



Impact of Technology Use on English Language Teaching at the Undergraduate Level in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Effective use of technologies in education can enhance both learning and teaching and the introduction of computer into foreign language instruction seems to conform to the statement. This study attempted to explore the impact of the use of technology, such as computer, internet, and multimedia projector on English language teaching at the undergraduate level in Bangladesh. The participants were 4 EFL teachers and 40 undergraduate students studying English as their compulsory study course. The study applied in-depth interview and questionnaire to collect data. The study revealed that use of technologies had a mixed impact on English language teaching; the technologies encouraged and motivated the students to be more connected to their lessons; teachers also felt more confident and classes were more lively and effective in technology applied classroom. It was also found that technologies had some negative impacts too. The study also found that the use of technologies effectively in classroom was not much common in our country and every teacher was not well trained to handle modern technologies too. So, they suggested different sorts of training that would be helpful for them. Finally, this study suggested that trained teachers and assistance of the institutions were important to implement technologies at the undergraduate level.

Keywords: EFL, CALL, Teaching, Learning, Undergraduate

1. Introduction

Technology enhanced language teaching is becoming the trend in Foreign/Second language teaching in developing countries due to the great impact and influence of information technology in every sphere of our life. Bangladesh has also been heading towards technology enhanced teaching since last decade. Like other spheres, technologies like computers, multimedia projector, mobile phone, sound box, social media, CD and DVD player are being widely used in foreign/second language teaching throughout the country and especially in private universities. Now-a-days, teachers like to use technologies in their classes to teach English language effectively. Since internet is easily reachable and provides necessary resources, teachers are fond of accessing the internet to useful language resources for preparing themselves in teaching English language. Singhal (1997) also remarks that technologies and English language education are related to each other. Technologies in present days, offers numerous options for the teachers to teach English language that has a great impact on teaching. Internet plays a key role here in operating different tools. Teachers are able to teach English language effectively using that equipment. The World Wide Web increases interest and also offers much software that is designed for the teachers who want to teach a language. Moreover, the students also get successful allowance in using technologies to learn the language individually or in group through the internet. In spite of these developments, technologies have some negative impact on both teaching and learning English language. The teachers and the

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students, in some of cases, face challenges in using technology. However, educators have supported the use of technology in teaching and learning despite some disadvantages.

2. Literature Review

The most inspiring aspect of technology is its ability to reach audiences all over the world. In language learning, it means teachers can be hired locally and students' access courses that are taught by native language speakers – ensuring proper language immersion. Taking language education online opens a door that allows virtually anyone to have access to that course and its resources. Without technology, teaching is restricted to a geographical area, a specific school, or a specific classroom; with it, the reach is endless. Abdullah et al. (2006) conducted a study to clarify the level of the attitude and motivation of English language teachers in using computer for delivery of the English course and the associated problems and constraints faced by them. The findings revealed that the majority of the teachers had a positive attitude. The teachers were highly motivated towards the use of computers to teach English and actually used them for teaching and learning purposes.

Maniruzzaman and Rahman (2008) indicated that lack of teachers training and sufficient audio visual equipment hamper the use of audio aids in EFL classes. According to Darrel M. West and Joshua Bleiberg (2013) the best educational technologies enable teachers to do more with fewer resources. Communication platforms like Twitter, Facebook, or Tumblr enable dynamic communication with students. Şahin-Kizil's (2011) findings suggest "that EFL teachers hold positive attitudes towards the use of ICT for educational purposes, however, the responses indicate that insufficient class time and inadequate training opportunities are the major obstacles in the process of ICT integration" (p. 1). Aydın's (2013) study "indicated that Turkish EFL teachers have little knowledge about certain software and experience difficulties using the software programs and that they suffer from a lack of technical and instructional support, although they have positive perceptions of computer integration and attitudes toward computer use" (p. 218). Research was also carried out in the teacher Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) preparation. Kessler (2007) findings suggest that "there is a general lack of CALL preparation in teacher preparation programmes and that there is evidence that teachers obtain a majority of their CALL knowledge from informal sources and personal experience rather than through formalized preparation" (p. 173). He further points out that there is a need for more insight into the role of CALL within teacher preparation (Kessler, 2007). Kessler and Plakans (2008) also claim that "CALL teacher preparation may benefit from a focus on developing contextualized confidence within certain teaching domains or types of technology rather than expecting teachers to develop a high level of confidence with technology across domains" (p. 269). The study in general revealed the need for more research in that area

