). Speaking entails the use of sounds that must be heard and understood. As the second language skills, speech is an oral communication found as one of the characteristics of human, which is available in every individual. Njemanze (2011) confirms that speaking is the process of transmitting ideas through integration of words, voice and action of the speaker so as to obtain the desired response from whosoever receives it. As speaking is a form of communication, there is the need for learners to have an overall mastery of the language. Roaming through the roles of English Language Nigeria as the language of governance used as interaction in the nation, and also internationally; it is pertinent to note that the teaching of English language will allow the learners to gain competence in schools as well as the home, so as to accomplish the desired goal which is competence. Njemanze (2011) affirms that the teacher is expected to bridge the gap between what is obtainable by the learner at home and in his immediate environment. In other words, the learner should be properly taught by the teacher so as to help him to actualize his goals of being educated.

Reading is the third language skill. It is a key element in literacy. The ability to be able to read and understand symbols in text is a major puzzle solved in learning. Primarily, in language teaching, reading is an activity which involves careful utilization of cognition to accept what is in a book. It is also an activity oriented task of the involvement of the eye to

capture what is written. Reading involves decoding what has been encoded by the encoder Oloruntoba-Oju, (1998). It is the interpretation of written symbols. The writer engages in a composition because of the information he has packaged in a book. The task of the learner is to decipher what has been encoded by the writer. Reading is the understanding of the message encoded by the writer. It is the duty of the language teacher to guide the learners on how to read effectively by overcoming unfamiliar lexical items, inability to recognize and reconcile multiple meaning. Reading, unlike writing, is a receptive skill. This implies that all the efforts put into the skill is not observable until the end result is achieved, which is comprehension. When comprehension is realized, digestion of the facts and information take place and reproduction of the facts emerge. Creativity in reading is the outcome of reading. This is a situation whereby a learner or reader applies what he has learnt as a model.

Writing is the fourth basic skills of language. This is one of the skills of literacy. Writing is seen as a productive skill. This skill is the most tasking, strenuous and demanding exercise. The writing process requires the writer's mind in articulating, synthesizing, thinking and organizing. The effectiveness of the tasking mental process observable in writing showed the production of the writer which is composition. It can therefore be explained that writing is the graphical and conventional expression and representation of the writer's thoughts, feelings and ideas. Babatunde, (1998). In the teaching and learning of writing skill, it must be considered that writing is a productive, interactive, strenuous and stage involving skill.

Statement of the Problem
The teaching and learning of English Language skills is faced with myriads of problem ranging from large class, lack of adequate professionals, lack of public address system, and many more. The teaching of language skills has also become a burden due to lack of essential instructional materials needed for easy grasp of the language by learners. Learners' poor attitude to learning unfortunately worsens the scenario. This study is thus all out to advance evidence-based solutions to teaching and learning of language skills in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study
In the General Studies Education (GSE), the following are the objectives stated by the Nigeria Commission of Colleges of Education:
(a)   To participate meaningfully in discussions covering a wide spectrum of disciplines.
(b)   To appreciate and analysis Nigeria human history and cultures as well as articulate their relative impact on   e d u c a t i o n a l   a n d   s o c i o - e c o n o m i c development.
(c)   To state, explain and critically analyse the National objectives and how to achieve them.
(d)   To acquire through independent research, the skills and information for appreciating the basis and nature/ character of human knowledge, values and actions and to use such knowledge/ information in solving   problems.
(e)   To develop critical thinking and imagination to apply Basic Mathematics in solving problems of everyday life.
(f)   To acquire a proficiency in the use of the English language foe effective communication.

These objectives are packaged by NCCE in order to produce a well rounded, morally, and intellectually capable graduates with vision for effective communication and smooth interaction and within and beyond the environment of the individual. It is therefore heartbreaking to discover that not all the stated objectives have been realized in the teaching and learning of English language in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo.

