



Primary School Teachers' Views on Integrating Technology in English Language Instruction in Rural School Contexts in the Lubombo Region of Eswatini

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ABSTRACT: The realization that traditional methods of teaching have become inadequate hence can no longer be exclusively used when teaching, has seen technology being integrated in instruction for all curricula. This study intended to explore the views of primary school teachers on the integration of technology when teaching English language in rural school contexts in the Lubombo region of Eswatini. The study was based on the following research questions: What are the views of primary school English language teachers on the integration of technology in English language instruction in rural school contexts? What are the benefits of integrating technology in English language instruction in rural school contexts? How do primary school teachers integrate technology in English Language instruction in rural school contexts? What challenges do primary school English language teachers encounter when integrating technology in English language instruction in rural school contexts? The study adopted the interpretivist research paradigm which was used with the qualitative research approach and the case study research design. While the simple random sampling technique was used to select four (4) schools that took part in the study, purposive sampling was used to select eight (8) teachers that took part in the study (two teachers from each school). Data were gathered using an interview guide where teachers were interviewed on a one on one. The data were analyzed using Thematic Content Analysis. The study found that some teachers had a misconception about technology integration in instruction as they view it as the teaching of basic computer skills. Another finding was that integrating technology in English language instruction was viewed as very beneficial as it resulted in optimum lesson delivery since learners generally have a big interest in technology. Challenges that teachers encountered when integrating technology in instruction included lack of training and unavailability of technological gadgets as well as poor internet connections. The study therefore recommends that The Ministry of Education, through the In-service department should train the teachers on how they can integrate technology in their teaching. Another recommendation is that Headteachers should organize teachers from other schools who are known to be effectively using the approach to come and assist teachers in rural schools.

KEY WORDS: Integration, Instruction, Rural Context, Technology, Views.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of technology in instruction has gained a lot of popularity in the world, Eswatini included. The approach has become the most preferred by most teachers, specifically teachers of the English language. This observation is made by Alqahtani (2019) who states that the emergence and integration of technology in English language instruction has seen a substantial number of teachers opting for, and using technology to support their teaching of the English language the world over; thus integrating technology when teaching is now viewed as a fundamental part of the English language instruction. In line with this view, many teachers have adopted the approach in their teaching of the English language for the many benefits that it has for both the teachers and the learners. The most important benefit according to Adhikari (2021) is that it positively influences instruction delivery as it ensures learner engagement and participation in the lesson. Integrating technology in instruction also ensures maximum effectiveness of the lesson delivery as well as understanding and retention of the content taught.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY



Education methods of instruction have undergone transformation over the centuries. The emergence of technology has prompted its use in education resulting in technology being the basis for innovation in instructional methods. Integrating technology in instruction according to Rizvi, Gulzar, Nicholas and Nkoroi (2017) enables students to not only acquire subject specific knowledge or content but to also become lifelong students in a digitally connected world. It is for this reason, and of course many other reasons that teachers all over the world, Eswatini included have adopted the approach. In Nepal, for example, teachers of the English Language integrate technology when teaching. According to Adhikari (2021) the teachers' justification for adopting this approach is the many advantages that it has on both teaching and learning. Integrating technology in English Language instruction in Nepal promotes and enriches teachers' instructional strategies as well as the learners' performance in the language. It also advances coordination, cooperation, collaboration, and interaction among teachers and learners, and in Adhikari (2021)'s view this is vital for the teaching/learning of English.

