

Using technology in teaching English at the S.S.C. level

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Abstract

In this an era of technology, new technologies particularly computer, multimedia, mobile phone and the internet offer possibilities for overcoming geographical and cost barriers in teaching and learning. This study attempts to trace the use of technology in teaching English at the S.S.C. (Secondary School Certificate) level in Bangladesh. It also focuses on the impact of using technology in teaching and learning English. Eight teachers and 60 students from four private schools in Dhaka city were selected to survey the use of technology in teaching the English Language. The researchers employed the mixed-methods research to carry out the study where two sets of questionnaires for the teachers and the students and a semi-structured interview only for the teachers were used to collect data. The findings showed that using technology in teaching has both the positive and the negative impacts. Teachers like to use technology in their classroom but limited time and lack of training and technical support from the authority hamper the mode of teaching. The students also feel comfortable in technology affiliated classroom, but sometimes they fail to catch the concept clearly as they become inattentive due to the lack of proper engagement of the teachers in the classroom.

Key Words: *Technology, Internet, Computer, S.S.C., Impact*

Introduction

In this era of science and technology, technology has great use in every sphere of our life. Like other spheres, technology is being widely used in foreign/second language teaching throughout the world due to the influence of information technology on today's modern society. Nowadays, teachers like to use technology in their class to teach the English language effectively. Since the internet is easily

accessible and provides necessary resources, teachers are fond of using the internet to collect various language resources for preparing themselves in teaching the English language. As the information and communication technology is being developed day by day, computer and internet have increasingly started to play an important role in education. Singhal (1997) remarks that technology and English language education are related to each other. Technology in

present days offers numerous options for the teachers for teaching the English language more effectively than before.

The teachers mostly use a computer, multimedia projector, mobile phone, sound box, social media, CD, DVD player, and pen-drive in English language class. Internet plays a key role here in operating these tools. The teachers are able to teach the English language effectively by using technology. The World Wide Web increases interest among teachers and students in education and also offers much software that is designed for teachers who want to teach a language. Moreover, the students also get a successful allowance in using technology to learn the language individually or in groups through the internet. In spite of these developments, technology has some drawbacks in both teaching and learning of the English language. The teachers and the students, in most of the cases, face significant challenges in using technology. However, educators have supported the use of technology in teaching and learning despite some disadvantages.

Objectives of the study

The teachers use technology in different ways of teaching the English language at the S.S.C. level in Bangladesh. Technology has a high impact on teaching. Therefore, the general objective of the study is to find out the implications of technology on teaching the English language at the secondary level. To specify, the objectives are:

- i. to observe the real scenario of using technology in the classroom,
- ii. to point out the impact of using technology, and
- iii. to provide a research-based solution to the problems faced by the teachers.

Research Questions:

- i. What types of technology do usually teachers use in teaching the English language?
- ii. How do the students feel in the technology affiliated classrooms?
- iii. What are the problems of using technology in teaching and learning the English language?
- iv. What are the suggestions regarding the negative impacts?

Literature Review

Technology has become part and parcel of teaching and learning. We hardly pass a single day without technology. Indeed, technology can boost up our language teaching and learning with its magical power. It can highly help the teachers for teaching the English language at every level of education. It is known that, Bangladeshi students face a great difficulty in learning the English language. Every year a considerable number of students fail in English at the Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C) examination. That is why if the teachers can avoid the traditional way of teaching and use technology in teaching English, it might be easier and beneficial for the students to learn English.

Rahman (2015) conducted a study titled "Challenges of Using Technology in the Secondary English Language Classroom". The research results showed that students are more responsive, spontaneous and cooperative in the technologically advanced classroom but most of the teachers are not interested in using technology in their class because of the time limitations, lack of knowledge in using or incorporating technology in their lessons, strict school authority rules, electricity problems, etc. The research also found that the learning atmosphere in the classroom could be made more encouraging and productive for the

students by enabling the teachers to take a practical ICT approach in the classroom in Bangladesh.

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. Firm affirmations of the work are shown by various reports. These state that several other improvements in the entire practice, especially in the content and approaches to teaching and learning, are stimulated by technology. Salaberry (2001) examined the impact of YouTube video clips on teaching listening to EFL Taiwanese learners. He points out that through Multimedia and network technology; teachers 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 largely overcomes the lack of authentic language environment and arouses students' interest in learning English.