The reasons why students who apply for tertiary education find easy acquisition of language skills difficult, according to Anifowose & Onjewu (2011) are

	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P	Cohen's d
Teaching with ICT	72	20.22	3.34	148	3.571	.000	.82
Teaching without ICT	78	17.00	4.44				

1.   Failure of students in senior secondary schools examination (SSCE).
2.   Lack of preparation of students due to cracked or inadequate foundation.
3.   Poor background in English language right from the basic classes resulting into being antagonistic towards the study of the language.
     Lynch (nd) cited in Anifowose and Onjewu, (2011) aptly itemize the problems in the teaching and learning of language skills to include:
4.   Lack of learners motivation
5.   Insufficient time, resources and materials
6.   Overcrowded English classes

Furthermore, there are also varying problems of inadequate/unavailability of public address system (PAS) and the lack of zeal by students to learn English language. This paper therefore examines the problems bedeviling Colleges of Education in the teaching and learning of language skills and raise evidence based solutions in tackling these varying problems in the colleges.

Objectives of the Study
The main objectives of this study are to advance evidence-based solutions to effective teaching and learning of language skills in F.C.E. (SP) Oyo in Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study include the following:
1.   To examine modus operandi for effective teaching and learning of language skills.
2.   To suggest relevant instructional materials for effective language teaching and learning.
3.   To investigate the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) in English teaching and   learning.
4.   To survey students' attitude towards usage of essential textbooks in the classroom.
5.   To verify supply of adequate human power in language teaching and learning.

Research Questions
The following research questions are formulated for the purpose of the research:
(1)   What is the significant difference between information and communication technology (ICT) and students' mastery of language skills?
(2)   What is the difference between language laboratory and students' easy comprehension of phonology?
(3)   What is the impact of small language classroom with public address system and large language classroom that is devoid of public address system?

Methodology
The methodology adopted in carrying out the present study was discussed in this section under the following sub-headings:

Research Design
This study adopted a survey research design. This is because the independent variables investigated had already occurred and cannot be further subjected to manipulation. . Sample sizes of 150 students were randomly selected from the pre-service students of the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. Three instruments were used for data collection. They are use of ICT questionnaire; mastery of language skills scale and comprehension of phonology scale

	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P	Cohen's d
Teaching with ICT	72	20.22	3.34	148	3.571	.000	.82
Teaching without ICT	78	17.00	4.44				

Sample and Sampling Technique
The study was conducted at Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo. Sample sizes of 150 students were randomly selected from the pre-service students of the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. Three instruments were used for data collection.

Instrumentation
A questionnaire of 10 item on "Advancing Evidence-Based Solutions to teaching and learning of language skills in F.C.E. (Special) Oyo, Nigeria (AESIS) was administered on the students of the college. Three instruments were used for data collection. They are use of ICT questionnaire; mastery of language skills scale and comprehension of phonology scale.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument
All the instruments were constructed by the researchers. The instruments were validated with the use of Cronbach alpha method of establishing reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficients of use of ICT questionnaire, mastery of language skills scale and comprehension of phonology scale were found to be 0.75, 0.86 and 0.81 respectively.

Data Gathering and Analysis
The instrument was given to the concerned personally by the researchers and collected back. Data collected was analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentages and Independent t-test.

Results and Discussion
This section presents the results and discussion of results based on the analysed data:

Research Question 1: What is the significant difference in the mastery of language skills between students taught with ICT and those taught without ICT?

Table 1: Mean Difference in the Use of ICT on Mastery of Language Skills
Table 1 shows the ICT difference on mastery of language skills of students of FCE (Special), Oyo. It was found out that students taught with ICT have better mastery of language skills. That is there is significant different in the mastery of language skills between students taught with ICT and those taught without ICT, t=4.99; p<0.05. The Cohen's the statistics on table 1 which shows the effect size of ICT on mastery of language skills indicates a value of 0.82 and this is an indication that the use of ICT in teaching has large effect on mastery of language skills. A value like the one obtained, according to Cohen (1992), is significant and substantial enough for practical purposes. In other words, the strength of the relation between the use of ICT and mastery of language skills is thus not trivial for practical consideration and it can safely be concluded that students taught with ICT are better in mastery of language skills than their counterparts taught without ICT.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference in the comprehension of phonology of students who need language laboratory and those who did not?Table 2: Mean Difference in the Use of Language Laboratory on Comprehension of Phonology

	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	p	Cohen's d
Teaching taught in Language Laboratory	71	20.61	5.03	148	3.57	.004	.50
Teaching without Language Laboratory	79	17.22	6.42				

Table 2 shows the t-value of t(148) = 3.51, p<0.05. This tables shows that the use of language laboratory is significant to comprehension of phonology; therefore, there is significant difference in the comprehension of phonology between students who have language laboratory and those who did not. The effect size as indicated in the table (table 2) as Cohen's d shows a value 0.50 which implies that the use of language laboratory has moderate effect on the students' comprehension of phonology. A value like this is importantly significant and has a lot of implications on students' comprehension of phonology. Therefore, it must not be trivialized.

