IMPACT OF ICT ON UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH STUDENTS WITH AND
WITHOUT PRIOR ICT EXPOSURE

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Brac Institute of Languages in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in TESOL

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Brac University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

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Approval

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Abstract

Existing researches in the field of Applied Linguistics shows a significant interest in the application of advanced practices through usage of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) while teaching English as a second language. Therefore, the subject matter of resorting to the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) has been of significant concern and has created considerable discussion on ICT skills being an increased necessity. This study attempts to investigate the effects of ICT in the non-credit English for Academic Purpose classrooms at tertiary level education in the context of Bangladesh, i.e. Dhaka to be more precise. This research aims to look at the positive and negative effects that ICT has in terms of attitude, motivation and learning in EAP. To be clearer, this is an academic research that will help to see how the use of technology affects English language learning outcomes in the private educational institution of the tertiary level. For this research, I have conducted interviews with students and teachers in addition to observing classes to collect the data required to answer my research questions from two private tertiary level educational institutions. By having inductive research, I was able to narrow down my research and make it as specific as possible to help me understand the research participants' state, attitude and motivation towards learning. After completing my research, the research findings have revealed that most of the participants, which include both students and teachers, view the implementation of ICT in EAP in a positive light. Both the students and teachers who participated agreed upon ICT significantly influencing the language learning processes and strategies. Although the study concludes ICT having positive effects when it comes to English language learning, nonetheless this study is also an attempt at identifying the challenges that comes with ICT application in EAP.

Keywords: Information and Communication Technology (ICT); English for Academic Purpose (EAP); EFL teaching; EFL learning; motivation; learner autonomy

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List of Acronyms

ICT   Information and Communication Technology

EAP   English for Academic Purpose

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

TELL   Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning

Chapter 1

Introduction

With the advancement of modern technology, more communication and sharing opportunities are found with better and simpler electronic tools and gadgets, opening new doors to a greater access to a world of knowledge (Fu, 2013). Existing studies on this field show that the use of Information and Communications Technology in the English language learning classes can enhance the learners learning process while simultaneously enhancing students' motivation in a significant manner that will make them want to constantly engage in acquiring knowledge as well as inspire imagination and creativity.

Technology in language learning can boost variety and increase the diversity of learning environments and opportunities and enhance the quality of the learning experience by making class content more varied and accessible to almost each individual learner; thus, ensuring greater participation and engagement among learners (Pennington, 1996). Curricular integration of ICT offers access to a set of electronic facilities such as interactive video, the Internet, email and the World Wide Web. These ICT tools can help learners acquire linguistic skills, establish contact and interaction with other language users and broaden their minds about different cultural practices, values and contemporary lifestyles in countries where English is used as a mother tongue or as a second language. ICT-aided teaching is believed to create more liveliness and interaction in the EFL classroom. Incorporating Info-Tech in language teaching gives students a large number of benefits to broaden their opportunities in successfully learning a foreign language. These advantages range from enhancing motivation to promoting autonomous learning, fostering critical thinking skills, encouraging innovation and creativity, establishing interaction, boosting communication, promoting research and cooperative learning in the language classroom and boosting students' performance on written class assessment.

1.1 Background

It is a usual norm of university education that first semester students[1] get placed into different levels of English courses. Students with weak English skills get slotted into the preliminary

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[1] In this dissertation, I used the term 'first semester students' instead of the commonly known term 'freshmen'. The latter term has come under serious criticism for being gender-biased and hence being rejected by various globally reputed universities (e.g. https://www.dailysignal.com/2017/09/18/yale-ditches-freshman-for-gender-neutral-term/)

courses of English, which has led to this study focusing only on the English teachers and learners from preliminary English courses. The research was conducted among students belonging to three categories: students having exposure, having no exposure and having minimum exposure to the use of ICT in their high school English courses.

