

Integrating ICT in English Language Teaching in Bangladesh: Teachers' Perceptions and Challenges

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Abstract

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education especially, in English Language Teaching (ELT) in secondary schools of Bangladesh has been existing for a decade now. However, the status of actual implementation is quite different from the adoption and initiatives taken to integrate ICT in ELT. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the secondary level English language teachers' attitude towards integration of ICT in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the factors inhibiting the use of it. Further, the paper attempts to examine the challenges faced by the secondary level English teachers of Bangladesh in using ICT in language teaching effectively. In an attempt to examine the attitude of teachers in using ICT in ELT, a quantitative research is designed with a close ended questionnaire to collect the data from a sample of 100 secondary English language teachers of various schools of Bangladesh. The data of the responses is quantified and is analyzed by SPSS 20 program. The obtained data from the questionnaire is examined in order to investigate the perceptions of the secondary level English language teachers towards ICT integrated language teaching and the challenges of the implementation of ICT in ELT. In conclusion, the outcome of the research would provide significant information about the attitude of the teachers towards ICT integration in ELT and the challenges faced by them and hence, the study would help the policy makers and the teachers to enhance the effectiveness of using ICT in ELT.

Keywords: Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Communicative Language Teaching, Challenges, Perceptions, English Language Teaching (ELT).

1. Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought a remarkable revolution in education sector. The Ministries of Education across the world have already agreed to the point of integrating ICT in their education system. Bangladesh has also made a vision of "Vision 21" in order to improve the quality of education and integrating ICT into its education system (Khan, Md. et al, 2012). In the light of this, ICT division has announced their policy 'National ICT Policy 2009' and based on this policy 'National Education Policy' has been rephrased in 2010 (Talukder, 2018). In addition, UNESCO has been providing their maximum support to Government of Bangladesh (GoB) to adopt ICT in Education. Different private organizations and NGOs are extending their hands in integrating ICTs as innovative approach to Education (Chowdhury et al., 2011). Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and Grameen Bank particularly have taken some initiatives in using ICT for education such as; in-service secondary teachers' ICT training program, Gonokendros (Union Library), Computer Aided learning (Commonwealth of

Learning, 2017). At the same time, National Education Policy (NEP) 2010, has been working on the promotion of ICT-enabled teaching and learning, professional development of teachers using ICT, and ICT literacy for students. Further, government has successfully implemented the project of compulsory ICT subject at the secondary school level by 2013 (Commonwealth of Learning, 2017). The integration of ICT in secondary education has brought a significant change particularly, in ELT (Talukder, 2018). In addition to this, the government has essentially focused on ICT based ELT in secondary level education rather than focusing only on ICT literacy (Azi Project, 2009).

With the aim of integrating ICT tools in classroom and to create successful teaching learning environment, education policy has been rephrased and as a part of this, Secondary English Curriculum has also been revised. Digital technologies are made available in the classrooms for the successful technology enhanced language learning and teachers are given special training in the use of ICT. Although a number of great initiatives have been taken by government and non-government organizations for the effective use of ICT in teaching learning process, the success of the various initiatives will be ensured only when ICT tools are properly used at the ground level, that is, in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to study the ground level implementation of these policies and initiatives, to understand the perception of teachers towards using ICT in classroom in teaching English to the secondary level students of Bangladesh and also to identify the challenges faced by them in the actual implementation of ICT in ELT.

2. Literature Review

The use of ICT in language teaching and learning is not a new concept or practice for the teachers (Rank et al., 2011) particularly, for the countries where English is taught as a foreign language. The use of technology makes the foreign language teaching and learning easy, active and interesting (Skinner and Austin 1999). It also offers not only an authentic environment for learning but also helps the learner to enhance the language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing (Warschauer, 2004).

The technology enhanced language leaning (TELL) and Mobile assistant language learning (MALL) offer the learners a freedom of autonomous learning at their own time, pace and space (Dash and Kuddus, 2020). There are some devices of MALL; smart phone, tablet, iPod allow and enhance learners' capability to learn language easily (Stockwell, 2013; Chatterjee and Kuddus, 2015). Demouy and Kukulska-Hulme also stated that MALL enables learners' with providing a great scope of practicing listening and speaking (Demouy and Agnes, 2010).

