



# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INNOVATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Soji-Oni, Titilayo I.**

Federal College of Education (Tech.), Department of  
English and General Studies, Akoka-Yaba, Lagos,  
Nigeria.

[www. orcid.org/0000-0003-0796-9415](http://www.orcid.org/0000-0003-0796-9415)

## **Abstract**

*The English language being our lingua franca has come to stay in Nigeria. Hence, there is the need to create new methods of teaching English language and implement effectively these new methods which will enhance national development. English language is evolving all the time, particularly alongside advance in technology. Innovation in English language teaching has become a major advancement in recent years. This paper discusses among other things: innovation in English language teaching focusing on digital platforms and portals like Learning Management System, WhatsApp, Facebook, Google Docs, Digital video, Edmodo, Online Corpora and Online Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Innovation in teaching for national development, benefits of innovation in English language teaching and the level of implementation of the innovation in English language teaching. The implementation of the innovation in English language teaching is bedeviled with many obstacles like epileptic power supply, poor internet connection (system related), lack of IT skills and resistance to embrace and adopt online teaching (teacher related), and management related challenges. The study concludes that management of schools and government should provide functional internet facilities, stable power supply, organized training, seminar and workshop for students and lecturers on the effective usage of online teaching and learning. This will go a long way to enhance national development.*

**Keywords:** Implementation, Innovation, English language, National Development.

## **Introduction**

All over the world, there has been the introduction of various innovations in English language teaching, which was necessitated by the 2020 lockdown that made the educational system to come to a halt. Different digital platforms and

portals have been introduced for smooth and effective teaching learning process, so that if such lockdown happens again then teaching and learning can go on unhindered. Digital platforms like WhatsApp, Zoom, Facebook, Google Docs, Digital video, Edmodo, Online Corpora, Online Continuous Professional Development (Chong, 2016) were introduced to teach English language but how far have English language teachers implemented the use of these platforms? Another important Portal is Learning Management System (LMS), which has been introduced in many higher educational institutions to connect lecturers and students online through internet facilities without the confines of physical traditional classroom (Shittu, Ola & Adedapo, 2021). The whole world has witnessed all manner of possibilities that this medium offers. LMS is an ICT intervention that aids teaching and learning. Shittu, Ola, Adedapo (2021) believe that the implementation of these digital platforms especially LMS by most public higher educational institutions in Nigeria has continued to increase in recent years. In the era of Covid-19 pandemic, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) help academicians of public higher education in Nigeria to administer teaching, research and community service obligation.

However, before the introduction of these digital platforms, there have been complexities and challenges of introducing educational change (Carless, 2012). People were used to old methods of teaching, that is why it is very important to evaluate the level of the implementation. According to Carless, (2012) innovation is an attempt to bring about educational improvement by doing something which is perceived by implementers as new or different. There are many innovations in English language teaching like new pedagogic approaches, such as task-based language teaching; changes to teaching materials; technological developments, such as computer-assisted language learning.

The implementation of these innovations is a critically important field because the development of education and invariably the nation rests in the hands of the teachers, since no nation can rise above the quality of her teachers and the educational system. Rogers, (2003), outlines five oft-cited factors which influence end users' responses to the innovation; relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Innovations or changes which are perceived by individuals as having greater relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, and observability and less complexity are likely to be adopted more rapidly and efficiently than other innovations. Most of these reforms have positive, negative, and unanticipated impacts (Carless, 2012). He further stresses that innovations which do not achieve all their (overambitious) objectives should not be necessarily be classified as failures. The success of innovations should be gauged by the extent to which learners are making more learning progress than before the innovation was implemented (Van den Branden, 2009). It is against

this background that this paper examines implementation of the innovation in English language teaching for national development.

### **Innovation in English Language Teaching**

English language teaching has undergone tremendous changes over the years. This Innovation is solving a real problem in a new and simple way. It is the process of making changes to something established by introducing something new. Innovation is a new idea, method or device. Taylor (2017) defines innovation as creation of new combinations of existing resources.

Lin (2006) views innovation as making something new. It is derived from the Latin word, *innovare*. Drucker (1985) explains innovation as the entrepreneurs' specific tool to exploit change for a diverse business or service. In his own words, Wiley (1998) says that innovation is a process of transforming an opportunity into fresh ideas and being widely used in practice. According to Afua (1998), innovation is the use of new technical and administrative knowledge to offer a new product or service to customers.