However, it must be kept in mind that having access to the different types of technological facilities is a scenario that is still rare and very exceptional in many parts of the world, Bangladesh being one. Over the last few decades, studies are being conducted to assess whether or not ICT can positively impact English teaching and learning. As Bangladesh is approaching ahead to make it a digitalized country in every sense, many tertiary educational institutions in Bangladesh have integrated ICT in English language teaching and learning. Under such circumstances, as teachers have been gaining wider expertise in ICT usage, they use their own technological materials that are provided at their place of work. The study thus investigated whether the teachers as well as students who have had less access to the use of technology have a harder time understanding the instructions being given with the assistance of technology when compared to those who had previous exposure to technology.

As we are all living in the 21st century, every aspect of our lives is being defined by technology, thus making technology to be a crucial factor in the development of society. Keeping this fact in mind, educational institutions all over the world have taken the advantage of using modern technology in the classrooms to enhance learning outcomes. The Government of Bangladesh has been extensively working over the last 10 years regarding this ICT aspect in education—eventually making Bangladesh in rank fifth in Asia to have used the internet most, with more than 80 million having internet access as of December 2017, up from 0.1 million in 2000 (Rashid, 2019)[2]. IT is in this line that The National ICT Policy of Bangladesh of 2009 perceived ICT as means of holistic development of the nation (ibid).

1.2 Context

It is trite to mention that modern technology is viewed as an essential feature when it comes to language teaching practices in today's globalized world of mass communication and transfer of information. And English is the language that is predominantly used in many sectors of development. Subsequently, the increasing demand of learning the English

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[2] 'The National Education Policy-2010' has been intended to bring necessary reforms in curriculum, pedagogy and teachers' capacity building where ICT would be an effective tool.

language for communicating across cultures and continents has created the teaching and learning of the English language so crucial in all segments of our education system. Thus, the necessity to master fluency and proficiency in English language within a short period of time is a common scenario these days—especially in the tertiary education. The option for students with weak English language proficiency to take non-credit preliminary English courses at the beginning of university education have become prevalent over the last decade in the private sector of tertiary level education in Bangladesh. However, an important factor that people tend to overlook is the fact that although this is a scenario that a lot of students face at the first year, a crucial matter does not get enough light shed onto it is the psychological implications that these students go through. If we narrow it down to two basic factors that cause students to have mixed feelings while taking non-credit courses, we find: firstly, they feel demotivated and frustrated due to the fact that the preliminary courses, being non-credited, take away an entire semester worth of studying without the credits being added to their overall grades. This is due to the correlation that exists between the student's academic performance and sense of self-worth. "In other words, significant findings revealed that students' level of self-esteem was a significant determinant in their academic achievement. If students develop higher levels of self-esteem, they would exhibit higher academic achievements (Aryana, 2010: 2475). Secondly, they feel motivated and interested as they know that through these preliminary courses, they will be able to get accepted into regular credit courses that are aligned with their respective fields. Therefore, my thesis inquired into the correlation between the students' attitudes, motivation and learning that occur due to the presence of ICT in the classroom. As the use of technology to enhance the effectiveness of English language teaching inside the classroom can be found in university level education in Bangladesh.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to find out whether the use of ICT in English language classes at the tertiary level provides the same results when being taught to students who have and do not have a prior acquaintance with ICT. The purpose also included an investigation into finding out whether new students being enrolled into the pre-university English language learning classes who had little exposure to the use of ICT in their high school language education face challenges when experiencing ICT in their university classrooms. Another purpose of the study was to find out whether having technology in the classroom influences students' motivation in learning the language.

1.4 Significance and Scope

The significance of this research topic is based on the fact that ICT has, in fact, become a crucial factor in the 21st century. Thus, the significance and value of ICT can be found all over the world in every sector of modern society, including the educational sector. Similarly, the educational institutions in Bangladesh have also come to terms with incorporating ICT in the classroom, therefore with this study it will help to identify ways in which ICT is helping improve language teaching and learning experiences.