Bordbar (2010) investigated the reasons and factors behind teachers' use of computer technology in the classroom. Also the study aimed to explore teachers' attitudes towards computer and information technology and how they apply their practical computer-assisted language learning experience and knowledge to their language teaching. The results showed that almost all the teachers had positive attitudes towards computer use in the class. The results also pointed to the importance of teachers' vision of technology itself, their experience with it, their level of computer skill and competence, and the cultural environment that surrounds its introduction into schools and English institutes in shaping their attitudes towards computer technology. Healey et al. (2008) found that teaching English with multimedia technology is flexible that focuses on how English language teachers, teacher educators, and administrators can and should use technology in and out of the classroom. It means that multimedia technology provides opportunities to have English teaching not only within the classroom situations, but also outside the classroom situations. It creates a multimedia language environment for teaching English



According to Chapelle (2003), technology is necessary to improve the language ability of students simultaneously inside and outside of the educational setting. Teachers who teach English as a second language recognize the students' need to use English away from the classroom in order to improve communicative competence. A useful discussion regarding applying technology to support language learning is addressed by Gordon (2007). Firm affirmations of her work are shown by various reports stating that several other improvements in the entire practice, especially in the content and approaches to teaching and learning, are stimulated by technology. The impacts of YouTube video clips on teaching for EFL Taiwanese learners regarding their listening skill performance were examined by Kuo (2009). As Zhang (2006) points out through Multimedia and network technology we can offer students not only rich, sources of authentic learning materials, but also an attractive and a friendly interface, vivid pictures and pleasant sounds, which to a large extent overcomes the lack of authentic language environment and arouses students' interest in learning English.

However, it has been found to have a number of beneficial features which make it a good tool for language learning. First, computer-assisted discussion tends to feature more equal participation than face-to-face discussion; teachers or a few outspoken students are less likely to dominate the floor, resulting in class discussions which are more fully collaborative (Warschauer, 1999). Second, computer-assisted discussion allows students to better notice the input from others' messages and incorporate that input into their own messages, thus expanding opportunities for learning of new linguistic chunks (e.g., collocations, common phrases; see St. John & Cash, 1995; Warschauer, 1999). Third, computer-assisted discussion, which takes place in writing and allows more planning time than does face-to-face talk, features language which is lexically and syntactically more complex than oral talk (Warschauer, 1996). Finally, since computer based discussion can take place outside of the classroom, it provides students increased opportunities to communicate in the target language. For all these reasons, language teachers (especially but not exclusively in courses which feature writing) have found single-class computer-mediated communication projects to be beneficial

3. Objectives of the Study

Traditional teaching has hampered students' capacity to comprehend certain language and also understanding to structure, meaning and function of the language, and makes the students passive recipients of knowledge, so it is hard to achieve the target of communication. Therefore, teachers currently use technologies in different ways in teaching English language at the undergraduate level in our country. Teaching English language by using technologies encourages students to learn the language; develops their ability to use language; and helps them overcome the language barriers. So, objectives of this study were:

1. to find out the various use of technologies that the teachers use to teach English,
2. to point out both the negative and positive impacts of using technologies and
3. to suggest solution to overcome the problems in using technologies

4. Methodology

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative method in conducting the study. Based on the objectives of the study, the researchers applied Mixed- Method approach to collect data and analysis of the collected data. Qualitative method included in-depth interview and quantitative method covered questionnaires: student questionnaire, and teacher questionnaire. The study was conducted at four private universities of Dhaka city. A number of four EFL teachers and 40 undergraduate students studying English at the undergraduate programmes as their compulsory study subjects were selected as participants. Teachers were interviewed in formal setting with a number of open ended questions. With the permission of the interviewee



teachers, a recording device was used to record the interview statements. Two different questionnaires were prepared for teachers and students each having 10 statements in 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

