

Efficacy of Audio-Visual Teaching Materials in EFL Classes: The Case of Two Elementary Schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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Abstract

The study was undertaken to explore the efficacy of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes in two elementary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The target population comprised 55 boys and 59 girls in the elementary schools. Data was collected from selected pupils, teachers and principals of the two elementary schools. The study sought to identify the common materials, methodologies and expertise used in teaching EFL Classes as well as to establish their effectiveness in using and promoting teaching aids. A survey research design was employed with a purposefully selected sample of one hundred fourteen (114) respondents. Interview, questionnaires and observation were used to collect data from principals and teachers on one hand, and pupils on the other hand. The data from the questionnaires was analyzed using frequency distribution tables and percentages while first-hand information from the interviews was recorded according to emerging themes. The findings of the study showed that materials and methodologies used to disseminate audio-visual teaching materials were not very effective. The schools did not run of the mill with relevant literature on audio-visual teaching materials. They commonly used teaching methodology in EFL Classes with limitations of language and audio-visual teaching materials. The findings further revealed that the context for audio-visual teaching materials was limited in the schools. It was also revealed that audio-visual teaching materials lacked the required expertise to conduct it as most of the officers involved had no pedagogical experience. The study concluded that the audio visual teaching materials in EFL Classes were not effective. It was recommended that stakeholders should use suitable media, resources, methodologies and personnel to advance audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes.

Keywords: Efficacy, Audio-Visual Teaching Materials, Language, Methodologies, Textbook.

1. Introduction

Visual aids have a great role in language teaching and learning. They make pupils involved, expand pedagogical implementation, and create access to information and teaching resources. A visual aid facilitates a new method of teaching language in the classroom. It also develops modern communicative teaching methods, especially, a new audiovisual serves as a warning and a signal on pedagogical quality of teachers teaching strategies and their interaction with pupils. It is important to get concrete wide information within a short time. In addition to this, the relevant visuals develop individual learning styles, teaching skills and comprehensive educational syllabus. They also enhance the competence and performance of pupils, and finally strengthen the systematic application of scientific knowledge in finding practical solution to specific problems of teaching language.

Audio-visual aids help teachers to bring a significant change in the class environment as well as in the teaching process. By using audio-visual aids in the class, teachers can present a topic both verbally and visually which is very helpful for the learners to pay more attention in the lesson. They can make a correlation between the verbal and non-verbal as well as abstract and concrete issues. There are some abstract things in language which are difficult to explain verbally (Abdullah, 2014). However, teachers in elementary schools are not interested to use visual aids in language classes. The fact beyond the curtain is lack of experience, exposure, interest, motivation and facilities. Consequently, the pupils do not

get much knowhow on visual aids. Krashen (1987) points out the importance of motivation and self-confidence. He holds that these factors are more involved not only in supplying comprehensible input but also in creating a situation that encourages a low filter. Thus, the effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and make it more comprehensible in low anxiety situation. Therefore, motivated pupils will learn better than those who are not.

Teachers have their own role in communicative approach. According to Larsen Freeman (1986) teachers in communicative classroom will find themselves talking less and listening more becoming active facilitator of their students learning. Similarly, to encourage visuals in the classroom and to integrate visuals with their uses, it is necessary to create some interesting situations in the classroom in which learners can use various visual items. If the verbal and visual things are presented together, learners can get the information quickly. Mayer (2001) approved that, if the instruction is given in the class using both words and visuals, learning becomes faster (cited in Dolati, 2011). Furthermore, a resourceful teacher can create different types of situations in the classroom. Although a few types of situations are created by the teacher, a competent teacher can create situations spontaneously depending on the level of students, the items and the topic s/he is teaching.

Teachers' main target is to foster Learners' interest toward the foreign language by taking advantage of the various resources available for this purpose. The schools under investigation used audio visual aids as one of the strategies in conducting the teaching and learning process. True audio visual aids are the significant resources utilized when it comes to having learners exposed to the target language. There are pedagogical centers in both schools where audiovisual materials are prepared as strategies to enhance the use of audio visual aids in EFL classes. However, the effectiveness of such strategies was not known as there was no known study to measure their efficacy, the researcher of this study was interested to see the real challenges while using audiovisual aids. Therefore, the study sought to explore the efficacy of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes: in the case of two elementary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the efficacy of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes: in the case of two elementary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1.3 Major Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study was to assess the efficacy of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes: the case of two elementary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- identify the factors that affect the use of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes find out the effectiveness of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes
- identify the common methodologies used in EFL classes; and find out to what extent audio-visual aids use in EFL classes.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the factors that affect the use of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes?
- What are the audio-visual aids used in EFL Classes?
- What are the common methodologies used in EFL classes?
- How effective are the methodologies used in EFL classes?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study was very important because it intended to benefit all stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, education officers, supervisors, school principals, teachers and pupils. The results would help school principals, teachers and pupils to

work together and produce relevant materials for preparing audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes to the pupils.