The scope of this research paper is immense for both teachers and learners of the preliminary courses of the tertiary level educational institutions. They would be able to understand how, and in what ways, application of ICT in the classroom can impact teachers teaching and the learners' learning experience. The study also expects to find the correlation between ICT and the learners' learning process in terms of motivation.

1.5 Research Questions

The research aimed at finding answers to the following general and specific questions.

General Question:

1. What kinds of impacts do ICT have on undergraduate students in their English classrooms regardless of their prior ICT exposure?

Specific Questions:

1. To what extent does ICT enhance students' motivation towards English language learning?
2. In what ways does ICT foster students' English language learning?
3. Can ICT promote students' autonomy as English language learners?

1.6 Delimitation

Since the first semester students get placed into different levels of English courses based on their English proficiency where the students with weak English skills get slotted into the preliminary courses of English, this study only focused on the English teachers and learners from the preliminary courses where the students' English skill is comparatively weak. To

further make the study as specified as possible, the data for the research were collected from only two private universities located within Dhaka, Bangladesh.

1.7 Limitation

As the outcomes of this research are from two private tertiary level educational institutions, it must be understood that the study represents the data of a small geographic location and may not be taken as an ideal representation of the subject matter at hand. Conducting the research at other tertiary level educational institutions might have yielded different results.

1.8 Thesis Outline

This thesis paper is composed of the following chapters:

Chapter 1 provides the background and context of the subject that is being researched upon, the purpose for which the research is being done. The significance and scope of the research as well as the research questions that are being asked to gather data for the study. This chapter also includes the delimitation and limitation of the study.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review on the use and influence of ICT in English language learning in the undergraduate level as well as all the relevant data that have been produced so far by numerous researchers on the topic of ICT and its impact on English language teaching and learning.

Chapter 3 talks about the methods that were used to collect the data for the research paper. The qualitative method for data collection had been applied in the form of interviews; Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and questionnaire were used to gather information for the research.

Chapter 4 incorporates the data collected through qualitative method and analyses of the outcome from the feedback received.

Chapter 5 compiles the results of the data collected and provides suggestion for future academics on ways to improve the teaching and learning of the English language with the assistance of ICT.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. Definition

As the term 'ICT' (Information and Communication Technology) is at the center of this research, by definition it means to describe a method where technology is used for producing, demonstrating, storing, influencing, and exchanging of information. Although this definition seems to be quite broad; within the scope of the research at hand, ICT should be understood to refer to computer-based technologies such as personal computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones, software and internet-based technologies including email, websites, and social networking sites used for the purpose of English teaching and learning.

2.2. Existing researches on students' ICT use and attitudes toward it

There have been other research papers as well that have shed light upon the use of ICT and the psychological effect that it has on students' motivation, learning and attitude; such as the frequency of ICT usage by students for English learning purposes and their attitude towards ICT application in English language classes. Some of the researches indicated that the incorporation of ICT into education has been as a means to develop an outdated educational system. Tri and Nguyen (2014) stated, "the fast-growing advance of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has made potential contributions to English language education for the past few decades" (p. 32). Another study conducted on researching the correlation between ICT use in learning and its effect in learners' attitude has analyzed that the majority of students liked and accepted English language learning through the use of Internet, however their opinions varied when it came to the benefits that technology provides to learning English. The project this study focused on was called the TELL (Teacher Effectiveness for Language Learning) project which stands for technology-enhanced language learning and it enabled students to experience new technologies, which would also increase students' learning prospects. This project helped in enhancing the students' knowledge of computers while developing their English skills. Most learners were positive about the potential of the Internet and felt that it would encourage language learning by combining various communication tools in the classroom, assumed that the tools provide suitable learning functions (Yang & Chen, 2007).