Research Question 3: What is the significant difference in the language skills of the students taught in classrooms with Public Address System (PAS) and those taught in the large classroom without Public Address System (PAS).

Table 3: Mean Difference in the Use of Classroom on Mastery of Language Skills

	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P	Cohen's d
Teaching in small classroom with PAS	75	20.25	3.28	148	5.34	.000	.87
Teaching in large classroom without PAS	75	16.84	4.45				

Table 3 shows the use of classrooms with Public Address System (PAS) difference on mastery of language skills of the students of FCE (Special), Oyo. It is indicated in the table that the use of classroom with PAS has significant effect on the mastery of language skills. Since t(148) = 5.34, p<0.05 which shows a level of significant at 0.05. It can be inferred that students taught in small classroom with PAS are better in language skills than students taught in large classrooms without Public Address System (PAS). Also, table 3 present the Cohen'd value of 0.87; which is the effect size of the use of classroom on the language skills. This value indicates a great or large effect of classroom on the mastery of language skills. This shows a high strength of relationship between the use of classroom and mastery of language skills and this must be given a serious consideration for practical purpose.

Research Question 4: Is there any significant difference in the language skills of students taught by an expert and those taught without an expert?

Table 4: Mean Difference in the teaching by experts on Mastery of Language Skills

	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P	Cohen's d
Teaching by Experts	79	20.22	3.21	148	5.55	.001	.90
Teaching without Experts	71	16.69	4.53				

Table 5 presents the mean difference of gender on mastery of language skills. It can be deduced from the table the value of t, 0 t(148) = 1.305, p<0.05 which is significant at 0.05 level of significant. This shows that there is significant difference between the mean of female and male students in the mastery of language skills. From the table, the difference

is in favour of female; that female students perform better in mastery of language skills than male. Female students have higher mastery of language skills than male students.

Also from the table, the effect size (Cohen's d) is 0.31. This indicates low effect. Although the mean difference in the mastery of language skills between male and female student is significant but the difference has a low effect on the mastery of language skills.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean score of male and female students in comprehension of phonology.

Table 6: Mean Difference in Comprehension of Phonology by Gender

	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
Male	70	18.83	5.95			
Female	80	18.81	6.14	148	.016	.765

Table 6 shows the mean difference of male and female students in the comprehension of phonology. From the table, the t value is $t(148) = 0.16$, $p<0.05$ which is not significant at 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected. That is there is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female students in comprehension of phonology.

Discussion of findings
The results presented from the analyzed data revealed in Table 1 that students taught with ICT have better mastery of language skills than the students that were taught without ICT. This assertion corroborates Yues, Dieter and Marelino (2006) who opine that "there is a wide spread belief that ICTs have an important role to play in changing and modernizing educational systems and ways of learning, stressing it will affect the complete learning process." Table 2 shows that the use of language laboratory is significant to comprehension of phonology. This is undisputable considering the enormous role which availability of language play in effective teaching and learning of phonetics and phonology. Table 3 indicated that the use of classroom with Public Address System (PAS) has significant effect on the mastery of language skills. This is in line with Fatiloro, (2011:87) while discussing listening defects states that "…when a speaker speaks on a broad field or large class that lacks provision of Public Address System, the attention of the learners will be drawn away and vice- versa." Table 4 indicates that there is significant difference in mastery of language skill of the students taught by an expert and those taught without an expert and table 5 shows that there is significant difference between the mean of female and male students in the mastery of language skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The analysis and the discussions show that in language teaching and learning, adequate availability and usage of information and communication technology (ICT), language laboratory, public address system and presence of language experts will be of immense benefits to mastery of language skills. The paper thus recommends that
1.   Government should guarantee accessibility of computer, language laboratory and public address system to the teachers and students in colleges for more effective teaching and learning of English Language.
2.   Since female students perform better in mastery of language skills than male; male students should be more up and doing in their learning of English Language.
3.   To ensure male seriousness in their language acquisition, parents and wards should endeavour to make available for them extra lessons; this is to strengthen their focus and language attainment.
4.   The number of the admitted students should commensurate with the number of language experts on ground.

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