2. Review of Related Literature

In Ethiopia, English is taught as a subject starting from grade one up to tertiary education. It is also a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary levels. Even though students are exposed to English language, their level of performance in using the language is very low. Moreover, students cannot understand the target language as they understand their mother-tongue. Therefore, learning of English becomes difficult for them. In the teaching of language, the main purpose of the use of audio-visual aids is to enable the teacher to make his/her lessons effective and interesting. In the teaching of English the teacher uses the lecture method. Therefore, it is for the teacher to give a clear idea to the students through audio-visual aids as such type of teaching make the idea permanent in the pupils mind.

According to Adrian Doff (1990:81-82), the use of audiovisual aids is important to teachers as well as to pupils. It focuses attention on meaning, helps to make the language used in the class more interesting. In addition, visuals can be used at any level of the lesson, to help out in interpreting new language or introducing a topic, as part of language practice, and when reviewing language that has been presented earlier. Good visual aids are not just used once, but again and again and can be shared by different teachers. Mattew etal (2013) state that an effective integration of teaching aids methodology elevates the learning environment. Koc (2005) cited in Mattew says that the integration of technology into curriculum means using it as a tool to teach academic subject and to promote higher order thinking skills of the students. It is generally said that students like the language class when teachers use different audio-visual materials because it motivates them to pay more attention in the class and they can relate their learning with their real life (Çakir, 2006, pp.67). As a result, the use of audio-visual aids seems to benefit both the teachers and the learners.

Use of audio-visual materials makes the learning more long-lasting than the use of traditional textbooks (Craig & Amernic, 2006:152-153). A resourceful English language teacher create smart audiovisual aids as a motivational tool in enhancing students attention in language teaching and learning. Thus, audiovisual aids are significant and the best tool for making teaching effective and the best dissemination of knowledge. Moreover, it arouses the interest of pupils and helps out the teachers to explain concepts easily. According to Burton cited in Shabiralyani (2015) "Visual aids are those sensory objects or images which initiate or stimulate and support learning". Kinder, S. James; describe visual aids as "Visual aids are any devices which can be used to make the learning experience more real, more accurate and more active". Hence, Saricoban (1999) proposes the incorporation of a sort of visual backup to enhance comprehension as well as the importance of awareness on environmental clues such as gestures, tones of voice, or expressions that may contribute in their comprehension.

Eliane etal (2007) state that visuals such as tables, charts and graphs provide clarity. Effective visuals are used for specific purpose, not for decoration, and each type of visual illustrates some kind of materials better than others. Moreover, effective visuals are simple and clear. If a chart is overloaded with information, separate it into charts instead. In fact, the experience of elementary teachers in using visual aids is poor. Thus, the essence of using various visual aids in line with the target lesson is mandatory, especially in EFL classes. Therefore, the study sought to explore the Efficacy of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes: the case of two elementary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In short, the researcher focuses on identifying the factors that hinder the use of effective audiovisuals in ELT classes.

Photographs, pictures, drawings, diagrams, and maps provide visual support to various subject matters like history, English and other languages as well as to philosophy, music, theater, and other performing arts Elaine P. and etal (2007:235). Most of the times students learn through visuals make the teaching learning process easier. It helps to integrate with various language skills such as reading, listening, speaking and writing. According to Abdullah (2014), using different relevant visuals in classrooms makes the class interesting and interactive. It helps the teachers to visualize the content of the classroom. Also, it makes the learners more attentive and engaged in tasks. When visuals are used to introduce any topic to the learners, it becomes more real and contextualized. Learners get an overview of the lesson and can generate ideas better. It improves the

learner comprehension ability.