There has been a major increase in development and their effects related to the use of ICT into the education sector that have encouraged teachers to expand the required knowledge and instructing skills in using ICT during their language teaching. Current studies show, ICT is just not a byproduct of the Digital Age, but is also a significant facilitator and means for bringing about educational modifications that improve students' learning process and transforms them into knowledgeable and dynamic individuals of the society. Advancement in has impacted all sectors of society, including the education sector. In higher education, application of ICT in the form of e-learning is already changing the teaching and learning processes. There are many academic and socio-economic factors that have led higher education institutions to educate learners through ICT. ICT application in education has paved way to greater information access, instantaneous learning and more teamwork. By saving time, it has increased reach to a greater number of students and computer-generated experiences. The study done by Mahmood, Bokhari, and Naqvi (2011) shows that with the presence of ICT both the teachers and learners now have the option to choose more suitable applications which are flexible when it comes to time, portability as well as cost-efficiency. The research also places importance upon taking advantage of the use of ICT by all those involved in the educational institutions and being able to harness that opportunity to adapt it to the specific task at hand. This also involves changing the notion that ICT is not just advanced technology that can only be bought with money and that it requires a sophisticated level of skill which is acquired through time-consuming training; but that it should be given full credit for all the positive aspects that ICT brings about. The study also notes that this general lack of awareness is a result of people's approach towards it. For effective implementation, it is imperative to have a positive outlook towards ICT with complete participation of all participants in the application process which is the fundamental approach to addressing the issue of lack of knowledge on the scenario.

Mahmood et al. (2011) suggest that formally organized awareness programs, visits to similar institutions where success has occurred, and short trainings can contribute to raise the awareness and change the attitude of stakeholders towards facilities and services. The impact of ICT on the learning process seems to be more important and requires more than looking only to curricula. Improved student outcomes are observed, with regard to factors like: motivation, enjoyment of learning, self-esteem, ICT skills, collaborative skills, subject knowledge, information handling skills, meta-cognitive skills, etc.

2.3. Benefits of integrating ICT applications in English language classrooms

Numerous researches have been done on ICT with its relation to English language learning which displays how ICT plays a positive role when applied to language learning, particularly with the use of the internet where language learners surf the net to assist them with learning new vocabulary. Learning with the assistance of ICT promotes learner autonomy due to the presence of multimedia technology such as audiovisuals as well as computer graphics— which are all said to greatly motivate learners by attracting the attention of the learners while elevating their learning interest. With the presence of ICT in the classroom, students are also able to connect to the Internet giving them the opportunity to gain access to a wider range of genuine resources to make the mundane process of English learning more gratifying. Ariza & Sánchez (2013) suggest that integrating the use of metacognitive strategies and activities which require students to work independently with the assistance of ICT tools within the context of language learning for beginners not only contributes to the development of student's language proficiency, but also provides them with insight as learners. The experiences of having more self-awareness can also be shifted to other conditions of learners' academic lives which is crucial to long term education. The processes that took place during this study provides a foundation for the internalization of a set of practices that were proposed to address learning challenges as a metacognitive approach that may contribute to making students become independent learners. This is evident by considering the fact that when learners use the internet to find available resources for completing their assignments, there is a significant improvement of their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. This is because most online portals that are available today are quite user-friendly and happen to be a part of their everyday modern technologically advanced lives.

2.4. Enhancing learners' motivation towards English language learning through ICT

In order to understand the impact that ICT has in English language learning, one of the best ways to analyze this is by looking into the level of motivation that the students feel towards having ICT in their English language classrooms. According to Mullamaa (2010), it should be understood that ICT supports the contemporary values of language learning, factors such as individual learning, communication and student motivation are thought of as fundamentally significant in modern education systems and are essentially a part of the process in ICT. When it comes to the notion of motivation, some students require influence from ICT materials inside classrooms to increase their motivation. However, being able to

bring about motivation from within the students themselves is the critical objective of educationalists, and to get students to reach this level of internal motivation it is up to the instructors to finding significance in students' behavior. Thus, a good way to do this is by finding a good approach to helping students find significance in learning. This can be done through implementing various instructional strategies that will aim at encouraging students to achieve their best in the presence of supportive teachers.