In Saudi Arabia, teachers of English also integrate technology in their teaching of English because of similar reasons. Alqahtani (2019) states that the use of technology in English language teaching has the potential to enhance content delivery as it forms a part of innovative pedagogies that are typically associated with modern methods of language instruction. In addition, through the integration of technology in English language instruction students are better able to acquire and improve their language knowledge and skills. The use of technology in teaching English further consolidates what learners have learnt in different lessons regarding the components of the language and this is what makes the approach essential for the teaching/learning of English Language. Integrating technology in English Language instruction is also done by teachers in Chile. Lizasoain, de Zarate, and Mansilla (2014) mention that when several initiative technology programs which were aimed at improving the quality of the teaching/learning process of English as a foreign language, the discovery that was made was that a majority of the teachers in the rural schools did not possess the basic technology skills to enable them to use the program. Teachers were unable to integrate technology in their teaching of English as a foreign language using the program. This realization saw the government initiating an education tool that was to be used by both the teachers and the learners for self-learning. The name of the tool is 'It's my turn' and it was used to foster the understanding of lexical and grammatical items, as well the general development of the English Language in both the teachers and the learners.

The tool comprises of materials designed for both the learners and the teachers and they include DVD's with pre-recorded lessons, a teachers' guide, CD-ROM with English songs and rhymes, CD-ROM with instruction, a schedule notebook, and another notebook for assignments. So teachers use this tool to teach and also to learn. According to Lizasoain, de Zarate, and Mansilla (2014) the great strides in terms of the learners' development in English as a foreign language have been noted since teachers started integrating technology in their teaching of the language. This is despite that rural school contexts in Chile are known to be lacking in terms of facilities that make it possible to integrate technology in English Language teaching. The learners have made remarkable improvements in the English Language as a result of this integration.

Other countries that have made an attempt to integrate technology in English language instruction are India and China. Of importance to note is that the situation in rural contexts for both countries are similar in terms of deficiencies and inadequacies of facilities that enhance the use of technology in English Language teaching. In both countries teachers are inadequately trained to handle or how to use technology in their instruction; low internet access and inadequate digital tools have also been noted as challenges. Despite these challenges, however, integrating technology in instruction has been found to be very effective as it has a positive impact in the teaching/learning of the English language (Lizasoain, de Zarate, and Mansilla, 2018).

Integrating technology in instruction is also done in South Africa. Teachers in South Africa have made big strides in using technology as well as integrating it in the teaching of different subjects; however, it has been noted that they encounter a number of challenges. Ramorola (2018) reports that despite that the approach of integrating technology in teaching is on the rise in many schools in South Africa, some teachers are of the view that the approach is both a challenge as well as complex more especially to teachers who have limited ICT skills and experience using ICT to support teaching. For most of the teachers integrating technology in instruction is a new approach in education and teachers feel they need to be trained for them to do it effectively. Some teachers



also according to Ramorola (2018) mistake the integration of technology in instruction, with the teaching/learning of ICT's rather than teaching through the use of ICT's.

In Eswatini, there is no ICT in Education/EdTech Policy or Strategy; however, there are several policy and strategy documents that support the integration of ICT in the education system at all levels. The Eswatini Education and Training Sector Policy (2018) pronounces extensive policy objectives related to ICTs and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and ICTs are considered to play an important role in the development of 21st Century skills as well as fulfilling Eswatini's national development goals, with short-term, medium-term, and long-term objectives aimed at enabling teachers and learners to use ICTs for teaching, management and administration of education and training establishments, and ensuring that there is adequate ICT infrastructure in schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Eswatini has set up varied policies and strategy documents that support the integration of technology in teaching and this is an indication that The Ministry of Education in Eswatini views the integration of technology in instruction as a very important approach which improves and develops learners' skills in education. The same view that integrating technology in instruction provides both the content and activities that learners do in the classroom is also supported by Ngwenya, Bhebhe, and Nxumalo (2019). The policies and strategy documents compel institutions of higher learning to restructure their curriculum to accommodate technology and also to ensure that pre-service teachers are trained on how to integrate technology in their instruction of different subjects (The Ministry of Education Report, 2012-2013). While most institutions of higher learning have heeded this directive and have trained teachers on integrating technology in instruction, teachers who are already practicing in the field, who did not get the opportunity for such training, encounter challenges when integrating technology in instruction. This is because there is no programme that has been put in place to train them yet they are expected to integrate technology in their instruction. In addition rural contexts are known to be lacking in terms of facilities, internet connection, and technology gadgets.

