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Teachers' Knowledge and Practices in Using Digital Literacy in Enhancing Communicative Competence in the English as a Second Language Class

ABSTRACT

This study explored teachers' knowledge and practices in using digital literacy in enhancing the communicative competence of English as a second language (ESL) learners. This is because there are different types of data in the digital domain, which necessitate their use in various fields of learning. One hundred teachers of English from South-west Nigeria participated in a survey through online platforms. After analyzing the data through both descriptive and inferential statistics, the major findings revealed the following: (1) ESL teachers have maximum knowledge of the existence of many of the existing digital tools (2) they largely perceive that digital literacy can be used to enhance communicative competence, but do not maximally use the digital tools to do so, (3) the digital divide is a

major factor limiting teachers' use of digital tools in enhancing learner communicative competence. In view of this, it is therefore recommended, firstly, that teachers be given adequate training on the use of digital tools in enhancing the communicative competence of ESL learners. Secondly, the government and other stakeholders should invest more in technology particularly in the area of education. Lastly, ESL teachers should make conscientious efforts to deploy digital tools in teaching to enhance the communicative competence of the learners.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Digital tools, communicative competence, digital divide, ESL

1. Introduction

One can hardly navigate through the intricacies of this twenty first century without walking into the threshold of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Digital literacy as an aspect of generic literacy is largely responsible for the complexity of what literacy specifically encompasses. The digital aspect of literacy remains the currency that drives human activities in education, agriculture, health, business and other fields (Dobson & Willinsky, 2009). There is therefore no controversy on why this age is popularly known as the Information Age. In view of the proliferation of technology, with its ubiquity in peoples' lives, various institutions have become adept at integrating it into all of its activities (Alexander, Becker & Cummins, 2016). In its 2018 report, the International Literacy Association clearly recognized digital literacy as the most important topic in the literacy ecologies. Again, it is due to the digital media that pluralisation of literacy as a concept to literacies emerged (Lawal, 2014). Literacies in its plural form encompasses the spectrum of practices that can be characterized as literate activity. This is because information and meaning are now multimodal and could no longer be constricted to the sole idea of reading and writing (Bhatt, et al. 2015). Given this background, teachers of the 21st century can hardly teach functional skills of a language without integrating digital literacy.

Defining digital literacy has always failed a consensus test, just as literacy itself, especially considering how it has evolved over the years. In a traditional sense, Greene et al (2014) view digital literacy as the ability to effectively plan and monitor the efficacy of strategies used in searching the bulk of online information as well as the knowledge to appropriately evaluate and integrate the sources of information. In a broader sense, Lankshear and Knobel (2008) explain that digital literacy is a shorthand for a myriad social practices and conceptions of engaging in meaning making mediated by texts that are produced, received, distributed, exchanged, etc., via digital codification. The view of these scholars is that digital literacy practices must be seen within larger systems of literacy practices and larger literacy ecologies. In concurrence with the broad view and in contrast to the traditional perspective, Buckingham (2015) argues that the traditional definition of digital literacy tends to neglect the affective domain, harboring persuasive dimension of the uses and interpretations, hence it could not see digital media beyond mere information. It is important, however, to note that digital literacy is flexible and dynamic because the skills and the degree of knowledge is continuously changing (Perez-Escoda, Garcia-Ruiz & Aguaded, 2019).

In situating digital literacy among literacies, each time functional literacy is mentioned, the aspect of literacies that one readily thinks of is digital literacy, not only because of its multisensory dimension, but also that its web spans across other literacies. According to Murray and Perez (2014), in the age of ubiquitous computing, digital literacy has become highly critical to success in any educational discipline or occupation. Digital literacy has led to great increases in information that can be conveniently and quickly accessed and facilitates the collaboration and sharing of knowledge. Digital literacy permeates the parameters of medium, person, context, attitude and continuum as categorized by Lawal (2014). Scholars are agreed that because of the expansiveness of digital literacy

within the nexus of generic literacy, it is a fundamental driver of societal and economic change. It provides veritable resources for reading and writing. With the digital system, literacy in such contexts as family, peer, school, occupation, and even rehabilitation is at a vantage point.