About Visual Aids in Language teaching, B. M. Bowen (1991) states: They vary the pace of the lesson:

- They encourage the learners to lift their eyes from their books, which makes it easier and more natural for one to speak to another;
- They allow the teacher to talk less by diminishing the importance of the verbal stimuli provided by the teacher's voice, and allow the students to talk more;
- They enrich the classroom by bringing in topics from the outside world which are made real and immediate by the pictures;
- They spotlight issues, providing a new dimension of dramatic realism and clarifying facts;
- A student with a creative imagination will often learn a new language easily and enjoyably through the use of pictures while he finds it difficult to learn just from a textbook and dictionary;
- They make a communicative approach to language learning easier and more natural;
- They help to teach listening, speaking, reading, and writing and allow the teacher to integrate these skills constructively;
- They inspire imaginativeness in both the teacher and students;
- They provide variety at all levels of proficiency (Bowen, 1991)

Wright A., Hallem S. also state that pictures have a major role to play in the development of students skills. There are two reasons in particular for listening and reading: meanings we derive from words are affected by the context they are in: pictures can represent or contribute much to the creation of contexts in the classroom; it is often helpful if the students can respond to a text non – verbally: pictures provide an opportunity for non – verbal response (Wright & Hallem, 2001).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The researcher also investigated the efficacy of audio-visual teaching materials in EFL Classes in two elementary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Descriptive research design was employed to conduct the study.

3.2 Population

The population of the study included 450 pupils, teachers, and principals in two elementary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

3.3 Sample Population

The sample size of the population comprised one hundred fourteen (114) pupils and four teachers from the two schools and two (2) principals from the two elementary schools (Tsehay Chora and Dil Betigil) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Purposeful sampling for the two schools, principals, pupils and teachers was used with the purpose of including all key elements in the sample. The two schools were purposely selected based on information from the Gulele sub-city education office that these schools were among those where pupils have been exposed to various teaching methods. Random sampling method was used for the selection of the 114 respondents.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

To get valid and reliable data, the researcher used questionnaire, interview and observation. Structured interviews were used for all the three categories of respondents in order to get firsthand information on the effectiveness of audiovisual aids. Structured interviews allowed direct interaction and also permitted assessment of non-verbal communication which could have been missed if other techniques were employed. Structured interviews also encouraged mutual exchange of information

yet allowing data to be easily coded and analyzed.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was used to analyse the effectiveness of methods and materials used. In this case tables and frequencies were used. Qualitative data was coded and analysed in the form of explanations as given by the respondents.

4. Findings and Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that there were several types of audio visual materials used in distributing information to pupils namely brochures, textbooks and electronic media. Similarly, the government had developed a more effective medium for educating the pupils through the publication of pictures, maps, diagrams, etc with various texts on the usefulness of audio visual materials.

The interview, questionnaire and observation results describe the suggestions of teachers, students and principals concerning the features of ELT audio-visual aids for elementary school students. The participants were asked about their primacies while selecting audio visual materials. The participant teachers focused on the possible features of a model ELT audio-visual aids designed for the elementary school students. In every stage of their suggestions, the participants focus on the importance of reflecting both the written and spoken aspect of communication in the classroom. The importance of the choice of a working methodology, the presentation of language skills with a focus on integration, importance of language functions, the appropriateness of the audio-visual aids/materials in terms of students' age, needs, levels, and interests are among teachers' priorities while evaluating the audio-visual aids. Most of the participants of the study also focused on the necessity of presenting authentic materials or the ones reflecting real-life situations and cultures in the audio-visual aids in terms of transferring knowledge into students' personal and social life endeavor. In addition, other participants of the study insist that the audio-visual aids should include materials relevant with the objectives of the curriculum that is consistent with the students' ages and needs.

As another component of the audio-visual aids, teachers also focused on the features of illustrations. A group of participants made a distinction between the use of drawings and the photographs in regards to the students' needs and suggested the use of real photographs for the elementary school students. Another group of teachers recommended the presentation of different kinds of illustrations as a mixture.

The majority of the participants considered that a communicative methodology following a content-based approach is ideal for the elementary school students and such kind of a methodology should be based on four main language skills, namely reading, listening, speaking and writing. Additionally, the organization of the audio-visual aids would manipulate students in order to give prompt answers to the questions that they are likely experience in their daily lives. Moreover, the teachers evaluated a successful audio-visual aids as long as it provides sufficient number of activities for enhancing interaction in the classroom. Furthermore, an effective audio-visual aids should manipulate students to use the language for different purposes under different circumstances and create as a basis in terms of providing discussions in the classroom.