Purpose and significance of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore the views of primary school English language teachers on the integration of technology in English language instruction in rural school contexts. It was hoped that the study may benefit The Ministry of Education which has made it a policy that technology should be integrated in education so that it may be known if teachers are implementing the policy and also that if there are challenges that teachers are encountering they may be addressed. The study may also benefit teachers in other rural school contexts as they may see how teachers in similar contexts are integrating technology in their teaching.

Research questions

The study was based on the following research questions:

1. What are the views of primary school English language teachers on the integration of technology in English language instruction in rural school contexts?
2. What are the benefits of integrating technology in English language instruction in rural school contexts?
3. How do primary school teachers integrate technology in English Language instruction in rural school contexts?
4. What challenges do primary school English language teachers encounter when integrating technology in English language instruction in rural school contexts?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was framed within the TPACK framework, an understanding of which is important if one considers integrating technology in teaching. The TPACK framework was first introduced by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler of Michigan State University in 2006. This framework identifies three domains of knowledge needed to successfully integrate educational technology:

- Content Knowledge (CK)
- Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)
- Technological Knowledge (TK)

According to the framework, each domain intersects with the other domains. The knowledge, skills, and abilities developed where all three domains overlap and integrate is said to be the TPACK and forms the basis for effective technology integration. In other words what this means is that in order to teach effectively in today's modern classroom, it is important to balance all three of these domains because all of them are equally important and also depend on each other.