One major area that has directly benefited from digital expansiveness is second language learning, and in particular English as a second language (Achike & Adeniyi, 2017). The English language has been acknowledged by many as a language of technology (Achike & Adeniyi, 2017; Huang, 2017; Agbatogun, 2014 Sha, et al., 2006). A major impact of technology as situated in digital literacy is on communication. Amongst other functions, the primacy of English language teaching and learning is communication. The teaching and learning of English as a second language have taken variegated approaches. Specifically beginning from the 1970s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), oriented towards communicative competence, has gained a justifiable dominance (Kwon, 2017). The primary purpose of language is for communication, so it is pedagogically asymmetrical for an approach to language teaching and learning to be devoid of communication as its focus. ESL teachers who are desirous of helping their students communicate in English do not stop at having the students to be linguistically competent alone. Rather, they further expose the students to sociocultural constructs which would enable them to communicate competently in the target language (Kwon, 2017).

The International Literacy Association (ILA), (2016) explains in its website that literacy is the capacity to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. This definition hinges functional literacy on having communicative competence and using digital means for communication. It further reveals the indispensability of digital literacy on enhancing communicative competence among learners. Many ESL teachers claim to have knowledge of digital tools, but then this knowledge does not translate into use in pedagogical practices in most cases (Achike & Adeniyi, 2017, Sadaf & Johnson, 2017). This article reveals that it is very important for ESL/EFL teachers to incorporate digital tools such as tablet and cellphone applications, slide presentation software, electronic reference materials and so on in their language classroom and that ESL/EFL teachers who believe in student centered teaching would be more disposed towards integrating digital tools in their pedagogical activities (Sadaf & Johnson, 2017, Ding, et al., 2019; Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2019). The point of departure in this article is ascertaining how this integration is related to enhancing communicative competence.

Research Questions

In order to clarify the purpose of this study, the following research questions were asked:

1. What is ESL teachers' level of knowledge of digital tools?
2. What are the perceptions and practices of the teachers with regard to using digital tools in enhancing the communicative competence of their learners?

3. How does the digital divide affect the use of digital tools by ESL teachers in enhancing communicative competence among their learners?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was raised for the study:

HO₁: Digital divide does not significantly affect ESL teachers' use of digital tools in enhancing communicative competence among their learners.

2. Literature Review

Many researchers have explored the nuances in digital literacy (Firat & Koksai 2019; Alexander et al., 2016; Buckingham, 2015; Murray & Perez, 2014; Fahser-Herro, 2010), but only a few have tried to find out the impacts of digital literacy on the communicative competence of ESL learners. Informed by the social interactionist perspective, Huang (2018) conducted a study on improving communicative competence through synchronous communication in a computer-supported collaborative learning environment. It is established that digital enhancements enable communicative practice and specifically improves users' oral skills, social presence and collective intelligence. Similarly, Agbatogun (2014) researched the predictive power of teachers' perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, behavioural intention to use a personal response system, and computer experience on teachers' acceptance and attitude towards using personal response systems in enhancing the communicative competence in the ESL classroom. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative dimensions to ascertain how the aforementioned variables generally contribute to the communicative competence of the ESL learners in Nigeria. The outcome showed that teachers had a positive disposition towards the use and integration of digital tools in the ESL classrooms. The study is quite similar to the present one in the sense that it sought to find out teachers' knowledge and practices in using a digital tool to enhance the communicative competence of learners. However, the study by Agbatokun 2014 has not given the teachers alternatives to the myriad examples of digital tools from which they can choose their preference.

Durriyah and Zuhdi (2018) explored Indonesian student teachers' initial perceptions about the use of digital technologies for EFL teaching. The selected digital tools considered in the study included Facebook, blogs, Skype, and WhatsApp. The result of the study showed that the student teachers were positively disposed towards using those digital tools. The participants offered various reasons for their comfort to use these tools, ranging from its interactive nature to its accessibility. However, there seems to be limited information on the digital practices of in-service teachers as initial perception may not correspond with end practices. In reaction to this, Ding et al (2019) investigated EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs and practices with regard to using technology. In particular, their study explored the EFL teachers' content-specific pedagogical beliefs and their

technology integration practices. The content-specific beliefs examined included skill-based, rule-based, and function-based beliefs. A key finding in this study was that beliefs substantially influenced practices, as teachers' content-specific pedagogical beliefs correspondingly aligned with their pedagogical practices. In addition to finding the meeting point between perception and practices, the present study wants to find out how these practices encourage communicative competence, and how the inequality in technology access can hinder these practices.