Maniruzzaman and Rahman (2008) indicated that lack of teachers training and sufficient audio-visual equipment hamper the use of audio aids in EFL classes. The best educational technologies enable teachers to do more with fewer resources. Communication platforms like Twitter, Facebook, or Tumblr allow effective communication with students. Sahin-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". Aydin'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. Kessler's (2007) findings suggest that "there is a general lack of CALL preparation in teacher preparation program 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).

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 using computers in the classroom. 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.

However, it is found that technology is used widely in teaching the English language at different academic levels. The teachers find a computer, multimedia projector, laptop, mobile phone, pen drive, CD and DVD player very useful in teaching the English language. It is also found that teachers and students face various problems in using modern technology. But very few studies have been conducted in Bangladeshi context regarding using technology in teaching English. This study intends to find out the use of technology in teaching

English and how effectively the teachers deal with these in their classroom at the secondary level.

Methodology

To carry out the study, the researchers collected information in both qualitative and quantitative manner. Based on the objectives and the research questions, the researchers chose Mix Method approach to collect and analyze the data. The qualitative method mainly included interview and analysis of the previous study. Quantitative method covered questionnaire, designed following the 5-points Likert Scale (1932), which was served to both the students and the teachers.

Participants

The study focuses on schools of Dhaka city. Four schools including Ideal School and College, Little Flower International School, Shahanori Model High School, and Sher-E-Bangla School and College were chosen to collect data through questionnaire and open-ended short interview session. From these schools eight teachers (five males and three females), and 60 students were selected for data collection. Teachers who have at least a post-graduate degree in English language and/or English language teaching were selected for both interview and questionnaire survey. The teachers were selected on the basis of experience. At least 15 students, S.S.C. (Secondary School Certificate) candidates in 2018, from each school were randomly selected for the questionnaire survey.

Research instrument

Several instruments were used in the present study. It used in-depth interview and analysis of examination related material to collect qualitative data and

conduct a questionnaire survey. Two different questionnaires were prepared for teachers and students, each having ten statements with the options of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The teachers were interviewed in a formal setting. A mobile phone was used to record the interview with the permission of the interviewees.

Findings from teachers' interviews

All teachers said that they used different technologies in their English language class. All of them used a computer or laptop, and multimedia projector. In addition, some of them used a mobile phone, internet, tape recorder, and TV as well. One of them did not know about a specific website for language teaching. Another one said that he never thinks of using blogs and Facebook for education.

All the teachers stated that technologies help them to make the language classes interesting and to prepare the class content. As one of the teachers has said, "...Technology, especially the internet, is great support for me to make my lecture interesting and effective." The teachers get new ideas about teaching English through the internet which shows them various new ways of teaching English in the classroom, and it brings a new dimension to their tasks.

It was found that in technology-affiliated class most of the students feel comfortable. However, in some cases, technologies reduced students' opportunity of speaking and writing and students become less interested in using technologies. In the beginning, they felt uncomfortable in the class. They take time to adjust themselves in technology affiliated class. So, teachers had to face some problems in using technology in the classroom.

Teachers have said that technologies have a mixed impact. In most of the cases, impact

was positive as the teachers get help from technology. By using technology, they could make the class environment friendly and attractive for the students, but sometimes it had a slightly negative impact on teaching when some students cannot cope up or concentrate on the class, and thus sometimes technology fails to achieve its goal. One of the teachers remarked, "...Technology has a negative impact on time management. It needs time to take a class with the help of technology."

Teachers mentioned that they faced some problems in using technologies in their class. Teaching-learning system was not fully compatible with the use of technology. Students were not interested to do any activities that will not appear in the examination. "...Most of the students want to get good marks rather learn something new," a teacher said. Sufficient resources were not available in all cases. Repairing a damaged machine was not easy when technicians are not available. Many teachers were not well-trained to use modern technology properly. They need

others' assistance. Teachers are less paid. Therefore, they usually cannot buy technological machines with their own money.

The teachers suggested some solutions to the problems they usually face. They think that motivation and support from higher authority, proper funding, and more training for the teachers are essential.

Finally, the teachers have said that teachers' training is very important for every teacher. Training on workshop basis should be given at the beginning of the career of a teacher. A teacher strongly suggested, "...There are no alternative ways except practical training to solve the problems."