5. Findings and Discussions

The purpose of this study was to present the field with an overview of how far the integration of ICT in language education and the development of language teacher education regarding the use of ICT have come, and to contribute suggestions on how the situation can be improved. The overview in question entails literature from around the globe. The section is to present findings of the study on the use of the impact of technologies on language teaching in Bangladesh at the undergraduate level looking into teachers' various use and competency in technologies and what kind of training would make them more competent in teaching language with the assistance of technologies. Four private universities of Dhaka city were selected to collect data and a number of four EFL teachers and 40 students from those universities involved were contacted for interviews and responses to several questionnaires. The scenario of each university has been discussed first. Then the percentage is shown based on the findings of the questionnaires.

5.1. Findings from Teacher Interview

While conducting interview, it was found that all the four teachers used different technologies in their English language class. They disclosed that all of them used computer or laptop, and multimedia projectors. All of them used mobile phone, internet, electronic board, tape recorder and TV monitor. While asking, one of them informed that he did not know about specific website for language teaching. Another one said that he never thought of using blogs and Facebook for teaching their students. In response to another question, all the teachers suggested that technologies helped them make the language classes interesting and preparing the class lectures. They opined they got new ideas about teaching English language through internet; it brought them a new dimension in teaching language. In response to another question, in technology affiliated classes most of the students felt comfortable. But in some cases, technologies reduced students' opportunity of speaking and writing tasks, and students were found less interested in technology use. Specially, the students who came from the rural areas were not used to the technology affiliated class. The teachers commented that their students took longer time to adjust themselves in technology affiliated class. So, teachers had to face some problem in using technology with the new comers.

The interviewed teachers informed that technologies had mixed impact on their teaching. In many of the cases they found good and positive impact as the teachers got help from technology use but, sometimes it has bad or negative impact on teaching to achieve its goal. The teachers responded that they faced some problems in using technologies in their classes. They told teaching learning system was not fully compatible with the use of technology. Students were not found interested in doing any activities that would not appear in examination. The interviewed teachers disclosed that sufficient resources were not available in their cases. They informed that faulty and old machines were not easy to handle in the class. Most of the teachers remarked that they were not officially trained to use modern technology properly. "*We need assistance*", they told. The teachers suggested some solutions to the problems they usually faced

They thought that motivation and support from the authority, adequate funding, and training for the teachers were essential for the improvement of their career. The teachers emphasized the need of training about the use of modern technologies for effective teaching learning in the class. A problem remains that displaying of the content or texts in the power-



point courseware cannot take the place of students' thinking or English communication in simulated circumstance. When working on and utilizing the courseware, "we need to encourage the students to use their own mind and speak more, actively join in class practice, *"We should not overuse the courseware merely in the hope of adding the modernized feature to class teaching"* a teacher commented.

Some teachers may possess the improper concept that they would totally apply multimedia technology in their teaching. It is also believed that the more utilization of multimedia technology, the better class atmosphere may grow, the more actively the students get involved in class participation, the more easily the material access to the students. Apparently, the students show some interest in leaning, but actually, they feel like looking on. In practice, the more unconscious attention the students pay. The more interference of teaching information during transmission, the less the students take from the language materials.

5.2. Findings from Teacher Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire comprised structured questions. Teachers were requested to give their views in a 5-Point Liker scale (1932). In response to question all the 100% teachers strongly agreed that technologies were valuable instructional tools for teaching English language. A total of 50% of the teachers strongly agreed and other 50% agreed that they were very confident when they used technology in delivering lecture. All the 100% teachers strongly agreed that technology promotes development of communication skill. It was found that 100% teachers agreed that they faced some problems while using new equipment. The all further strongly agreed that adequate training in the use of technologies could help to solve the problems they faced. 75% teachers strongly agreed and 25% of them agreed that teaching with technology would be successful when the shortcomings would be reduced. The study found that technologies were very important part and parcels in teaching English language in present time. Teachers largely depended on the mood of technologies to up-to-date themselves and to make their class more interesting and effective.