Social networking Sites (SNS) helps learners to develop their language proficiency through the socialization process (Yang, 2013; Ahn et al. 2016). It also improves the English-speaking skills of the young learners in all three dimensions-accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation (Blattner et al., 2011). Different technology based cartoon films and blogs also motivate young learner to learn language both inside and outside the classroom. YouTube helps to learn language with curiosity and enthusiasm (Buzzetto-More, 2015). Regarding this, Silviyanti made a strong claim that YouTube motivates learners to learn through watching video and practicing pronunciation like the native speaker (Silviyanti et al., 2015). Another technological tool-multimedia improves teaching proficiency of the teachers and makes the best use of class time (Kuddus, 2018). It rejects teacher-centered traditional teaching method and enhances interaction between the teachers and students.

Md. Zulfeqar Haider & Takad Ahmed Chowdhury carried out a study on promoting CLT within a Computer Assisted Learning Environment in Bangladesh where learners showed their high satisfaction which provides quality English Language Teaching through Communicative approach (Haider, 2012). This CALL based program particularly helped the learners to be fluent in

speaking and improving listening skills. Other studies in Bangladesh show how technologies significantly contribute to enhance school based teachers' professional development in their service training (Mahruf 2012).

Studies have been carried out to study the perception of the teachers towards integrating ICT in language teaching and learning as successful transformation in education requires users' positive attitude towards new technology (Woodrow, 1987). Liu et al. opine that, the successful integration of technology in language teaching depends mostly on teachers' attitude to technology (Liu et al., 2004). According to Atkins and Vasu, teachers' attitude towards computer use in the classroom setting has a great significance (Atkins, 2000). In addition to this, teachers' personal background, interest in using ICT and willingness to integrate in EFL classroom work significantly for successful ICT integration in classroom settings (Redmond et al., 2005).

Considering the benefits of ICT in education specifically in language teaching, the government of Bangladesh adopted 'ICT in Education Master Plan 2012-2020'. According to the plan, ICT based education and training facilities have been ensured to all level of education sectors. Government has implemented multimedia/smart classroom to create a real time effect of ICT in education in the educational institutions (Master Plan for ICT in education in Bangladesh, 2019). Training on using ICT tools in the classroom setting has been ensured for the secondary school teachers and as a part of the training, government emphasizes on ICT based English language teaching in secondary education rather than only ICT literacy (Rank et al. 2011). National Curriculum and Text Book (NCTB) has developed a teacher's guide for the teachers in such a way that they can easily understand the contents and teach the students properly by using ICT tools materials (Talukder et al. 2016).

From the above discussion, we understand that, a great number of initiatives have been taken by the concerned organizations but the success of the various initiatives will be ensured only when ICT is properly integrated in the classroom for teaching learning process and it is possible with the favorable and positive attitude of teachers towards the integration of ICT in language teaching.

The review of related literature on integrating ICT in English Language Teaching and the massive initiatives taken by the government and the non-government organizations of Bangladesh motivated the researcher to explore the ground level reality of the implementation of policies and initiatives of ICT in Education by studying the perceptions of the secondary level English teachers of Bangladesh towards ICT integrated CLT and the challenges faced by them during its real- time implementation.

3. Research Objectives

The following objectives are formulated to complete the study:

1. To study the attitude of secondary level English teachers towards ICT integrated Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)?
2. To identify the challenges faced by the teachers in implementation of ICT integrated Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) at the various secondary schools of Bangladesh.

4. Research Methodology

After conducting a comprehensive review of the related literature, a questionnaire was designed and a survey was conducted to study the attitude of the secondary level teachers towards

integration of ICT in CLT and also to identify the challenges faced by teachers in using ICT in language teaching.

4.1 Participants

For the purpose of the study, a sample of 100 secondary level English teachers of Bangladesh were invited to participate in the survey and a total number of 100 responses were obtained. Out of 100 secondary level English teachers, 67 were male and 33 were female.

4.2 Researching Tools

This study applies a quantitative approach with close ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed after conducting a pilot study. Questionnaire was administered randomly to the secondary level English language teachers of various secondary schools viz; government, semi government and private schools of Bangladesh. The participants were selected randomly. The samples were the teachers who teach English in secondary level schools at urban, semi urban and rural areas of Bangladesh.

The questionnaire was divided into three Sections: a) participants' background b) Attitude towards ICT integrated CLT c) Barriers and challenges of ICT on CLT. For section B and C, a five point Likert scale (5 being strongly agree to 1 being strongly disagree) was designed to find out the attitude to integrate ICT in communicative language teaching, and the challenges faced by the secondary level English teachers of Bangladesh in the implementation of ICT in CLT respectively. The section B of the questionnaire consisted of 13 items dealing with teachers' attitude towards ICT integrated CLT. Section C consisted of 11 items focusing on the challenges faced by the English teachers in ICT implementation in CLT. For the overall reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha values of section B and section C of the questionnaire were 0.82 and 0.75 respectively which indicate the internal consistency of the questionnaire is acceptable (Taber, 2018).