According to the participants, the materials in audio-visual aids should evoke both the spoken and written communication in the classroom in terms of students' needs. An audio-visual aid can be regarded as successful, as long as it improves students' productivity in all skills and provides an assorted organization over a monotonous one.

Considering the presentation of cultural issues in the audio-visual aids and textbooks, it is essential to reflect the target language culture overwhelmingly into the audio-visual aids/materials. The participants also suggested the presentation of Ethiopian culture in terms of making comparisons and the representations of multicultural aspects. Additionally, they indicated that it would be inappropriate to disregard the cultural aspects of first language and teaching the language via the representations of the Ethiopian culture.

The participant teachers also indicated their thoughts concerning the four main language skills. The suitability of the skill exercises in terms of the students' needs and levels and the importance of a varied selection of the activities are indicated by the teachers. Specifically for the speaking skill, the importance of guidance and authenticity is stated. According to the teachers, the speaking activities should create a reason for students to talk and discuss and such activities should require pair or group work discussions. While focusing on the writing exercises, the participants indicated a number of aspects such as the guidance, integration of writing activities with other skills (speaking and reading) and activating students' creative and cognitive thinking skills. Moreover, the writing samples should be selected from the ones since students are able to write in their daily lives. Visual aids are also necessary for the students to experience writing different kinds of essays and writing samples such as short stories, poems, letters postcards, and e-mails. Regarding the reading skill, interesting, attractive and motivating reading passages associated with various audio-visual aids are indicated to be effective in students' language learning process. Another aim should be to achieve appropriate audio-visual aids content consistent with students' ages, preferences and expectations.

The teachers suggested a number of aspects concerning the presentation of vocabulary in ELT audio-visual aids. The teachers considered that the selection of vocabulary should be consistent with the students' needs and levels. A great majority of the teachers suggested the use of meaningful and contextual grammar exercises. The teachers also focused on the efficacy of audio-visual aids and situation-based instruction with the aim of teaching different language skills. In addition, the participants pointed out the superiority of the audio-visual aids instruction of language issues and the importance of presenting situations and tasks in which students have to use the specific skills interactively. Shortly, audiovisual aids have positive effects on pupils, teachers and schools.

Moreover, it is possible to observe that teachers share common opinions by indicating their disagreement considering several features of the audio-visual aids in the text book. In other words the participant teachers do not consider that a number of features or aspects are successfully presented in the textbook. According to the majority of the participants, the cover of the audio-visual aids are unattractive (83.3 %), the audio-visual aids do not reflect representations of L 2 (80.3 %), the topics are uninteresting for the students (88.3 %) and the exercises are not designed according to the students' interest (80 %).

Moreover, most of the participants (81.7 %) did not consider that the vocabulary items are controlled to ensure the systematic gradation from simple to complex. One fourth of the participants (25 %) strongly disagree with the statement 'The teacher's guide provides practical activities/ideas for the teacher to use visual aids in the classes'.

More than half of the teachers and principals (75 %) indicated that the audio visual aids help students to comprehend the reading passages, on the other hand, the rest of the participants (25 %) considered that the audio visual aids are ineffective for manipulating the students to understand the reading texts. In the open-ended questionnaire, a great majority of the teachers reflected that the audio visual aids, especially, the drawings are poor in quality. For this reason, they are ineffective in terms of reflecting the real scene of the reading passages.

While focusing on the language skills in the audio-visual aids, the majority of the participant teachers and principals (86%) indicated that the reading exercises are appropriate for improving students' reading abilities. In addition, listening exercises presented in the audio-visual aids are found to be effective in terms of improving students' listening skills (80%). Furthermore, most of the participants agree on the efficacy of the listening materials or audio-visual aids (pictures, diagrams, photographs, charts, videos, CDs) in terms of improving students listening in particular and language skills and fluency in general.

However, considering the speaking skill, most of the teachers (76%) pointed out the inefficacy of speaking exercises in terms of enhancing students' speaking abilities. Especially for the writing skill, although a significant number (65 %) of the teachers agree on the efficacy of the writing exercises, the rest of the participants (35%) did not evaluate the writing exercises as

The last section of the questionnaire was designed to find out the aspects that the teachers would like to see in the audio-visual aids regarding the four-language skills. The results indicated that a great majority of the teachers would like to see more speaking (95 %) and writing exercises (88.3 %). On the other hand, teachers' responses show diversity whether or not they would like see more reading, grammar, and listening exercises. At this point, it is possible to state that there is a significant correspondence between the teachers' assessments of the four-skills in the audio-visual aids and teachers' following comments regarding the language exercises that they would like see more in the textbook.