According to Chong (2016), the following are what appear to be the ten innovations for teaching English language:

1. Digital platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Docs, Digital video and especially Edmodo which create a safe online environment for teachers, students and parents to connect are popular with English language teachers. These digital platforms for instance, zoom, can be utilized by sending a scheduled zoom link to the students, this will be clicked on by the students.
2. Online corpora: The use of corpora-large text collections used for studying linguistic structures and frequencies used to be the privilege and exclusive preserve of lexicographers. But with most corpora now available online, and quite a few for free, teachers now have access to information about the way language is used in authentic texts and speech.
3. Online Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and the global staffroom. Teachers of English from all over the world form online communities that act like a huge global staffroom. This will enable all English teachers to converge in an online room for professional development.
4. Mobile learning and BYOD (bring your own device): Teachers and learners benefit from apps like WIBBU, and podcasts like Luke's English Podcast-Learn British English with Luke Thompson- nominated for an ELTons award in the category of digital innovation. Students can use their devices to connect wherever they are especially from the comfort of their homes.

5. Communicating with people online: Skype and other similar tools have enabled students to meet and interact with others in English.
6. Online authentic materials: Teachers can now access the daily news, watch trending videos on YouTube. It is important to choose the right online materials for efficient and effective learning.
7. The IWB (Interactive White Board): This allows saving and printing notes written on the board, controlling the classroom computer from the whiteboard, playing listening activities on the sound system, using the screen as a slide for presentations, accessing the internet etc.
8. Students steering their own learning online: Teaching learning process has gradually been moving from a teacher-centred top-down approach to a student-centered, bottom-up one. Here, the student will be at the center of the teaching learning process. The teacher brings him out of his shell to interact meaningfully.
9. Dogme: this is a communicative approach that eschews published textbooks in favour of conversational communication between learners and teachers.
10. Teaching soft skills and critical thinking skills: soft skills problem-solving, presentation skills, time management and decision making.

Likewise, Shittu, Ola & Adedapo (2021) reiterate the use of Learning Management Learning Management System: This is a portal that enables lecturers and students to interact out of the classroom, having discussions through forums that could otherwise take up too much of the time supposed to be spent on learning in the classroom system as one of the innovations in English language teaching.

The use of these innovations which brought about these digital platforms and portal cannot be over emphasized. Innovation encourages teachers and students to explore research and use all tools to uncover something new. It involves a different way of looking at problems and solving them. It should be noted, however, that Innovation does not mean creating something from nothing, but rather it means to create things from existing structures.

### **Level of Implementation of the Innovation in English language Teaching**

In today's technology driven communities, teachers of English are utilizing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the teaching learning process. Pagan and Medina (2021), find out that many schools deemed it necessary to adopt the usage of these digital platforms for teaching. This helps English teachers to develop new teaching strategies like using online tools to teach, design educational materials (web-based materials, e-books, worksheets) and identify a learning management platform to teach their course. The adoption of the new concept helps these teachers to provide their learning materials that

will be students friendly and interact with students, share files and forums via online. These digital platforms promote “any time, any place, any pace” access to learning content. The platforms offer tools that are quite productive in learning like: file sharing, discussion forums, lesson, syllabus, chat, and management of assignments, among others.

However, there are lots of challenges since these platforms are online and internet based in which high internet access tariff poses a great challenge. In Nigeria, the internet is easily available and accessible by urban dwellers. There’s also the problem of epileptic power supply and poor internet access and speed which affect delivery of courses. Shittu, Ola & Adedapo (2021) also discover that lack of IT skills by English teachers and the resistance to adapt to online teaching by lecturers and students in the new normal create another barrier to the implementation of these innovations to teaching.

In the same vein, Nzeih & Udoh (2019) identify the following challenges:

- learner’s perception of digital platforms -learners prefer physical learning environment.
- difficulty in providing Online Realtime feedback to all learners.
- relatively expensive cost of tools and applications.
- inadequate skill set and subject matter experts for deployment e-learning systems.

Furthermore, Carless (2012) outlined three (3) main barriers facing the implementation of the innovations in English language teaching: Teacher related, System related and School related.