4.3 Procedure

This study was conducted by survey method. To collect the data for the study, the researcher visited the schools and distributed the questionnaire in person to the respondents. The questionnaire was administered among 100 English language teachers of different secondary high schools of different areas of Bangladesh and 100 responses were obtained. The data of the responses were quantified and was analyzed by SPSS 20 program. Data calculated with the SPSS program was expected to determine the mean and standard deviation which were used to interpret the data and to draw conclusion.

5. Analysis and Discussion

The obtained data from the questionnaire was analysed in order to study the perceptions of English teachers towards ICT integrated English language teaching and to identify the challenges faced by the teachers in the actual implementation of ICT in teaching learning process.

Table 1: Distribution and Frequency on ICT integrated CLT

Attitude towards ICT integrated CLT								
SL No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	I enjoy using ICT.	75	22	2			4.70	.611

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2	Integrating ICT in learning can improve English language proficiency skills.	53	45	2			4.51	.541
3	ICT helps me to be at ease with the new changes in Communicative language teaching curriculum	50	48	2			4.48	.541
4	ICT makes teaching interactive, interesting, easier and also keeps boredom at bay.	56	37	7			4.49	.628
5	Using ICT in English language teaching can save both time and effort.	55	39	4	2		4.47	.674
6	ICT has a positive influence on students' interaction attention and outcome.	51	45	3	1		4.46	.610
7	ICT use increases independence among students and assist in self – education	38	56	5	1		4.31	.615
8	ICT offers easy and quick access to all sorts of information	56	43	1			4.55	.520
9	ICT use offers continuous student-teachers communication resulting in flexible and better relationship	45	50	5			4.40	.586
10	ICT use improves technical skills of the English teacher.	59	39	2			4.57	.537
11	ICT helps learners express their views in better and different ways.	35	61	4			4.31	.545
12	The teaching with the use of ICT is more useful than traditional way of teaching.	54	38	6	2		4.44	.701
13	The use of internet in teaching and learning is more advantageous.	51	45	4			4.45	.577

Table 1 explicitly exhibits the positive attitude of the secondary level English teachers of Bangladesh towards using ICT in English language teaching. It reveals that teachers completely agree with the advantages of integrating ICT in English classroom. The table shows that the teachers have experienced the effectiveness of using ICT in the teaching and learning of English.

They believe that ICT integrated CLT enhances the language skills of the students by making the class interactive, active and interesting. It also encourages flexibility and autonomy to the students by providing them lessons at their own pace and place. Moreover, the table also reveals that the secondary level English teachers also completely agree with the point that ICT improves and strengthens the student-teacher relationship by increasing the frequency of interaction between them. The table clearly shows that teachers' positive attitude towards the use of ICT and its advantages in the teaching learning process. It further shows that using ICT in teaching improves the technical skills of the teachers.

In addition, figure 1 reinforces the findings by showing that 52 percent of the total respondents strongly agree with the effectiveness of using ICT in CLT and 44 percent of the teachers agree with the significant use of ICT in CLT. So taking both the findings together, we can easily say that 96 percent of the total respondents have positive attitude towards the effectiveness of ICT integrated English language teaching.