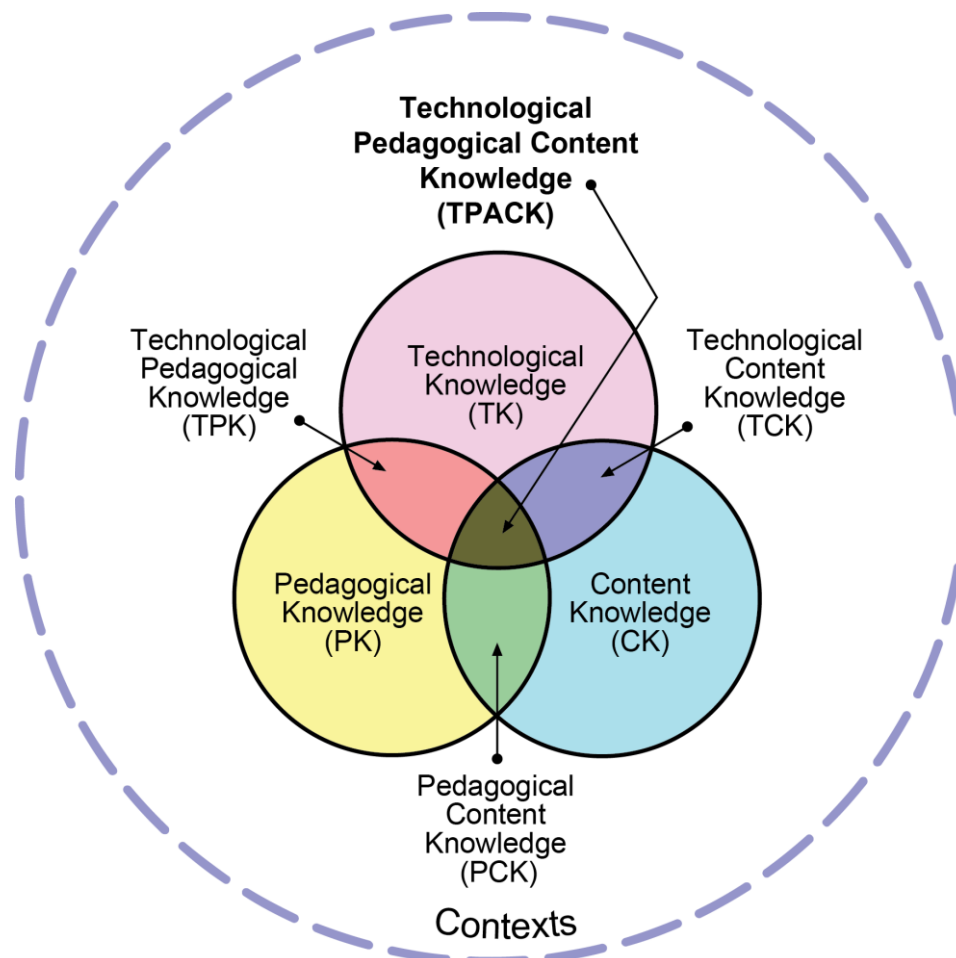


Figure 1. The TPACK Model

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The model puts emphasis on teachers ensuring that learning assessments and activities are selected to support the lesson objectives, technology tools, and abilities, based on how they enhance and support the lesson presentation, assessments and activities. TPACK also emphasises on the teachers' ability to evaluate and select the appropriate tool for the teachers' pedagogic need, finding digital content that is in line with the subject taught, and operating a specific tool effectively (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

In this study the TPACK framework was used to understand why teachers found it difficult to integrate technology in their teaching of English Language. This understanding was based on that if teachers are uncomfortable with a technology tool, they may struggle to integrate technology with the content. Again, if pedagogic goals are not appropriately aligned, teachers may struggle to select an appropriate technology tool or technique to accomplish the course learning goals and objectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW



Literature that is related to this study reveals that the use of ICT tools for teaching English in rural school contexts is an effective way to learn English. A study that was done by Lizasoain, de Zarate and Mansilla (2018) in Chile, with the aim of examining the impact of “It’s my turn” (an ICT) tool for self-learning English as a foreign language, found that “It’s my turn” was a very effective tool for improving communicative competence in both teachers and learners in rural schools. For this reason the tool was introduced to all rural schools in Chile. In this study the target was rural schools in Chile because the situation in rural schools in Chile is that the schools are lacking in terms of access to knowledge, preparing learners for better job opportunities, and health. The introduction of the ICT tool “It’s my turn” therefore gave rural school learners and teachers the opportunity to get the required competence to access knowledge thereby decreasing the socio-economic and cultural gap between urban and rural school learners. In the view of this study, digital literacy and English Language learning are inseparable, they go hand in hand, however there have been instances where an attempt to integrate these two has yielded negative results. One of the reasons is inadequate teaching staff with high-level skills in the English language and teachers’ lack of training on the use of ICT. It’s my turn was found to be an effective tool for promoting English language among the learners but it was noted that teachers needed to make some changes on their use of the tool, hence they needed training.

A similar study was done by Shan and Aziz (2022) based on the observation that teaching English language in rural schools is viewed as challenging and arduous because rural school learners have minimal exposure to the English language. According to the study by Shan and Aziz (2022) the challenges in the teaching of English in rural school contexts are many and they thwart the development of the learners in the English language. Some of the problems identified are similar to those that were found in the study by Lizasoain, de Zarate and Mansilla (2018). The challenges according to Shan and Aziz (2022) are more formidable in rural school settings as they are compiled with many other obstacles (Febriana et al, 2018). The challenges were lack of qualified English language teachers, inadequate facilities, infrastructure, teaching materials, learners’ limited competence in English and lack of parental support. According to the study the suggested solutions for these challenges were the provision of training for the teachers, fostering positive attitudes to the learners by designing interesting lessons and activities, upgrading infrastructure and facilities, provision of teaching aids as well as opening lines of communication between learners and parents.

The study by Shan and Aziz (2022) was based on the observation that English is important as it is an international language and used as the language of business, diplomacy, Science and technology, finance, commerce, hence essential for everyone. The study also noted that English language is considered to be one of the most difficult and challenging languages, more especially for individuals learning it as a second or third language. Elaborating on the challenges faced by both teachers and learners in rural settings, Shan and Aziz (2022) say that the major obstacle in the teaching of English language in rural school settings is the lack of a conducive and supportive learning environment due to the poor conditions of the school buildings, facilities, internet access, ICT facilities and gadgets; all of which make it difficult for teachers to effectively teach English.