- Teacher-related: lack of teacher ownership or understanding of the innovation; change not congruent with existing teacher values and beliefs, negative attitudes often engendered by the additional workload entailed; lack of IT skills, administrative bottleneck and resistance to adapt to online teaching; teachers are often emotionally bound up in existing practices; and change can be personally threatening, if the teacher is not ready for the change..
- System related: poor communication and lack of mutual trust between change agents and frontline implementers; putting too much emphasis on the intricacies of the innovation itself and not enough on consideration of how it could be implemented; lack of appropriate resources to support the innovation; insufficient professional development and support for teachers; failure to bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality; cynicism engendered by previous failed attempts at innovation; failure to align a pedagogic innovation with the requirement of high -stakes examinations. Epileptic power supply and poor internet connection also hinder the innovation.

- School-related: lack of supportive culture for change; conservative forces within a school; lack of support or understanding from senior management; inadequate school-based resources; student difficulties in adapting to teacher change, particularly if the rationale has not been persuasively articulated.

### **Conditions for Innovation**

In view of the multiple challenges facing the implementation of innovations, it is worth considering under what circumstances there are prospects for success. The following conditions act as facilitating factors:

- The innovation is not overly ambitious and has support from the management.
- It has appropriate time frames and seeks to facilitate early, small-scale success which generates momentum and positive sentiments.
- Teachers are brought on board at an early stage, and feel belonging and ownership that is of more than a token nature. These teachers may act as opinion leaders.
- Effective institutional -based professional development and support are built into the project.
- The innovation is contextually and culturally appropriate, and does not promote values which are incongruent with those of implementers.
- Problem-solving strategies are built into the project and there are change-management strategies to tackle challenges arising. (Carless, 2012).
- In addition, government should provide fund to generate stable power supply and subsidized for internet tariff.

### **Benefits of Innovation in English language Teaching**

Using different innovations to teach English language serves the students better. It ignites a passion for learning and provides students with the tools they need to succeed in the innovation economy when technology is used in the right way. It helps students learn effectively. Philmckinney (2020) highlighted some benefits:

- It makes learning interesting and engaging, especially for younger generations raised on the latest technology.
- It allows for faster and more efficient delivery of lessons, both in the classroom and at home.
- It reduces the need for textbooks and other printed material, lowering long-term costs incurred by schools and students.
- It makes collaboration easier; students, teachers, and parents can communicate and collaborate more effectively.
- It helps to build technology -based skills, allowing students to learn, early on, to embrace and take advantage of the tools which technology offers.

### **Innovation in Teaching for National Development**

Ukpong (2020) defines national development as the ability of a nation to improve the lives of its citizens. The importance of education to national development is that education improves the development of any society because her citizens who are educated will know the right decision to take at any point in time, hence the need for innovation in the teaching -learning process. Schools at various levels are expected to implement the innovation in teaching for economic growth and development.

Innovation is an essential driver of economic progress that benefits both learners and teachers in any nation. Innovation, when rightly engaged in, will lead to national development. One of the major benefits of innovation is its contribution to economic growth which will invariably lead to national development.

Innovation in teaching has been said to contribute meaningfully to national development. It brings about national reformation in the educational sector (Ukpong, 2020). She further stresses that knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) had made the world to be a global village through sharing of ideas, information and skills. This has also made learning and teaching effective which resulted in the national transformation and development. Internet connectivity in schools made research more convenient and dissemination of research findings possible to enhance national development.

### **Conclusion**

Digital platforms and portals are an essential virtual classroom for the survival of education in general and English language teaching in particular especially as dictated by the recent pandemic. The implementation of these digital platforms is not to substitute the face-to-face traditional physical classroom method but rather to complement it. With online teaching, students can participate from the comfort of their homes. Today, with the use of these platforms, information is disseminated quickly. Teachers likewise, have an easier time reaching out to their students quickly. It is possible for every child to learn English in the most enjoyable manner if it is supplied with the right kind of materials. When the digital tools for teaching English are rightly implemented, this can lead to better student learning and engagement. On a final note, there is the need to embrace future innovations on the educational horizon.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings on the level of implementation of the innovation in English language teaching, it is recommended that the Government should provide all necessary gadgets to improve the technical infrastructure and make internet connectivity a priority for education by investing greatly in this sector. Teachers should be trained and re-trained to acquire ICT skills while workshops should be



organized for learners for capacity building. In addition, the importance of using these digital platforms for teaching should be emphasized so that learners would see the need to cooperate in all areas. The teachers should likewise, provide regular feedback to all learners as this will reveal their strengths and weaknesses.

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