Considering the notion of motivation in academia where motivation is greatly required to help students strengthen their attitude towards learning, Mullamaa (2010) takes support from a study on the impact of intrinsic motivation on e-learning. That study demonstrates— according to the motivation theory of Ryan and Deci—there is evidence that intrinsically motivated students learn more in a fixed time period as a result of their higher effort and persistence and will do different things in computer environments that allow for this liberty of choice. With the presence of an ICT environment, the students' overall motivation is positively impacted during the learning process.

2.5. Improving learners' engagement in language classrooms

The importance of engaging students in the English language classroom has to be done in a manner that involves a combination of psychological as well as sociological and language factors. According to Azmi (2017), by providing ICT materials in the language classroom and teaching the students to apply them in their learning, the teachers encourage more meaningful interaction while increasing the students' awareness and motivation and ensuring an increase in classroom participation and engagement. With these facts at hand, there seems to be enough evidence regarding the possible benefits of ICT usage on motivation and engagement in the language classroom. The use of ICT materials in class content requires the use of advanced cognitive processes which discourage low achievers therefore making the students to be more attentive during class time. Not only does ICT influence students' motivation to learn but also increases learners' concentration and attention span while ensuring more classroom involvement (Azmi, 2017). As described by Azmi (2017), it has been found that learners are more likely to display positive attitudes when computers are used during classroom learning implying that ICT usage in EFL classrooms has made EFL activities significantly effective and improved. It has been taken from the perspective of the learners that when the instructors use ICT to aid with their teaching, the students' level of motivation and engagement improves significantly making them to become more involved in

the learning process. The research acknowledges the fact that classroom application of audio-visuals increases the learners' motivation and participation towards language learning.

2.6 Promoting learners' autonomy with ICT

Ariza and Sánchez (2013) stated "the development of autonomy implies students being able to self-regulate themselves, that is, students take responsibility to find the ways to enhance their learning process by paying attention specifically to critical aspects, such as setting goals, selecting appropriate methods, and monitoring procedures (Holec, as cited in Benson, 2001). Framed within a Vygotskian point of view, this process of self-regulation is understood in terms of inner speech, in which students can improve their ability to learn through the use of metacognitive strategies"(ibid, p. 156).The impact that ICT has on the learners' autonomy has also brought about changes to the role of the teachers in the classroom i.e. shifting the role of a lecturer to that of a facilitator of learning. This in turn helps students become more independent, self-sufficient and improves students' classroom participation. Students' exposure to ICT to assist them in learning simultaneously prepares them to learn without the constant assistance of a teacher as a supervisor. Therefore, the belief in one's own ability to learn with the use of information found online helps to build the learners' competency and coping mechanism. Additionally, the practice of learning independently helps develop the learner to adapt better in the competitive world of employment (Budianto, 2014).According to Condrat (2014), learner autonomy should be acquired gradually. Henceforth, the teacher should be very patient and steadily reduce supervision of the students' learning process, nonetheless the teacher's influence on the students' learning remains important since the teacher is the role model for the students and can act as an advisor when the students need it. The learners' autonomy through ICT possesses a transformative element to the generic teaching-learning experience as the teacher is no longer expected to be the only source of knowledge in the classroom; students are now required to take ownership of their learning. It can be understood that there is a significant correlation between a teacher's use of technology for instruction and an increase in the chance of having a student-centered class where more learner autonomy is achieved as students can learn at their own pace and do activities on their own. With the presence of technology in the classroom, the course material can be integrated into activities where more cooperation takes place in allowing students to develop their own talents, while leading to a less teacher-centered learning environment that encourages individualized learning.