Evolvements in Digital Literacy

Evolvements in digital literacy can be categorized into three stages. The first stage is the public uptake of the computer through word processing. The next is the rise of hypermedia and the internet as demonstrated in web 1.0, and the last is the more recent emergence of web 2.0 oriented towards design.

The first hint that computers would metamorphose into digital literacy came with the widespread use of the personal computer for word processing (Dobson & Willinsky, 2009). The term "word processing" may have found its way into print in 1970. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this happened when this phrase was used in the journal, "Administrative Management," suggesting how word processing was originally a secretarial device for the efficient management of other people's texts (Dobson & Willinsky, 2009). In the 1960s, media literacy included critical approaches to interpreting mass media (Alexander et al 2016). Writing did not really flourish in the form of technology at this stage. However, it significantly impacted future developments in technology-oriented literacy.

The far-reaching effect of word processing in the domain of writing can be summarized in the following words: writing activities have been made easy and acceptable through word processing. The electronic writing being referred to here is the writing intended to be read on the computer, involving various forms of hypertext in, for example, preparing documents, sending e-mails, creating blogs and the like. In fact, word processing facilitation of writing may perhaps have led to more letters to public officials, better prepared reports in schools, and more elaborate annual family missives during the 1980s (Dobson & Willinsky, 2009).

The second phase of digital evolution could be traced to the late 1980s, when information literacy helped users to navigate through the internet for information (Alexander et al., 2016). The uptake of hypermedia by the public in this period was to integrate with the marketing of programs for personal computers such as hyper card. Hypermedia came as a result of the growing mass of the human record and the inability to navigate and distribute records. This therefore necessitated the development of a personal reading machine designed to facilitate information storage and access. The hypermedia coincides with developments in web 1.0. The web 1.0 is designed for one way flow of information where learners passively access that information (Firat & Koksal, 2019).

One of the earliest examples of the use of hypermedia in an educational setting was intermedia, an extensive hypertext system developed at Brown University in the mid-to-late-1980s with a view of facilitating the teaching of literature courses (Kahn, Launhardt, Lenk & Peters, 1990). The network allowed students to access primary and secondary literary materials, and permitted them to contribute comments, texts, and links to these materials.

Hypermedia has been of tremendous importance in the ever-expansive nature of digital literacy. One significant gain from hypermedia is the speed and power of electronic searching. This, undoubtedly, promotes information literacy. As digital literacy is leading to significant increases in the quantity and range of information that can be readily accessed, new technologies are adding to the convenience, speed and accuracy with which readers can work with a wide variety of information sources. But as Vlieghe (2015: 212) points out “the traditional way of acquiring literacy is as absurd as intensively studying the manual of a complex machine without ever using it”. Web 1.0 lacked the needed digital democratization that learners would leverage on to be producers and not to only be consumers. Thus, the only skills needed were that of mastery of the technical know-how and evaluation (Pangrazio, 2016), which all kept the users passive.

The latest stage in the digital evolution is the development of Web 2.0, otherwise known as the new media, in the early twenty-first century. Unlike web 1.0 that operates on a one-way information flow, Web 2.0 engenders dynamism in the digital environment (Firat & Koksal, 2019). Web 2.0 is revolutionary technology that not only enables information sharing and dissemination, but also allows for user-generated content (Jena, Bhattacharjee & Gupta, 2018). Indeed, this twenty-first century technology has completely altered the digital dimension from the traditional perspective, thereby ushering in a design perspective whereby learners are not just users but producers. Web 2.0 includes those user-friendly digital tools like wiki, Facebook, Podcast, WhatsApp and other social networking tools which allow active participation of the users, and are frequently updated, enhancing the capacity for collective information sharing (Fahser-Herro, 2010). It is not enough for learners to know how to use technology, it is important for them to use it creatively (Alexander et al, 2016). With the embedment of Web 2.0 into mobile technologies, there has been an explosion in information generation and sharing. Even professions that were initially constricted to an esoteric few have been outrightly demystified, giving room for inclusiveness.