Shan and Aziz’s study is supported by a study by Omodan (2020) which was carried out in Malaysian rural schools. The observation made by this study was that teaching English in Malaysia is a cumbersome task owing to the teachers inability to design interesting activities and lessons that have combined the teachers’ instruction with technology since there is no internet access and sometimes electricity to allow for the use of videos and other materials that require the internet. According to the study by Omodan (2020) the learners’ failure in the English language can be largely attributed to the rural setting which does not allow for the integration of technology in the English language instruction among other challenges. For Adhikari (2021) insufficient ICT infrastructures, poor bandwidth of internet and limited ICT skills in teachers and learners are the major obstacles which prevent teachers from integrating technology in English language instruction. The literature reviewed also indicated that integrating technology in instruction has many benefits. A study carried out by Adhikari (2021) in Nepal which sought to explore students and teachers’ perspectives on integrating technology in English language teaching, revealed that; technology integrated teaching promotes teachers’ instruction as well as the students’ performance in the subject, enriches student-centered teaching strategies, enriches teachers’ pedagogic approaches, advances, co-ordination, collaboration, and co-operation among teachers and students.

For Lizasoain, de Zarate & Mansilla (2018) some of the benefits of integrating technology in English language instruction include that students become motivated as they naturally have an interest and enjoy using ICT tools. The motivation also extends to autonomous or independent learning where learners develop the will to find information on their own through manipulating the gadgets. According to these studies, integrating technology in English language teaching is very crucial as can be seen in the many



benefits. Mohammad (2018) states that technology integration in English language instruction creates flexible lessons where learners support their learning with varied ICT tools. The use of technology when teaching English also enables teachers to use a variety of digital tools such as e-books, audio-files, videos, online articles and this results in learners participating actively during teaching/learning. The use of technology in the classroom incorporates the real world into the classroom (Mohammad, 2018) thereby exposing learners to the target language and the culture. Through technology in language teaching learners get the opportunity to interact with native speakers of the language; something that rural school learners need.

Regarding how teachers can integrate technology in their instruction, the literature reviewed unveiled that one of the many ways in which teachers can integrate technology in the classroom is posting homework assignments using platforms such as Blackboards, Brightspace and Moodle. Doing this increases learner engagement and helps learners to be organised. Another way is using presentations or videos, and projectors when teaching. Other ways could be virtual classrooms, smartboards, smartphones, Chromebook, and Google classrooms for presenting lessons. Teachers can also record their lessons so that learners can do play backs in the event they missed something or want to revise. Online field trips can be taken by the learners as at times it may not be possible to go on physical trips, hence online trips can be used. This can be done through Google maps. Google arts and culture can also be used; these are a collection of museums, where content may be created online through posts on Instagram or Tiktok videos. PowerPoint or Google slides, images, videos and animations can be added to slide presentations. Learners can also be assigned to use the internet to research on a given topic. Social media can also be used where learners explore hashtags to see trends in popular culture or news media. Learners can also be encouraged to create their hashtags, share their work, and discuss each other's work online.

Adding onto how teachers can integrate technology in their instruction, Trucano (2014) advises that instead of teachers always thinking about technology integration in terms of involving the use of the latest shiny and expensive gadgets, old technologies such as the radio, television, and recorders can be used with little modifications. Radio broadcasts for example, can be used to prompt specific actions by learners and teachers. According to Trucano (2014) teachers should also consider sharing whatever few technology gadgets that are available using low cost video cameras, for example, those in mobile phones, where teachers can for example record presentations done by their colleagues who have been trained on technology integration in instruction and use them for their own lessons.

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

This study adopted the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive paradigm is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology), and is therefore best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology) since interpretive researchers view or "interpret" the reality through a "sense-making" process rather than a hypothesis testing process (Krauss, 2005).

