

Examining Teachers' and Learners' Perspectives on Multimedia Integration in Language Classrooms

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers and learners' about using multimedia and how the use of multimedia helps in language classroom. The study has been conducted at one of the leading universities of Bangladesh- International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC). The participants were MELT students and teachers of the department of English Language and Literature (DELL). Qualitative method was followed and interviews were taken from the participants for the descriptive findings of the study. Findings showed that multimedia is a motivating tool for language class and using multimedia technology combined with traditional teaching method is very helpful for learners. The study also marked up some limitations of using multimedia in language classroom.

Keywords: Perception, technology, multimedia, language learning, language classroom.

Introduction:

Due to growth of information technology in the last two decades, there is a revolution in the education system throughout the world. Technology play a very important role in language classroom. Using multimedia is one of them. Earlier teachers used to come in a classroom with a stick, a piece of chalk and a text book; they used to write down on the blackboard, read out the text books and give lecture in the period. Students gulped the lecture whether they understood the topic or not. This was the common picture of a classroom in pre-technological era. But now- a-days, things are changed. By the gold stick-touch of technology, the classroom environment, teaching policy and learning system are changed. Multimedia is one of the most exciting innovations in this information technological era. "Multimedia is a subtitle of technology" (Razavi, Ghanizadeh & Akbari, 2016, p. 99). For the sake of this study, multimedia can be defined as the combination of more than one medium such as internet, video, projector, sound, computer etc. As it belongs to modern education, people are paying much attention on multimedia teaching. It is a helping tool for the language teachers. Multimedia stimulates the students thinking process and improves learning environment in the classroom (Mathew and Alimat, 2013). In developed countries, it is very common feature of using different technologies like multimedia and internet in classrooms. They are benefitted of using them. Our neighboring country like- India, Shri Lanka, China, Iran and also western countries, all are giving emphasize and paid more attention to the multimedia-based language education. They are started including it in their curriculum. In Bangladesh, practice of using multimedia technology in language classrooms started at a very primary level. In recent times, government starts to set up computer and internet in schools and colleges throughout the country, but technologically advanced classroom has not yet become available

everywhere. It is important to implement multimedia classroom at every level of education. However, use of technology in language classroom may have some limitations in the context of our country. So, there is need some research in this regard and to explore the perceptions about teachers and learners' using multimedia in tertiary level language classroom. Using multimedia as a teaching tool improves classroom efficiency and enable students to change and update their thinking.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objective of the study is to analyze the impact of multimedia it's in language classroom. The study also has the following sub objectives:

- i. To Assess Teachers' Perceptions
- ii. To Explore Learners' Perspectives.
- iii. To Identify Best Practices

Research Questions:

- i. What are the primary factors influencing language teachers' adoption or reluctance towards using multimedia in their classrooms?
- ii. How do language learners perceive the impact of multimedia tools on their language acquisition and engagement in classroom activities?
- iii. What specific challenges and benefits do teachers and learners associate with the incorporation of multimedia in language education, and how can these findings inform effective pedagogical approaches?

Problem Statement:

This study explores the concept of integrating new media methodologies in education, specifically focusing on the use of multimedia to enhance teachers' effectiveness and students' interest in language classrooms. Despite being one of the leading departments in Bangladesh, the Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) at the International Islamic University Chittagong has yet to fully adopt this concept due to the substantial investment required in terms of time, money, effort, and self-education. Therefore, it is essential to investigate teachers' and learners' perspectives on multimedia, including its benefits and challenges, in language education.

Significance of the study: Use of multimedia technology in language classroom can play an important role to develop the communication skills of students and also work as an effective teaching tool for the teachers. So, it is urgent that language classroom and teaching process need to be modernized in our country. It is significant to investigate that is the idea of multimedia actually clear to the language learners and as well as teachers or they using it without a clear knowledge and need to discover that is multimedia actually helpful for developing communication skills or not and should institutions need to invest to set up multimedia-based language classroom.

Literature Review:

The involvement of technology in the classroom cannot be denied, giving a positive effect to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There are obviously some difficulties in every method. Many researchers put their opinions and views on the impacts of using multimedia. They showed several stages in their articles to describe the position of multimedia, significance and some problems which they think are needed to solve to make this modern teaching method better. All these are encompassed in this chapter to get a clear review over what should be done or what shouldn't on this sector.