The integration of Web 2.0 into educational practice has birthed concepts such as mobile learning and blended learning. O'Malley et al as cited in Statti and Torres (2020) consider mobile learning as a type of learning that is not restricted to a fixed location, but takes advantage of mobile devices to take place anywhere. Mobile learning helps learning to be extended to the grassroots regardless of the background of the learners (Statti & Torres, 2020). However, blended learning is the combination of interfaced teaching with the assistance of computer technology (Hockly 2018). It is learning via electronic and online media as well as the conventional teacher-student face-to-face learning. An example of blended learning is the use of the PowerPoint for lesson delivery and/or networked learning that takes place at a school's computer laboratory.

Nonetheless, the concept of design as enhanced in the new media is centrally located on the trajectory of learners' autonomy. This will be looked at more comprehensively in this paper within the sociocultural perspective of digital literacy. On the whole, the development of digital literacy has always had an overlap as predicated by a continuous flux in information explosion. It is therefore difficult to mark a clear boundary in time and space of these trends. However, it is understandable that each stage has immensely contributed to situating digital systems as the epicenter of knowledge carrier, dissemination and easy access in the modern world.

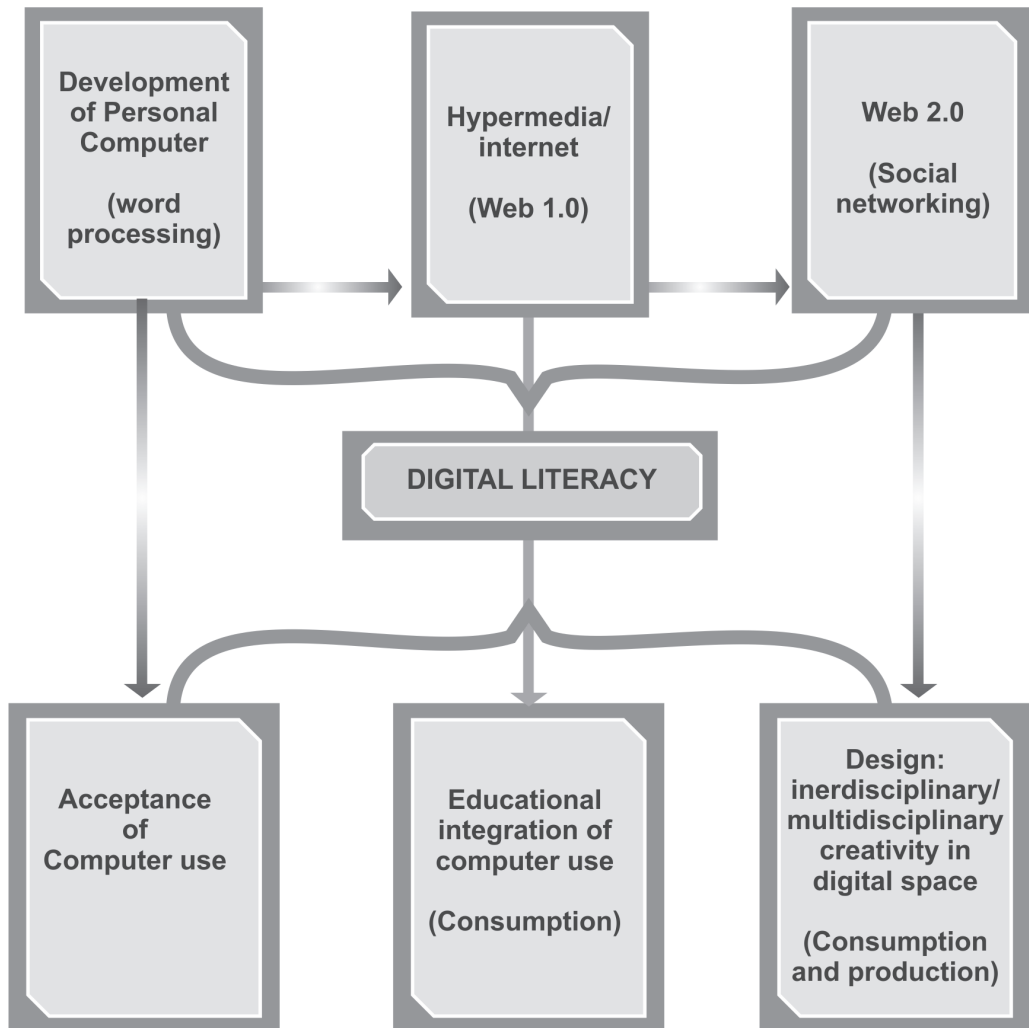


Fig. 1: A Schematic Representation of Evolvments in Digital Literacy

Trends in the Digital System

Internet

The internet started as early as 1969, and was then known as ARPANET. It was originated and developed by the ARPA (Advanced Research Project Agency) that operated with the US Defence Department. The aim of ARPANET was to establish communication amongst military agencies and store a huge amount of important information as regards the nuclear weaponry (Dobson & Willinsky, 2009). The internet has millions of computers that are interlinked together for storing information globally. It is quite unwieldy to estimate the exact number of internet users in the world. Nsude (2007) posits that the internet could be likened to a room filled with many spiders, each spinning its own web and the webs are so interconnected that the spiders can travel freely within this maze or environment. The internet has been noted as a window for global convergence. All that one needs to link to any part of the world, is to connect to the internet; with the internet, one travels around the globes in few minutes.

E-mail

This is an electronic mail which is a world device system for sending and receiving mails across the globe. E-mail is different from the regular mail because it reaches its destination in a few minutes. Most e-mail systems have the capacity to allow users to edit texts in the course of composing messages. Although different e-mail systems use different formats, there are emerging standards that are making it possible for users on all systems to exchange messages. Almost all e-mail systems have an internet gateway (Dobson & Willinsky, 2009).

The Web