Chapter 3

Overall research approach

This chapter presents the procedures followed for designing the research and collecting and analyzing data to serve the research questions with authentic answers. In details, it exhibits the techniques for research design, sampling approaches, methods to data collection and processes used to analyze data. I followed all the steps with the aim of conducting this research with the help of both qualitative and quantitative data. My approaches to data collection used in this research were: literature review, open-ended and close-ended questionnaires, classroom observation and Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

3.1 Research design

Research design involved: deciding the type of data collection procedures, type of respondent and population size; preparing research instruments; projecting the strategies to save and organize the data; and sketching the sampling methods.

I used the mixed method with a combination of qualitativeand quantitative approaches. While qualitative analyses helped me to create in-depth analyses of my research outcomes, quantitative analyses provided summaries of data that supported generalizations about the phenomena under my study. I observed classes and took interviews of both the teachers and students. In addition, I distributed open-ended and close-ended questionnaires separately among teachers and students. I also conducted two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with undergraduate students of these two private universities.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were from two top-ranking private universities located in Dhaka. As per research ethics, their names have been justifiably kept confidential.

The total number of participants in survey section was thirty 30 students from multiple disciplines (15 from each university) and four teachers of English Department (2 from each university).

3.3 Research Instruments

Data collection method was purely descriptive which required the use of questionnaire for conducting survey, questions for FGD and classroom observation notepads to detect and note down information about teaching and learning strategies.

Data required for this study were of several types: data related to the availability and use of ICT in classrooms; data related to the approaches of integrating ICT in classrooms; data related to students' attitudes toward using ICT in classrooms; data related to students' motivation for learning English due to the impact of ICT; and data concerned with students' overall reflection as regards their experience with ICT in English classrooms.

3.4 Questionnaire

I prepared questionnaires to conduct survey among both students and teachers that could help me find out: (a) whether or not the first semester students at the two private universities were satisfied with the styles and approaches of their teachers while teaching English using ICT, (b) to measure the extent of their attitudes toward ICT, and (c) to assess their motivation for improving their English due to the influence of ICT.

Accordingly, I prepared an open-ended questionnaire for students (a total of thirty students) who were students without prior ICT exposure, with prior ICT exposure and with prior minimal ICT exposure. And I also provided one open-ended questionnaire for four (4) teachers belonging to the English Departments of these two universities. Besides, I provided close-ended questionnaires to the teachers and the students from both the institutions. There were eight (8) close-ended questions for teachers and seven (7) close-ended questions for student. These questions deal with the styles and approaches of ICT usage in the classrooms and the participants' ways of dealing with those.

3.5 Classroom observation

Classroom observation was necessary to identify the approaches and techniques of teachers in dealing with their learners. As per context and needs, teachers change their teaching practices and methods to teaching English also vary from teacher to teacher. Classroom observation is believed to be the best method to study the teaching methods, because through classroom observation, it is possible to determine teachers' attitude and behaviour and style of dealing with students that even unknown to them. Classroom observation process involved discovering: the availability of ICT materials in the classroom; the teachers' interest and

disinterest in ICT; the percentage of the lesson provided with the help of ICT; and the students' access to ICT devices. To get a better visual understanding of how the classes were conducted, I took part in observing two classes from both the private educational institutions where the students were from the first semesters.

3.6 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

In order to grasp a genuine understanding of the students' opinions regarding impact of ICT has in their English language classes, I sat down with a group of students with extensive question-answer sessions in the form of FGDs; I noted down their responses during the process.

3.7 Procedure and timeline

The interviews, questionnaires, class observations and FGDs were conducted at two private universities after receiving formal approvals from the concerned authorities of the institutions. The data collection took three days, where four teachers were requested for the interviews that took about five to ten minutes each. The interviews with the twenty students from both the universities took around three minutes each. For the class observations, I had requested the teachers to allow me to sit and observe their classes for over thirty minutes. As for the FGD, I sat down with two groups of students from both institutions to inquire about their opinions based on their own experiences as learners.