“Educational technology is a systematic and organized process of applying modern technology to improve the quality of education” (Stošić, 2015, p. 111). Educational Technology (also known as EdTech) is a concept of transforming the traditional book, teaching and learning to digital form (Quora). There is a term “teaching resources” which is commonly used for educational technology but they are not synonymous. There is no single term for educational technology. Different countries use different terms. There is also a different perception of educational technology, where every author according to their needs defines the concept of educational technology. Educational technology is still not being applied sufficiently for lack of necessary equipment and insufficient qualification of teachers. According to Stošić (2015), “Educational technology has three domains of use:

- Technology as a tutor
- Technology as a teaching tool and
- Technology as a learning tool”.

In the realm of language teaching and learning, there is a myriad of technological options to consider, including radio, television, CD-ROMs, computers, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), the internet, electronic dictionaries, email, blogs, audio cassettes, PowerPoint, videos, DVDs, and VCDs (Shyamlee, 2012). When utilizing educational technology, the primary focus should be on the educational value of the tools and applications, assessing their effectiveness in facilitating knowledge acquisition, examining the level of interaction between users and these tools, and considering the positive impact of their usage (Stošić, 2015).

The field of language education is changing. Today's classrooms are much different from that of the mid- to late-20th century (Eaton, 2010). The focus on language education in this century is no longer on grammar, memorization, and learning from rote, but rather using language and cultural knowledge to communicate and connect with others around the globe (Eaton, 2010). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL, 2013) noted that educational technology has been important to both assist and enhance language learning. It is now rare to find a language class that does not use some sort of technology. “Technology is no longer a tool to create an alternative environment- it is THE environment” (Gupta, 2010, p. 68). Eaton (2010) found that computer-based education is a beneficial feature for language learning. Nowadays it is proved that technology-oriented teaching environment is more fruitful than lecture-based classroom. In traditional classroom, teachers usually stand in front of students and give lecture by using blackboard or whiteboard. “These techniques need slightly to be modified regarding with the development of the technology” (Joshi, 2012, p. 34). The use of multimedia- text in classroom helps students to become familiar with academic vocabulary and language structure. Use of print, film and internet give students opportunity to

gather information. “Internet presents students a wide range of collection of English language texts in many discipline departments” (Joshi, 2012, p. 34). Implementation of educational technology in language classroom can be increased students’ motivation and expand their critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills. Involvement of technology in the language classroom improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Multimedia may be defined in many ways, depending upon one’s perspective. It is one of the areas of ICT. Multimedia is the “use of multiple forms of media in a presentation” (Schwartz & Beichner, 1999, p. 8). It is the use of computers to present text, graphics, video, animation and sound in an integrated way. The word consists of two words: *multi*, means various and *media*, which refers to any hardware (e.g. computer, television, interactive whiteboards or mobile phone) or software used for communicating (e.g. e-mail or video conferencing) (Klímová, 2013). The term multimedia, was firstly used by singer and artist Bob Goldstein during his show in a New York Club in 1966 (Zuras, 2010). There is a term CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), which should not be ignored when we talk about multimedia. It has close connection with CALL. In traditional classroom, language teachers are used to using some conventional equipment, such as blackboard, chalk, tape recorders, and so on. However, we can find modern equipment in a multimedia classroom. A typical one-multimedia-PC classroom setting illustration given by Zhen (2016) where needed tools are:

- MPC – Multimedia personal computer;
- VCD/DVD player- Video compound disk/ digital video disk;
- Amplifier and Hi-Fi acoustic system;
- Overhead/slide projector;
- Screen/curtain;
- Projecting Apparatus;
- The Internet Access;
- Cassette tape recorder.

In Bangladesh, like many countries around the world, governments have recognized the significance and value of technologies, including multimedia, in education. Our country also takes steps to come into the front line of multimedia-based education. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) of Bangladesh has taken various steps to use technology to modernize the overall primary education system. The 2010 National Education Policy of Bangladesh recommended the use of audio-visual materials in the language classes. To enhance the government policy, Save the Children in Bangladesh created a pilot initiative and started developing supplementary classroom teaching and learning software for English language classes in primary schools. The software was associated with the National Curriculum and was implemented in 18 government primary schools in one district of Bangladesh (Parvin & Salam, 2015). All 65,000 govt. primary schools in Bangladesh are to be given multimedia classrooms to promote ICT-based education. The National Education Policy, 2010 has brought some changes in the English syllabus for higher secondary level, i.e. class XI-XII. It focuses on skill-based teaching and learning through communicative method. The use of multimedia technology in language classroom can play an important role to implement the new curriculum. Now a days, tertiary level educational institutions are started using different technology

and internet in language classroom but technologically advanced classroom has not yet become available everywhere in our country.