The www (World Wide Web) consists of two things: a protocol called HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), and a language called HTML (Hypertext Markup Language). The www is quite different from the internet; it is a tool for fetching documents on the internet. The web browser software is used to read documents, listen to music, watch video, do research, make friends, download files among others. It has largely been the reason for the popularity of digital technology. There is no gainsaying the fact that the web has significantly influenced digital literacy. It is apparent that there are forces arrayed for increasing public access to and participation in the production of digital texts of every sort, and this is enhanced by the web (Dobson & Willinsky, 2009).

As indicated earlier, the web first existed in the form of Web 1.0. This only allowed for one way flow of information as users surfed the net only to access burgeoning information (Firat & Koksal, 2019). In the early twenty first century, as earlier said, there was a transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. This became a paradigm shift as the web then

allowed the users to not only consume but also to produce contents (Alexander et al, 2016). Web 2.0 has given space for networked information as found in the social media. One significant effect of social media is quick access to and participation in distant learning, interaction, relationship and attitudinal modification.

Social media services such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Skype, Wiki etc. possess some features that assist users to video an event, share and interact fully on a websites by letting a user's profile into the internet. Profile means the recording and organization of behaviours. It contains such information as a user's name, age, gender, locality, pictures, hobbies, marital status and the like. Social network sites bring together a huge number of audiences who are active participants, and provide information which can be accessed by those classified as friends or followers (Buck, 2012).

Sociocultural/Communicative Possibilities in Digital Literacy

Recent developments in the digital space have diverted it from absolute formality, and oriented it towards the sociocultural essence of human existence which is interaction. Literacy itself is situated within social practice rather than an exclusively formal and schooled understanding of correct language (Bhatt & Machenzie, 2019). It is even more so in digital literacy considering the democratization that has taken place in digital spaces. A digital perspective that seeks to understand this approach of social practice divests itself of an a priori notion of what works but rather engages a detailed exploration of digital literacy in the lives of those that use technologies (Bhatt & Machenzie, 2019). Users of digital platforms do no longer have to constrain themselves to pre-established rituals of what must be done. Learners are exploring opportunities in the social environment as embedded in digital spaces in both formal and informal approaches. This is moving towards learners' autonomy by internalizing social practices in the digital media.