In this situation, to keep pace with the global world, teachers think that, technologies should be made user-friendly. Ideally, the purpose of both the traditional and computer-assisted cooperative language leaning classrooms is to provide a space in which the facilitation of learning, and learning itself, can take place. If problems and shortcomings can be solved, impact may be positive; and technology may be the useful media for teaching English language in the education system.

5.3. Findings from Student Questionnaire

The findings showed that all the teachers used different types of technology according to the topic and content. In technology based classes, the most of the students felt comfortable. They enjoyed the class with laptop and projector use. But some of the students were from rural area where technology was not available. They were found less interested in the projector based classroom. The findings of the questionnaire survey are presented in the table below:

Sl	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Technologies help in learning English language	12 (30%)	20(50%)	8(20%)		
2	Technologies make the language class more interesting	5(12.5%)	21(52.5%)	7(17.5%)	7(17.5%)	
3	I pay more attention when	6(25%)	22(55%)	10(25%)	2(5%)	



	teachers use technologies in the class					
4	Technologies promote development of communication skill	23(57.5%)	15(37.5%)	2(5%)		
5	Technologies have good impact on my learning English language	25(62.5%)	10(25%)	2(5%)	3(7.5%)	
6	Using projector in language class is effective	22(55%)	15(37.5%)	3(7.5%)		
7	I feel comfortable in technology affiliated classroom	6(15%)	21(52.5%)	7(17.5%)	6(15%)	
8	Teachers use relevant technologies for teaching language	8(20%)	25(62.5%)	7(17.5%)		
9	Teachers motivate me to use technologies for learning English language	20(50%)	17(42.5%)	2(5%)	1(2.5%)	
10	Teachers often engage me in using technologies for learning English language	17(42.5%)	23(57.5%)			

Table: Responses of the students to the questionnaires

During presentation of findings strongly agree and agree are merged to 'agreement'; while strongly disagree and disagree converted to the total of disagreement. Here, the students expressed their own feelings and attitudes toward the technologies used in their class. They showed mixed feeling: the 80% students agreed that technologies helped in learning English language". A total of 65% students agreed that technologies made the language class more interesting to them. The study also showed 80% students agreed that they paid more attention when teachers used technologies in the class. It was found that 95% students were in agreement that technologies could promote development of communication skill. A total of 87.5% students commented that technologies had good impact on their learning English language. It was discovered 87.5% students agreed that using projector in language classes was effective. The survey found that 67.5% students felt comfortable in technology based classroom. It was revealed 82.5% students agreed that teachers used appropriate technologies for teaching English language. Furthermore, 92.9% students commented that teachers motivated them to use technologies for learning English language. Almost 100% strongly agreed that the teachers frequently engaged them in using technologies for learning English language.

Some teachers may possess the improper concept that they would totally apply multimedia technology in their teaching. Position of the teachers should not be replaced by the computers and other devices. It is also believed that the more utilization of multimedia technology, the better class atmosphere may grow, the more actively the students get involved in class participation, the more easily the material access to the students. Apparently, the students show some interest in leaning, but actually, they feel like looking on. In practice, the more unconscious attention the students pay. The more interference of teaching information during transmission, the less the students take from the language materials.



6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, a number of suggestions are put forwarded to be considered for the successful implementation of technologies in language teaching at the undergraduate level in Bangladesh. Here, teachers should play the leading role while using technologies, such as computer, internet, multimedia, etc. Teachers' interpretation during the language teaching should not be overlooked. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) should be followed for effective learning and teaching of the English language. English language teachers should encourage their students to use technologies, and internet resources in developing the language skills and linguistics knowledge. Training for one-to-one or small group tutoring should be introduced so that teachers can practise computer literacy and can be competent in using different modern technologies. Universities should equip themselves with modern technologies, internet, and digital content.

The study reveals the impact of different technologies in language teaching at the undergraduate level. Besides lots of positive impacts, several shortcomings are also found. In some cases, sufficient equipment is not provided and training sessions are not sufficient for the teachers as well. However, this study presents different ideas for using technology proposed by the teachers. Based on the findings, it can be said that in Bangladesh context, technology based language teaching will be successful and impact of technology will be positive only if there is coordination and understanding between the teachers and university authorities in providing full technological support.

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