This paradigm was chosen for some of the advantages that it has. Firstly it is well-suited for exploring hidden reasons behind complex, interrelated, or multifaceted social processes, where quantitative evidence may be biased, inaccurate, or otherwise difficult to obtain (Yanow, 2014). Secondly, it enables the researcher to "see through the smoke" (hidden or biased agendas) and understand the true nature of the problem (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This paradigm was also chosen because it is also consonant with the approach that was used in the study. The qualitative approach was used.

Research Approach

There are basically three approaches to research and these are: qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches (Smith, 2008). The qualitative research approach was adopted and used in this study in line with the interpretive research paradigm. Qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses on the way people interpret, and make sense of their experiences, views, and perceptions to understand the social reality of individuals (Mohajan, 2018). The qualitative approach is used by researchers who are interested in gaining a rich and complex understanding of people's experiences, beliefs, and views over a given phenomenon. Qualitative researchers do not base their research on pre-determined hypotheses (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003) but they identify a problem or topic that they want to explore and guided by a theoretical lens they conduct an investigation (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2003). This approach to data collection and analysis is methodical but allows for greater flexibility than in quantitative research. Data are



collected in textual form on the basis of observation and interaction with the participants through in-depth interviews and focus groups. The data are not converted into numerical form and are not statistically analysed. Using this approach the researchers were able to gather narrative data where the teachers related their views on integrating technology in English Language instruction in rural school contexts.

Research Design

Yin (1984) defines the case study research design as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Creswell (2012) on the other hand, defines a case study design as an in-depth, intensive inquiry reflecting a rich and lively reality and exploration of a phenomenon. In most cases, a case study design selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through a detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships (Eisenhardt, & Graebner, 2007). The case study design was used in this study because it enabled for a deep exploration of the phenomenon in one region out of a total of four regions and also because of its freedom in collecting information where in this case the intention was to collect information using a semi-structured interview guide (Lucas, Fleming & Bhosale, 2018).

Sample and sampling procedures

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) sampling involves choosing a group from a population to evaluate the research question as it would be impossible to include the whole population. Yount (2003) on the other hand says that sampling is the process of selecting a group of subjects in a study in such a way that they represent the larger population from which they are selected. In this study purposive sampling was used to select the teachers who participated. Purposive sampling implies that only participants who are “fit for the purpose, can be used” or can be considered (Bailey, 2018). Purposive sampling starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is selected to include participants of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. In a purposive sample, the researcher deliberately or purposefully selects a particular section of the wider population to include or exclude from the sample. The strength of purposive sampling in a study is that the researcher is able to use their judgement to select a sample that they believe will provide the data required for the study (Palys & Atchison, 2008). Purposive sampling was appropriate for this study because the researchers’ interest was on teachers of English in rural school contexts; hence it is these teachers who were selected to take part in the study. The selection of the schools was however done using the simple random sampling technique. This was meant to give all rural primary schools the opportunity to be selected.

Instruments for data collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for this study as they were viewed as suitable. Zohrabi (2013) states that semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in detail. This type of interview provides the participants with some guidance on what to talk about. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allow for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon (Ellis, 2016) which in this case was the integration of technology in English Language instruction at primary school level. The semi-structured interviews were also chosen because they yield rich and extensive data due to their use of open-ended questions which allow respondents to express their opinions and views freely. The participants can also pose questions where they need more clarification, and this ensures the accuracy and relevance of the information provided. Similarly, the researcher is also able to make a follow-up to the questions asked in case part of the answers provided were not sufficient as expected by the researcher (Creswell, & Poth, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

Following all research ethics, the researchers set up appointments with participants in each school for an introduction and to seek the participants’ informed consent (Yin, 2019). The researchers then requested contact details (mobile phone numbers) of the participants in order to set up appointments for the interviews; this was after the study had been explained to them and they consented to taking part. The participants were notified of their right to voluntary participation and that they can withdraw anytime if they wish. They were also ensured that they will be anonymous and protected. When data had been collected from all the participants,



the researchers conducted member checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, which is a technique for exploring the credibility of results in line with the ideas of Creswell and Poth (2018). Anonymity was also ensured as the names of the participants were never divulged in the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is one way researchers can convince themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refined the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility addresses the relationship between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them. It is achieved by engaging in prolonged interviews and being persistent on observations. Guba and Lincoln (1985) also claim that the credibility of a study is determined when core searchers or readers are confronted with the experience, or view and they can recognize it. In this study credibility was achieved by spending some time in the interviews asking questions and follow up questions on the responses that were given by the participants in order to get all the required information. To achieve dependability, the researcher ensured that the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented.