Findings from teachers' questionnaires

The questionnaire comprised structured questions. Teachers were requested to give their views in a 5-Point Likert Scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Table 1 shows teachers' perceptions on different aspects of ICT use.

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Technology is valuable instructional tools for teaching the English language	8 (100%)				
2. I am very confident when I use technology in delivering a lecture	2 (25%)	6(75%)			
3. Students pay more attention when I use technology in my class	4 (50%)	4(50%)			
4. Technology promotes the development of communication skill	8(100%)				
5. I can learn many new things by using technology that enhances my teaching ability	8 (100%)				

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
6. Too costly in turn of resources, time and effort	4(50%)	4(50%)			
7. Teachers usually face problems in using technology		8(100%)			
8. Adequate training in the use of technology can help to solve the problem	8(100%)				
9. Successful only when a teacher has access to a computer properly	6(75%)	2(25%)			
10. Using technology in teaching English is not necessary				2(25%)	6(75%)

In response to the statement one, all eight teachers strongly agreed that technologies are valuable instructional tools for teaching English. In response to the statement two, two the teachers strongly agreed, and other six agreed that they are very confident when they use technology in conducting a class. In response to the statement three, four strongly agreed and the other four agreed that students pay more attention when they use technologies in their class. Then, all eight teachers strongly agreed that technology promotes the development of communication skill. Four teachers strongly agreed and four teachers agreed that technology is too costly in turn of resource, time and effort. All eight of teachers agreed that they face some problems while using new equipment. All the teachers strongly agreed that adequate training in the use of technologies could help to solve the problems they face. Six teachers strongly agreed and two of them agreed that teaching with technology would be successful when the shortcoming will be overcome. Finally, two of teachers disagreed and other six teachers strongly

disagreed that using technology in teaching language is not necessary.

From the responses given by the teachers, it has been seen that technology is an essential part in teaching English at the S.S.C. level in present time. Teachers largely depend on the mode of technologies to update themselves and to make their classes more interesting and effective. Technology helps them in wide range and they accept the blessings of technology though they sometimes feel problems in using technology. In this situation, to keep pace with the rest of the world, teachers think that, technology should be made friendly in our country. If problems in using technologies can be solved, the impact will be positive, and technology will be useful media for teaching English in our country. For this, first, the authority should come forward. They should think about the development of teaching. They should support their teachers both financially and technically so that the teachers will be encouraged in using technology. Training and workshop should be arranged in

different phases to make the teachers more active and to make them understand how to use modern technology. Finally, the teachers should be more assertive and technical in choosing different technological tools in the classroom.

Findings from students’ questionnaires

The questionnaire comprised structured questions. Students were requested to give their views on a 5-Point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Table 2 shows students responses.

Table 2: Students’ responses to the questionnaires

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Technologies help in learning English	18 (30.06%)	30(50.1%)	12(20.04%)		
2. Technologies make the language class more interesting	8(13.36%)	40(66.8%)	10(16.7%)	2(3.34%)	
3. I pay more attention when teachers use technologies in the class	11(18.37%)	38(63.46%)	8(13.36%)	3(5.01%)	
4. Technologies promote the development of communication skill	35(58.45%)	15(25.05%)	10(16.7%)		
5. Technologies have a good impact on my learning the English language	37(61.79%)	15(25.05%)	5(8.35%)	3(5.01%)	
6. Using projector in English class is effective	35(58.45%)	15(25.05%)	10(16.7%)		
7. I feel comfortable in technology affiliated classroom	12(20.04%)	38(46.76%)	7(11.69%)	3(5.01%)	
8. Teachers use relevant technologies for teaching English	15(25.05%)	39(65.13%)	6(10.02%)		
9. Teachers motivate me to use technologies for learning English	23(38.41%)	25(41.75%)	7(11.69%)	5(8.33%)	
10. Teachers often engage me in using technologies for learning English	28(46.76%)	32(53.44%)			

Here, the students expressed their own feelings and attitudes toward the technologies used in their class. They showed mixed attitudes. Most of the students (i.e. 50.1% and 66.8%) agreed “technologies help in learning the English language.” and “technologies make the language class more interesting.” Majority of the student (i.e., 63.46% and 58.5%) said that they paid more attention when teachers used technologies in the class and technologies promoted the development of communication skill. Similarly, 61.79% and 58.45% of the students strongly agreed that technologies had a good impact on my learning English language and using projector in language class is effective respectively. The students felt comfortable in technology-affiliated classroom, thought that teachers used relevant technologies for teaching language, and teachers motivated them to use technologies for learning the English language. Majority of the students (53.44%) agreed the teachers often engaged them in using technologies for learning the English language. However, they acknowledged that technologies make the learning environment easy and enjoyable.