3.8 Analyses

The result that was formed based on interpreting data received through interviews, survey and classroom observation, and FGDs have been presented in a descriptive manner.

3.9 Consent, access and participants' confidentiality

All the personal information of the participants who took part in my research were kept strictly confidential. Therefore, no mentioning of the participants names, gender or age can be found in this study. All the necessary measures were taken to maintain ethics while conducting my research. The research was carried out with permission from the required personnel. In accordance with research ethics, the names of the educational institutions where I had conducted my research have not been disclosed anywhere in my thesis.

Chapter 4

Findings and Analyses

4.1Introduction

In this chapter, the data that was gathered from the teachers and students' questionnaires, interviews, FGDs as well as the observed classes from the private institutions have been analyzed and evaluated in detail concerning the impact of ICT on undergraduate English students who had no ICT exposure prior to their university level education.

4.2 Findings of the student survey

4.2.1 Whether students had exposure to ICT in their English class before coming to the university

50% of the students mentioned of having no exposure while 25% of the students' said that they had exposure to ICT in English language courses before coming to university. The remaining 25% of the students answered that they had minimal exposure to ICT in other capacities (not English-related) prior to tertiary level English classes. The students' responses in general were that they mostly did not receive English language education with the assistance of ICT prior to university.

4.2.2 Whether the use of ICT helped to increase students' attitude in a positive manner

In this question, all students responded that they felt ICT significantly increasing their attitude while learning English. They felt from personal experience of using ICT that they could make their classes more interactive and interesting due to the audio-visual effects ICT materials comprise. Since a lot of the students acquire the language better due to audio-visual memory, they responded saying that ICT has a positive influence in their learning.

4.2.3 Whether the use of ICT in the classroom has increased students' motivation towards learning English

The response in this question was very much similar to the previous survey question as most of the students opted with the use of ICT as increasing their motivation towards English learning.

4.2.4 Whether students required ICT for doing assignments at home

Most students in this question mentioned that they did in fact need the assistance of technological materials when working on any home assignments.

4.2.5 Whether students faced any challenges with having ICT for learning English in the classrooms

The students answered with a positive response in this question as all of them mentioned about not facing any kind of challenge with regard to ICT usage for learning English inside the classroom.

4.2.6 The percentage of ICT usage in the classroom as students felt in overall terms

Majority of the students chose the option of having the classroom being75% manually teacher-oriented and 25% ICT-aided. A few students opted for having the English language course taught with 50% being teacher-centered and 50% ICT-assisted, as these students found it better to learn when the teacher is teaching and ICT being used in a balanced ratio.

4.3 Analyses of the students' responses

From the students' overall response, it is evident that having the integration of ICT in the classroom is highly beneficial to the students' learning process—regardless of the extent of students' prior exposure to ICT-based classrooms. Not only did it change the usual teacher-centered practice of teaching, it also allowed the classes to be more interactive. Students, by and large, seemed to have had realized this fact due to which they felt that ICT in the classroom had been promoting better student collaboration and creativity. Some of the students said that they enjoyed it when the teacher would use videos to explain a lesson as it enlightened the classroom environment. The students also became more interested in the topic of discussion as some students said that they had better audio-visual memory that enabled them to learn better. Some students said that as they were all first semester students, even having the ice-breaking session with the incorporation of a little audio-visual made the starting of the class more relaxed as the students were all new and had not yet been acquainted with one another.

Though there were students who said that they did not have any prior exposure to the use of ICT in their English learning in schools, they had been enjoying learning with the presence of

ICT in the classroom and preferred it over a non-ICT based class. The students who did not have any prior exposure to the usage of ICT during their school English classes also mentioned that at times they found it a little difficult to catch up with the teacher when power point slides are used. Nonetheless these students themselves said that they felt having ICT in their learning motivated them to put in more effort and keep up with the rest of the class. From the students responses it was found that those students who were not exposed to ICT usage in their English courses prior to university said that they were fine with either have ICT or not having it unlike the students who had exposure to ICT prior to university said that they preferred an English class with ICT. All these findings actually prove the validity of Bangladesh Government's plan of 'Digital Bangladesh' where ICT has been gradually establishing itself as a key component in our education sector.