Transferability refers to the generalizability of the results thus the researcher provides thick descriptions, so that those who seek to transfer the findings to their own site can judge transferability. Conformability is concerned with establishing if the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached. According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), conformability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved. Koch (1994) recommends that researchers should include markers such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study, so that others can understand how and why certain decisions were made. In this study this was done by providing a justification for everything that was done.

Data Analysis Method

Thematic Content Analysis was used to analyse the data that were collected in this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2013) thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It organizes and describes the data in detail. Alhojailian (2012) defines thematic content analysis as a type of qualitative analysis that is used to analyze classifications and present themes and patterns that relate to the data. Braun and Clarke (2013) assert that there are six phases involved when carrying out thematic content analysis. The phases are: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, creating initial themes, reviewing the initial themes and writing the final report. Thematic content analysis involves logical groupings of the data with similar messages (Bailey, 2018). As such, responses are scanned to determine words or phrases that are frequently used by the respondents (Mosera & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher codes and categorizes ideas or patterns contained in data, and makes connections in order to identify emerging themes. Thematic content analysis was suitable in this study because it allowed the researchers to draw conclusions from the themes that emerged from the data gathered from the teachers (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The results from the semi-structured interviews were presented and analyzed in line with the research questions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study found that the teachers' understanding of technology integration in instruction varied. While for some teachers this referred to an approach where in one's teaching technology is used, to some of the teachers this referred to the teaching of basic computer knowledge. Of the eight (8) teachers who were engaged in this study, six (6) of them understood technology to be a situation where teaching is done with the support or aid of ICT tools or gadgets such as tablets, mobile phones, videos, projectors for presentations as well as zoom and Google classrooms. According to these teachers integrating technology in instruction entails ensuring that each lesson is taught with the aid of a technological gadget or tool. The findings regarding the teachers' understanding of technology integration in instruction is consonant with the definition of technology integration in instruction by Bui (2022). In this definition, Bui (2022) gives varied definitions of integrating technology with instruction which have been given by different individuals. Despite that the definitions are not the same, they do however, have one thing in common, that is, supporting or aiding one's teaching with technology. In one of the definitions, Viar and Sanchez (2020) say that this has to do with viewing digital technologies as being not standalone elements but being in a close relationship with the methods of teaching used as well as the



content taught. In another definition given by Henessy et al in Bui (2022) technology integration denotes the teachers' use of technology when teaching and also when designing classroom activities that learners are going to do, for example, presenting using PowerPoint and showing learners videos in instruction.

The understanding of technology integration given by the two (2) teachers is also in line with the understanding of this approach by some teachers in South Africa. In the background of this study, Ramorola (2018) mentioned that for some teachers in South Africa, integrating technology in instruction is understood to mean teaching or learning ICTs' rather than using ICTs' during teaching/learning. This reveals the misconception that some English Language teachers have on the integration of technology in English Language teaching. It also unveils that for these teachers, despite the importance of this approach, they are still far from practicing it as they do not know what it is.