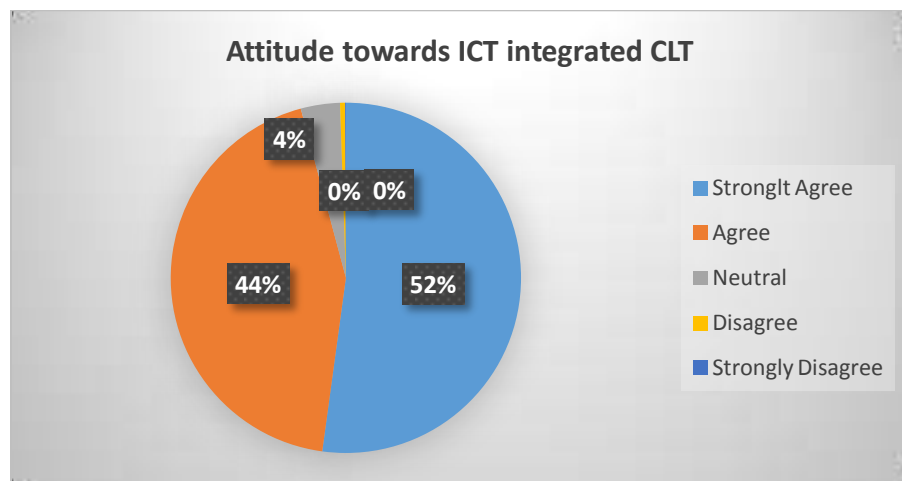


Figure 1: Attitude towards ICT integrated CLT

Table 2: Distribution and frequency of challenges of ICT in CLT

Challenges of implementation of ICT in CLT								
SL. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
1	I have enough experiences and training on integrating ICT in teaching.	16	31	18	34	1	3.27	1.127
2	CLT (Communicative language teaching) curriculum is not developed enough to use ICT in classroom teaching	24	48	10	13	5	3.73	1.118
3	I am aware of ICT materials that I can incorporate in my class.	31	49	16	3	1	4.06	.827

4	I have limited time to integrate ICT in my teaching.	24	53	8	15		3.86	.954
5	ICT distracts students and affects classroom discipline	7	26	11	43	13	2.71	1.192
6	Lack of adequate skills of teachers.	36	43	9	8	4	3.99	1.068
7	Insufficient technical support for teachers.	27	54	13	3	3	3.99	.893
8	Lack of training on how to use ICT for teaching.	40	43	6	6	4	4.14	1.101
9	Insufficient number of computers/ whiteboards/ projectors and other infrastructures.	32	39	10	15	4	3.80	1.163
10	Poor internet speed.	32	50	4	10	4	3.96	1.063
11	There is lack of technical support and maintenance	25	56	6	8	5	3.88	1.037

Table 2 clearly reveals that majority of the teachers faced different types of problems and challenges in the real-time implementation of ICT in classroom at the ground level. Most of the teachers accepted that they did not get sufficient time to prepare ICT integrated CLT lessons and they were not well trained and adequately skilled in using ICT in teaching and learning process and at the same time they also agreed that they were not provided with the technical support for the successful integration of ICT in classroom. The table also shows that the majority of the secondary level English teachers had lack of infrastructural facilities like inadequate number of computer systems, projectors, whiteboards and poor internet connectivity. In addition to this, 72 percent of the people also realized that the CLT curriculum was not properly developed enough to incorporate ICT in the CLT lessons. Further, some of them also experienced distraction of students due to the use of ICT which consequently affected the discipline of the classroom.

6. Limitations and Future Scope of the Study

The generalizability of the study has the following limitations. Firstly, the sample consisted of 67 male teachers and 33 female teachers which mean the equal male female ratio may give a different result. Secondly, the sample for the survey was selected from government, semi-government and private schools of Bangladesh and hence, further research can be done considering government, semi-government and private institutions individually. Thirdly, the study focused on the attitude of teachers towards ICT integrated CLT and challenges faced by them and hence it paves the way to further research on the attitude of students towards ICT and challenges faced by them. Finally, with a small number of participants completing the survey, the likelihood of generalizing the findings of the study is limited. Therefore, investigation with a larger sample size is necessary.

7. Conclusion

The remarkable growth in the demand of ICT in the field of education is the testimony to its effectiveness in the teaching and learning process. Several researches have proved that ICT plays a significant role in developing foreign language skills by exposing the learners to the authentic language of the native speakers and by making the lessons interesting and interactive, autonomous and flexible. Keeping in mind, the significant impact of ICT in education

especially in language learning, the government of Bangladesh has given an important position to ICT in its National Education Policy. Besides this, several government and non-government initiatives have been taken for the successful implementation of ICT in education and in learning English as a foreign language. However, after the study of the perception of the second language English teachers of Bangladesh towards the ICT integrated CLT and challenges they face at the ground level, it can be concluded that, the majority of teachers have positive attitude towards the effectiveness of ICT in teaching English to the secondary level learners of Bangladesh. They believe that ICT makes their lessons interactive and lively, promotes teacher-student and student-student interaction which consequently helps them develop proficiency level of the learners. Although they have positive attitude towards the effectiveness of ICT in language learning, they encounter several challenges while actually implementing ICT in their class like; poor connectivity, infrastructural problems, inadequate training to the pre-service and in-service teachers, and lack of time for the preparation of lessons integrating ICT. Hence, this study on the teachers' perception of ICT in English language teaching and major inhibitions in the successful implementation of ICT in classroom would provide an insight to the policy makers and the researchers to work on the measures to be adopted to reduce these inhibitions so that an optimum use of technology can be made, in providing education to all and in teaching English effectively.

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