The findings showed that all the teachers used different types of technology according to the topic and content. In technology-affiliated class, most of the students felt comfortable. They enjoyed the course with a laptop and projector. However, some of the students felt bored in the class. To make the teachers comfortable with computer and technology and to solve the negative impact, there is no alternative to training. In this regard, all the teachers believe that training is necessary for them to develop their IT skill. Training will help them to understand the advantages of technology and to know the use of different software and e-tools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, some suggestions could be considered for the successful implementation of technologies in English teaching at the S.S.C. level in Bangladesh that helps to solve the problems that the teachers face in teaching English with the help of technology. Teachers should use relevant technological tools to teach different language skills or topics. Topics and objectives should be clarified before using technology so that students can easily understand the various uses of technology. Modern technical ways should be followed in entertaining manners for effective learning and teaching the English language. English teachers should encourage their students to use technologies in developing language skills. Reconsideration of the current textbook, national curriculum, and testing system for technology should be introduced. Training for one-to-one or small group tutoring is a must so that teachers can develop computer literacy skills and can be competent in different modern technologies in their context. Educational institutions should modernize their technical instruction capabilities by using new technologies and laboratories for supporting the teaching process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, all the teachers who were interviewed and surveyed for this study used technology though they faced some difficulties to run the tools. Though some of the students felt bored in the technology-affiliated class, most of them enjoyed their lessons when their teachers used technology in the classroom. However, most of the schools were not able to provide sufficient amenities for using technology and most of the teachers were unconscious of this issue. The teachers were also not very aware of the facilities of different

technologies, and they mainly used computers for typing and browsing the internet. However, this study presents some ideas for using technology proposed by the teachers. Based on the findings, it can be asserted that in Bangladeshi context, technology-based English teaching will be successful and use of technology will be fruitful and effective only if the coordination and understanding between the teachers and the school authorities can be ensured.

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Appendix 1

Interview sheet (for Teachers)

- 1) Do you use technology in your classroom to teach the English language?
- 2) What kind of technologies do you use in your language class?
- 3) Do you think technology helps you in teaching language more effectively?
- 4) Do you think the students feel comfortable in technology affiliated class?
- 5) What are the impacts of technology in teaching the English language?
- 6) What are the likely problems that the teachers face while using technology in language class?
- 7) What might be the solution?

- 8) What kind of training or workshop will be helpful for the teachers to introduce them to different technologies?

Appendix 2

(For teachers)

Questionnaire: Using Technology in Teaching English at the S.S.C. Level

5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2=disagree, 1= strongly disagree

	Attitudes toward technology	5	4	3	2	1
1	Technology is valuable instructional tools for teaching the English language.					
2	I am very confident when I use technology in delivering a lecture.					
3	Student pay more attention when I use technology in my class.					
4	Technology promotes the development of communication skill.					
5	I can learn many new things by using technology that enhances my teaching ability.					
6	Technology is too costly in turn of resources, time and effort.					
7	Teachers usually face problems in using technology.					
8	Adequate training in the use of technology can help to solve the problems.					
9	Successful only when a teacher has access to a computer.					
10	Using technology in teaching language is not necessary.					

Appendix 3

(For students)

Questionnaire: Impact of Technology on Teaching English Language

5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= neutral, 2=disagree, 1= strongly disagree

	Attitudes toward technology	5	4	3	2	1
1	Technology helps in learning the English language.					
2	Technology makes the language class more interesting.					
3	I pay more attention when teachers use technology in the class.					
4	Technology promotes the development of communication skill.					
5	Technology has a good impact on my learning the English language.					
6	Using projector in a language class is effective.					
7	I feel comfortable in technology affiliated classroom.					
8	Teachers use relevant technologies for teaching language.					
9	Teachers motivate me to use technology for learning the English language.					
10	The teachers often engage me in using technology for learning the English language.					

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