The study also found that the teachers' views on the integration of technology in the English Language instruction were varied. A gain for six (6) of the teachers, integrating technology in English Language instruction was viewed as a very effective current trend in the teaching of English which results in optimum delivery of lessons. According to these teachers contexts that allowed for the integration of technology in instruction benefited greatly from this approach since it benefits both teachers and learners. These teachers felt this is what gave both teachers and learners in urban schools a head start and resulted in them always getting good results as they were able to integrate technology in their teaching, something which they could not do in rural schools. The teachers' view on this aspect is congruent with Alqantani (2019) who views technology integration in instruction as the most preferred method and a fundamental part of teaching by most teachers as it benefits both the teachers and the learners. The same view was also observed in literature review where Lizasoain, de Zarate & Mansilla (2018) stated that the use of ICT tools when teaching is viewed as an effective way to learn English. However, the teachers who took part in this study lamented that as much as they viewed the integration of technology in English Language instruction as positive as it benefits both teachers and learners, the contexts in which they are deprives them from its use as they encounter a number of challenges when they attempt to use it.

Another finding was that integrating technology in instruction was beneficial to the teachers and learners because, learners generally have an interest in technological gadgets and tools. As soon as a teacher comes into class with a gadget or presents their lesson with the support of these tools, there is always a high level of motivation that is noted with the learners. Learners develop an interest in the lesson, in the technology tool and the content presented using that tool. So as Alqantani (2019) observed integrating technology in the teaching of English ensures learner engagement and participation which enhances the learning of English. The teachers also stated that their instruction becomes more interesting hence effective when they have integrated it with technology. According to the teachers sometimes all that you have to do in class is to show learners a video and then learners have to answer questions based on the video. Learners like videos and enjoy watching them. This finding agrees with what was said by Adhikari (2021) in the background of this study. Adhikari (2021) pointed out that integrating technology in English language instruction promotes and enriches the teachers' instructional strategies as well as the performance of the learners in the subject. In addition it advances coordination, co-operation, collaboration, and interaction, all of which are very important in the learning of a language. The study also found that integrating technology in English instruction is beneficial in that in instances where it is difficult for teachers to provide the learners with certain experiences, technology in the form of online field trips and pictures as well as videos can be used. In line with this McNutty (2021) said integrating technology in English comes in handy in situations where it is not possible to go on physical trips as online trips can be taken through Google maps and Google arts and culture.

Findings on how the teachers integrate technology in their English Language instruction were that teachers mainly use their phones where they download videos and show them to learners in small groups. Sometimes they record speeches by native speakers of the English Language and play them either on tapes or phones. The teachers pointed out that they would love to use a variety of technology tools and gadgets in their instruction but these were not available in the rural contexts. According to Trucano (2014) the teachers' use of the available technology when teaching English is justified. For Trucano (2014) there is no problem with using the old technologies. He further says teachers can also share with others technologies or use low cost technologies such as cellphones which is what the teachers in this study said they did.

The study found that primary school teachers of English language in rural contexts encounter a number of challenges when integrating technology in their instruction. One of the challenges is that since this is a new approach in education, the teachers have not been trained on how to do it. They just do it from what they see or hear from others. According to the teachers during training



there was never any mention of technology, let alone mention of how they can integrate it in their instruction. They have not been to any workshops on how they can do their teaching using this approach. This challenge resonates with the challenge that was identified by Ramorola (2018) in South Africa. According to this author teachers view the approach as both complex and challenging because they have not been trained on it since it is new. Another challenge that the teachers encountered was the lack of ICT gadgets, low to no network access, electricity which goes on and off. The same challenges were identified by Adhikari (2021) and were faced by teachers in Nepal, India and China. According to Adhikari (2021), teachers encountered problems relating to inadequate instructional materials, low internet access and inadequate digital tools.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that rural primary school teachers of English Language view the integration of technology in instruction as a very effective way of teaching English. The approach has benefits for both the teachers and the learners. Learners are motivated to learn using technology and they actively participate as they learn in collaboration and co-operation with others. For teachers the approach enriches their instructional strategies. The study further concludes that teachers encounter challenges when using the approach as they are not trained on how to use it. The study therefore recommends that The Ministry of Education, through the In-service department should train the teachers on how they integrate technology in their teaching. Another recommendation is that Headteachers should organize teachers from other schools who are known to be effectively using the approach to come and assist teachers in rural schools.

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