The first stage of educational digital utilization could be regarded as the period of acceptance. This is the period of public uptake of technology as a kernel of information (Alexander et al 2016). Secondly, there was the integration of technology with the traditional curriculum (Vlieghe, 2015). Different disciplines had to incorporate technology as a means of impacting knowledge. This is both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary dimensions to digital literacy. But as Vlieghe would argue, digital literacy should be seen as a type of literacy in its own right and not as a passive way of integrating technologies in the implementation of the traditional curriculum. However, with innovations in technology, there is now mediation in the digital space that is oriented towards a design to enable learners create content that will serve their interest in the course of learning (Pangrazio, 2016). The mediational sequence in sociocultural theory entails the flexibility of the mediator (teacher or another learner) shifting from task work to pedagogical support, where support is negotiated before a shift back to the task work (Van Compernelle, 2015). This defines the activities-oriented nature of sociocultural theory. The learners are pivotal in both the negotiation of support and task performance. The new media has been designed to encourage these activities. This purpose, the 'design perspective' of digital literacy serves in encouraging learners to be content producers as much as they

are content consumers. In an effective communication, there is no static encoder nor decoder, rather, there is flexibility that allows for a change of roles.

One major argument of sociocultural researchers is that learning is not solely cognitive.

They argue that context and social interactions are important for learning (Yuan, Wang & Eagle, 2019). These interactions are now better situated in digital spaces as it bridges the distance gap and affords learners the opportunity of reaching out to diverse speech contexts. Again, as creators of content, learners can develop the attitude of skepticism in order to assess the authenticity of content, so as to validate the content they themselves are creating (Yuan, Wang & Eagle, 2019). This further gives room for the needed dynamism and flexibility. Sociocultural tools include social relationships, cultural artifacts and concepts (Mirzaee & Aliakbari, 2017). In this regard, the digital media, particularly the new media as enhanced by Web 2.0 serve as cultural artifacts in providing social relationships that elucidate concepts and enhance context-driven communications.

There are pedagogical implications for this. The construct of mediation in sociocultural theory, where the events in social contexts are mediated for the intra-personal needs of the learners should be done appropriately by teachers not to inhibit the learners from exploring opportunities in digital spaces but to encourage them. This warrants that

teachers too must be equipped with the skills of digital media. To ensure that learners are able to take full advantage of learning in the digital environment, it is imperative for teachers to possess the knowledge and skills of digital literacies (Yuan, Wang & Eagle, 2019). This informs part of the objectives of this present study.

In the views of Achike and Adeniyi (2017), technologies are not change agents in isolation; technologies not deployed by the teacher for instructional purposes would have a less pedagogical impact on the learners. In planning and delivering their lessons teachers should incorporate digital aids, ideally. The digital space has offered a whole lot of material resources, to the extent that teachers need not waste much of their energy in lesson planning because they have the skills to efficiently utilize the digital system within their reach. The role of the teacher becomes mainly to mediate between the students and the digital system. The multiple means of engagement provided by digital literacy when harnessed by the teacher will not only further entrench digital literacy but engender autonomy in knowledge acquisition and creation.

Digital Divide as a Factor

Digital divide is a term used to describe the different degrees to which the digital space can be accessed by different users. It is the gap between individuals, households, genders, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to the opportunities they have to access information and communication technologies. As much as the relationship between socioeconomic status and access to internet have been the basis for many the research conclusions about digital divide,

it should be noted, however, that academic literacies and technology are synchronous in relation to mobilizing multimodal digital texts (Rowse, Morrell, & Alvermann, 2017). There is therefore a kind of controversy on what resides in the territory of the digital divide, although all variables are oriented towards poor access, lack of knowledge, and lack of technology.

Ritzhaupt, Liu, Dawson and Barron (2013) group the digital divide into three categories. First, equitable access to hardware, software, the internet, and technology support within schools. Secondly, the frequency of use of technology by students and teachers, and the purpose for which they are using it. Thirdly, whether the students know how to use the digital facilities for their personal empowerment. Three strands of digital divide construct that can be deduced from this classification are access, frequency/purpose of use, and knowledge. All these constructs cut across socioeconomic status and location (Ritzhaupt, et al., 2017).