Furthermore, the analysis of interview and observation results revealed that half of the teachers indicated that the organization of some of the main headings is problematic in terms of not presenting the actual sequence of the visual aids. Moreover, focusing on the visual aspects, the subheadings are presented with small typeset in the textbook. This aspect is disparaged by a number of the teachers and they suggested that these headings can be redesigned by using big typeset and various colors in order not to present a rhythmic organization.

The participant teachers and principals tended to be negative concerning the efficacy of the instructions in explaining the purpose of the relevant activities. However, the analysis conducted by the researcher did not match with the teachers' statements since the language of the instructions is simple, consistent and addresses the purpose of the practices at different levels. Focusing on the topics and exercises, the majority of the teachers (82 %) consider that the topics are not interesting for the students and in the interviews teachers regarded the interestingness of the topics as a priority issue. Concerning certain topics in the audio-visual aids, teachers indicated that their students were not eager to participate in the activities in a number of topics because of finding the visuals uninteresting. Although creative activities and tasks are displayed, they are limited and none of the activities are based on authentic situations. Thus, most of the teachers and principals considered that audio-visual aids are not successful in terms of initiating communication.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

From the findings, it was concluded that audiovisual aids are not as effective as they should be because of a number of reasons. The inadequate availability of teaching materials and limited methodology hinders effective dissemination of the lesson/ needed information. To achieve desired goals, all the stakeholders concerned must ensure availability of required resources, employment of a variety of methodologies to arouse interest in the learners and also train all personnel involved to disseminate information. It was understood that audiovisual aids have positive effects on pupils, teachers and schools. The failure to recognize the importance of audiovisual aids will always lead pupils into misunderstanding the text/message. Audiovisual aids, if accorded the importance they deserve, will help to avoid excessive, empty and meaningless verbalization in teaching English. Moreover, using audiovisual aids make teaching and learning effective, provide interest and inspiration, and help students to form clear and accurate concepts in English. Thus audio-visual aids help out our students in their language articulation. However, most of the teachers do not use these aids which have great educative value. These are not the ordinary materials, rather these are teaching materials. Audio-visual aids give direct sensory experience to the students.

In addition to the above points, the findings revealed facts regarding the evaluation of EFL audio-visual aids. First, since the audio-visual aids were designed for the elementary school students, the topics can be rearranged or chosen by taking into consideration their ages, expectations, and needs. Second, the illustrations may be restructured to meet the expectations of elementary school students by providing high-quality standards similar to the ones in commercial publications. Third, from the teachers' perspectives, the teacher's guide can be revised in order to provide practical ideas for the teachers to use in the classroom. Fourth, the results are considered to be informative considering the audio-visual aids elements which do not require revision regarding teachers' audio-visual aids evaluation results such as the presentation of grammar and the relevant exercises, the presentation of listening and the relevant exercises, and the activities.

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations:

1. The audiovisual aids need to be transformed into policy so that it is included in the school curriculum and be incorporated in the entire school subject both at primary and secondary school. Only then will it receive maximum attention it deserves.
2. The audiovisual aids must be given adequate funding so that the school officials can provide quality training to those given the mandate to disseminate information to the teachers. Adequate funds will allow all stakeholders to attend frequent workshops in order to keep abreast and avoid misinforming the pupils mind.
3. The principals, department heads, supervisors must make it a mandate to visit all schools at least once a week by utilizing supervisors in all schools, so that pupils and teachers in schools can perceive the importance of the audio visuals unlike the situation where the officers visit the schools at the most once per year or not at all.
4. There must be involvement of stakeholders in decision making, planning, implementation and evaluating of programs designed to make sure that the audiovisual aids education succeeds.
5. Addis Ababa and Gulele sub-city education office should give continuous training on the use of effective visual aids in ELT classes in order to cultivate students' cognitive as well as social bondage.
6. The principals, department heads, supervisors must consider the audio-visual aids elements which require adjustments such as the presentation of grammar and the relevant exercises, the presentation of listening and relevant exercises, and the activities.

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