The word ‘perception’ derived from a Latin word ‘perceptio’, meaning “receiving, collecting, action of taking possession, apprehension with the mind or senses”. In psychology, philosophy and cognitive sciences, perception is the procedure of achieving awareness or understanding of sensory information. It is the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. It is the process by which people translate sensory impressions into a clear and united view of the world around them. It is the reality that guides human behavior in general (Wikipedia).

All over the world, teachers and students’ perception about using multimedia in language classroom is very positive. Gimbert and Cristol (2004) stated, technology integration has an influence on teacher perception and lesson planning. Students are using multimedia to connect with different cultures and societies that can broaden their learning experience. “Adding technology to courses where it is not currently used is likely to have a positive impact on student perceptions of the instructor and the course as well as on most aspects of students behavior” (Lavin, Korte. & Davies, 2010, p. 7).

Many studies have shown that students are tired of traditional language class and they are now interested in new learning method. In language class, using multimedia which can show a variety of sounds, images, animation and other effects can firmly grasp the students’ interest and stimulates them in learning and make the language class vivid and lively (Zhen, 2016). The use of multimedia as a tool of learning can make students more creative, autonomous and collaborative than in classrooms where technology is not accessible to students (Raihan and Lock, 2012). “Exposure to authentic materials is another boon of being able to integrate technology effectively in EFL classroom” (Ivy, 2011, p.210). Multimedia helps to improve communication skills and also open the door for teaching outside the classroom.

The practice of using multimedia for teaching and learning are beneficial. But there are some limitations too. Lack of training about using multimedia technology in language classroom is a major problem in Bangladesh which teachers may face. “Without thorough understanding of the technology at hand it will be impossible to bring out optimum result” (Ivy, 2011, p.216). Most of the teachers do not have much knowledge to deal with technical issues. Issues such as tracking down appropriate information, misspelt addresses, slow connections, blocked access, system crashes, loose wires, out-of-date plug-ins, out-of-date websites, easy access to unsuitable content and lack of administrative privilege can ensure that many EFL teachers and students avoid using the web (Ivy, 2011). Using multimedia devices during teaching, sometimes teachers may turn into slaves to the multimedia which create a lack of interaction between teachers and students (Shyamlee, 2012). Financial expenses cannot be denied in implementing multimedia technologies in language classroom. Ivy (2011) stated, “It is not always possible to fund language programs with such high cost, especially in the developing countries. Therefore, most of the technologies remain ‘distant dream’ to a good number of teachers in our country” (p.217). Moreover, in a country like Bangladesh, not all students have access to technology.

Reviews indicate that there is limited research on the use of multimedia in tertiary-level language classrooms in Bangladesh. Therefore, I believe my study will contribute significantly to filling this gap in the literature.

Methodology of the study

The study follows a qualitative research paradigm, which aims to understand situations from the participants' viewpoint and involves direct participant involvement in the research process itself. Qualitative research, according to Leedy (1993), emphasizes firsthand experiences as the most meaningful data source and can yield large volumes of high-quality data from a limited number of individuals. The study participants included MA students in English Language Teaching (ELT) and teachers from the Department of English Language and Literature at the International Islamic University Chittagong, selected through non-probability sampling to gain a deeper understanding rather than to generalize to a larger population (Neuman, 2000). Data collection involved interviews with open-ended questions to investigate the topic in depth, aligning with the research questions. Neuman (2000) highlights the importance of matching research questions with appropriate techniques, with open-ended questionnaires deemed most effective. Additional interview questions were developed based on the research inquiries to gather comprehensive insights from both teachers and students. Following data collection, the researcher objectively analyzed participants' feedbacks by organizing observations, related articles, and recorded interviews to enhance reader comprehension and facilitate the presentation of findings. Interview transcripts were generated from tape recordings, and information was synthesized through initial coding with accompanying notes, comments, and reflections to aid in result preparation. Throughout the research process, the researcher ensured the protection of participants' identities and treated their feedback with dignity, prioritizing their mental and physical well-being.

Analysis and Result:

The analysis highlighted several important considerations for using multimedia in language classrooms. Firstly, multimedia should complement traditional teaching methods rather than replace them, as machines cannot replace human interaction. Multimedia serves as a valuable learning tool and motivates students with its novelty. In today's technology-driven era, incorporating multimedia for educational purposes can enhance student engagement in the classroom. Multimedia provides authentic language learning materials that aid in developing language skills, particularly listening and speaking. However, the analysis also identified limitations that need addressing. Adequate technical arrangements and institutional support are crucial but not always readily available. Therefore, multimedia systems, internet access, and other technical facilities should be updated to support effective teaching and learning. Additionally, some teachers have reservations about using multimedia due to technology-related apprehensions. To address this, teachers require training and support to confidently integrate multimedia into their teaching practices. Using multimedia benefits both teachers and learners in language classrooms, but it should not be the sole method of instruction. This study explores perceptions of both teachers and learners regarding multimedia use in language classrooms, highlighting actionable insights to overcome identified limitations with timely interventions.

i. Findings from Teachers:

- Teachers utilize multimedia tools such as projectors, internet, word processing, email, digital video, and audio in their language classes.