Despite the concept of design that facilitates both consumption and production in digital literacy, the digital divide tends to orchestrate a one sided use, orienting towards consumption and devoid of production. This is because consumption and production require more access, more technologies, and more software (Rowse et al., 2017). Ultimately, if the digital use of learners is constricted to consumption, it brings about an anticlockwise dimension to the flow of the trends in digital literacy with its associated gains. Even worse is lack of access and availability of these technologies. It is a sort of keeping learners in the dark when their counterparts are flourishing in the light.

This disparity in the access and effective utilization of the digital space is more glaring between developed and developing nations. For instance, in Nigeria, a study by Achike and Adeniyi, (2017) shows that family, peer, school, occupation, community and rehabilitation are below average when it comes to digital literacy. Worse still, this shortcoming is more pronounced in the school, which is the most formal context for literacy. Nigeria and, by extension Africa, is yet to maximize the opportunity provided by the digital system as a pedagogical platform.

On this, Maduabuchi (2007) suggests that teachers of reading and indeed all teachers must have professional training in ICTs. This is a veritable step toward bridging the gap. There is therefore an urgent need to bridge the gap of digital divide especially in Africa, particularly Nigeria. This is not only germane to the pedagogical skills of teachers, but the overall utilization of the opportunities provided by the ICTs.

3. Method

This study is a quantitative descriptive survey of a cross-sectional type. A researcher-designed questionnaire was administered using online tools such as WhatsApp, Facebook and email. The questionnaire contained twenty items which investigated teachers' knowledge, perception and use of the digital tools in enhancing communicative

competence, and how the digital divide affects their use of digital tools. All teachers of the English language at secondary schools in South-western Nigeria constituted the target population. However, a total of one hundred English teachers were purposefully sampled for the study.

4. Data analysis

Research questions 1 and 2 were answered descriptively while research question 3 was transformed to hypothesis.

Research Question 1

What level of knowledge of digital tools do ESL teachers have?

This research question was answered descriptively and the results are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the level of the ESL teachers' knowledge about digital tools

Range	Measure	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 15	Inadequate	0	0
16 – 30	Adequate	35	35
31 – 45	Very Adequate	65	65
Total		100	100

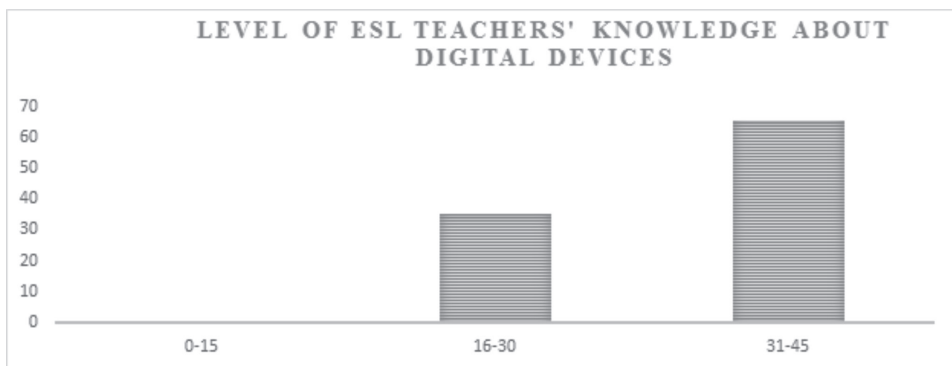


Figure 1: Level of teacher knowledge about digital devices

Table 1 and **Figure 1** above reveal how much the ESL teachers indicated they knew about digital tools such as video, slide presentation software, edmodo, iphone, google classroom, WhatsApp, Facebook. They reveal that 35% of the participants indicated that they had adequate knowledge of various digital tools, whereas the majority (65%) indicated that they had adequate knowledge of digital tools. Lastly, none of them indicated that they had no knowledge of digital tools. This implies that the ESL teachers themselves indicated that they had very good knowledge of the various digital tools that can be used to access and assess their students without physical contact.

Research Question 2

What are the perception and practices of the teachers in using those tools in enhancing communicative competence of the learners?

This research question was also answered descriptively and the results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: A descriptive analysis of the level of perception and practices of teachers in using digital tools to enhance communicative competence

Range	Measure	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 20	Low	0	0
21 – 39	Medium	84	84
40 – 60	High	16	16
Total		100	100

Table 2 above rates the perception about the teachers’ usage of digital tools in enhancing communicative competence. The table reveals that many of the teachers (84%) had an average perception of their knowledge about digital tools as they choose ‘medium’ as the term to describe how they used digital tools in enhancing communicative competence of students. Meanwhile very few of them (16%) agreed that they had been making judicious use of many of the digital tools in enhancing communicative competence. However, no teacher was recorded not to have made use of any of the digital tools. It can therefore be deduced from the table above that while many of the teachers had been making use of some of the digital tools at one point or the other to enhance communicative competence, almost all the participants felt that they were yet to judiciously deploy digital tools in enhancing learner competence.

Research Question 3

Would the digital divide affect the use of digital tools by the ESL teachers in enhancing the communicative competence of the learners?

HO₁: The digital divide would not significantly affect ESL teachers' use of digital tools in enhancing communicative competence.

The research hypothesis was tested using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the results thereof are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Analysis of variance of the effect of the digital divide on the usage of technology by ESL teachers

Model	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	122.117	1	122.117	4.329	0.040
Residual	2764.323	98	28.207		
Total	2886.440	99			

Table 3 above unveils the effect of the digital divide on the usage of technological devices by 100 ESL teachers in South-western Nigeria to enhance communicative competence. The table indicates that the teachers' perception was that the digital divide had a minor but significant effect on the rate at which they made use of digital tools for the enhancement of communicative competence among their students at $F(4.329)$, $df(1,98)$ and $Sig.(0.040)$ which is less than 0.05. This implies that the extent to which ESL teachers' perception was that the digital divide did in fact affect their use of digital tools for communicative competence was significant

5. Discussion of findings

The first finding of this study is that ESL teachers in South-west Nigeria have good knowledge of digital tools. This outcome is in consonance with Agbatogun (2014), Achike and Adeniyi (2017) and Sadaf and Johnson (2017) who opined that many ESL teachers know about these digital devices but only often use them for personal purposes. This is probably because many of these tools are not primarily designed for pedagogical purposes. Their use goes across contexts, but can also be creatively used

for pedagogical purposes. Little wonder Yuan, Wang and Eagle, (2019) emphasize the imperativeness of teachers having knowledge of digital tools so as to be able to encourage learners in doing same.

Similarly, this study found that although many of the participating teachers had a positive perception about their use of digital tools in enhancing communicative competence, they also showed that they scarcely judiciously utilized these tools for teaching and learning. This outcome is in synergy with Agbatogun (2014), and Durriyah and Zuhdi (2018) who all affirmed that ESL/EFL teachers had a positive disposition towards the use of digital tools. It, however, contradicts Ding et al (2019) who posited that teachers' pedagogical beliefs and perceptions about digital tools correspond with their use of the tools. That is to say, as the level of teachers's knowledge of digital tool is high, their pedagogical use of these tools increases. In contrast, the present article revealed that although the ESL teachers perceived they had a good knowledge of the digital tools, this knowledge does not increase their use of those digital devices in enhancing communicative competence of learners. However, this could be as a result of the third finding of this study which is that the digital divide significantly affects the rate at which ESL teachers use digital tools in enhancing communicative competence. Rowsell et al. (2017) aptly stated that the effective utilization of digital tools demands greater access to technology and software. When this access is not there, it constrains the use. Again, Ritzhaupt, et al. (2017) maintained that in a case where students do not have knowledge to use these tools, their pedagogical use is limited. It thus requires more investment both in making the digital tools available and training to promote effective use.

6. Conclusion

This study explored Nigerian ESL teachers' knowledge and practice in using digital literacy to enhance learner communicative competence. The results showed that ESL teachers have adequate knowledge of digital tools. It also revealed that while the teachers perceive that digital tools can be used to enhance communicative competence, their use of those tools in doing this is quite limited. Again, the outcome of the study shows that the digital divide is a significant factor in teachers' use of digital tools to enhance the communicative competence of learners. Based on these findings, it is therefore recommended that future researchers should do experimental studies to find out how some of the tools mentioned in this study enhance communicative competence of the learners. Variables such as location, gender and the educational qualification of teachers can also be explored by future researchers in carrying out similar studies.

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