- Teachers prefer integrating multimedia with traditional teaching methods to create effective language learning experiences for students.
 - Students generally respond positively to multimedia in language classes, feeling motivated, interested, and attentive. However, some students may struggle due to lack of familiarity with these tools.
 - Teachers believe that multimedia can enhance all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—especially by providing authentic materials for teaching listening and speaking.
 - Teachers emphasize that combining teacher instruction with multimedia enhances language learning. Although technology cannot replace teachers, it can support them by enabling online feedback during short language class sessions.
 - Teachers face challenges due to limited technical support and outdated resources, exacerbated by electricity issues, which hinder effective use of technology in language classrooms.
 - Regular training programs are essential for teachers to stay updated on the latest multimedia techniques for language teaching.
 - Given the normalization of technology in education worldwide, implementing multimedia language teaching in universities like IIUC in Bangladesh is crucial.
- ii. Findings from Students:
- Students are familiar with multimedia-based language learning tools provided by the Department of English Language and Literature (ELL), including projectors, presentation software like MS Word and PowerPoint, and internet resources.
 - Students prefer a balanced approach that combines traditional teaching with multimedia, as overreliance on multimedia can impede learning and create barriers between teachers and students.
 - Using multimedia makes lessons easier, practical, interesting, and fosters an effective learning environment in the classroom. It also motivates students and helps develop language skills through audiovisual materials, keeping them updated with global trends.
 - Students encounter technical challenges such as slow internet connections, projector connectivity issues, file management, and virus attacks when using multimedia.
 - Integrating multimedia technology is essential for universities in Bangladesh like IIUC to stay competitive globally.

Discussion:

From the findings, the research questions have been addressed with the following feedback:

- Teachers and students at IIUC utilize various multimedia technologies in language classrooms, including multimedia projectors, presentation software, internet resources, word processing, videos, audios, and email. Implementing technology enhances the teaching and learning process, creating a more practical classroom atmosphere. Multimedia motivates students to remain engaged and

improves language skills by visualizing key concepts and facilitating understanding of language content.

- Both teachers and students agree that integrating modern technology with traditional teaching methods is more effective in developing the language classroom environment. Multimedia should be viewed as a complementary teaching and learning tool, not a replacement for teachers. Embracing multimedia keeps educators and learners updated with technological advancements globally.
- Institutions should offer comprehensive technical support and create a conducive environment for teaching and learning through multimedia, ensuring comfort for both teachers and students. Faculty members should receive training programs on using multimedia in language classrooms, as teachers play a pivotal role in multimedia education implementation. Properly trained teachers can overcome limitations associated with multimedia usage. Integrating multimedia technology into tertiary education in Bangladesh is crucial to align with global educational standards.
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Conclusion and Recommendations

Technologically advanced classrooms are increasingly popular for language teaching, with students showing great enthusiasm for learning through technology. Modernizing education in our country is crucial, and multimedia can play a key role in this transformation despite its limitations. The aim of this research is to explore teachers' and learners' perceptions of multimedia use in language classrooms, including its benefits and limitations. Results indicate that integrating multimedia technology with traditional teaching methods enhances student motivation and learning interest, improving practical language skills and critical thinking. The study highlights the necessity of training teachers to enhance their technology integration skills in language instruction. Additionally, the findings reveal a lack of adequate equipment and facilities in Bangladeshi institutions for conducting language classes with multimedia technology. This study underscores the importance of educational experts prioritizing the use of multimedia as a teaching and learning tool in tertiary-level language classrooms.

The study aimed to explore teachers' and learners' perceptions of multimedia in language education. Based on the gathered information, several recommendations have been proposed:

- Education experts should implement teachers' training programs to ensure effective teaching and optimal outcomes in technologically advanced classrooms.
- Teachers are encouraged to combine traditional teaching methods with multimedia tools in language classrooms for enhanced learning experiences.
- Technologically advanced classrooms should be introduced nationwide, incorporating audio-visual learning systems to develop language skills.
- Institutions should provide technical arrangements and support to create conducive teaching and learning environments.
- Researchers should conduct comprehensive studies on the feasibility, potential, and challenges of implementing multimedia technology in Bangladesh's educational landscape.

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