4.4 Findings of the teacher survey

4.4.1 The ICT materials that are used to teach English language classes

From the survey questionnaire that was provided to the four teachers who participated, it was found that the most common ICT materials used for teaching English language had been the computer projector along with the sound system. In fact, the classrooms had inbuilt systems comprising these tools.

4.4.2 Whether the use of ICT in the classroom increased students' attitude positively

Two of the teachers responded that they used ICT in the classroom most of the time while two teachers said that they moderately used ICT in teaching English. In both cases, they found students bearing favorable attitudes toward their use of ICT.

4.4.3 Whether the use of ICT in the classroom increased students' motivation towards learning English

Out of the four teachers, one teacher said that he felt the students' motivation towards learning English increased moderately when the teacher used it in the classroom. While the rest of the three teachers felt that taking the assistance of ICT in the classroom had in fact increased students' motivation towards learning English.

4.4.4 Whether students required doing assignments at home using ICT

Two teachers said that they do not assign students with homework which demands ICT materials. The other two teachers said that they assign their students with home tasks where they need to use technology to complete their work properly.

4.4.5 Whether teachers faced challenges with ICT while teaching English

Three teachers in this question said that they did not really feel any challenges with regard to ICT to teach their language classes. While one teacher felt that he faced challenges when there is a power outage during class as the computer, projector and sound system would turn off.

4.4.6 Whether teachers feel satisfied with working with the assistance of ICT in the English language classroom

In this question two teachers responded that they have felt satisfied having ICT to help them in teaching English, while two other teachers responded in negative as they felt that they would be able to teach English even without having ICT assistance.

4.4.7 The percentage of ICT usage in the classroom as teachers felt in overall terms

One teacher opted for having 75% manual teaching with 25% usage of ICT. The rest of the three teachers chose 50% share of balance regarding manual teaching and ICT usage.

4.5 Analyses of teachers' responses

From the teachers who participated in the interview sessions, it is found that having ICT materials in the classroom enabled the teachers to achieve more student autonomy as it helped them to develop their individual skills without having the pressure of having a teacher-centered classroom. The teachers opined that since technology is the new reality of today, most students were one way or the other accustomed to having ICT in their learning. One of the teachers said that every student owns a smart phone or a PC which makes having technology in the classroom very natural and their learning process easier. The teachers felt that their students preferred it when the teacher would incorporate audio-visuals in their classes as it captured their visual senses.

Nonetheless, the teachers also mentioned that the end result of teaching the English courses is pretty much the same. Students enjoyed having more interactive courses with the incorporation of ICT in the classroom rather than doing the course without ICT. According to the teachers' perspective, one of the positive aspects of having ICT in teaching English is that it helps it getting the students more engaged with the lesson. In addition to motivating them for group work such as group presentations with the assistance of PowerPoint slides.

The teachers also said that having ICT in teaching also helps with time management as the teachers are able to use power point slides inside of writing long lectures on the board as well as assign and receive students' assignments via emails.

4.6 Findings from FGD

The FGD with two groups of students (ten students per group) from the two private universities were predominantly based on a single query – dealt extensively. They were asked to give their overall opinions as students in regard to their experience of ICT in English language classes. Each of the students was provided complete freedom to express their personal opinion on the topic.

4.6.1 The influence of ICT in learning:

According to the participants, when ICT was applied in combination with various types of teaching methods and approaches, especially constructivist practices, the learning outcomes tended to be more successful. The information that I gathered from the students from the interviews, FGDs as well as classroom observation is that the majority of the students felt having ICT in their English learning put a really positive effect on their overall learning and experience. A lot of the students expressed that ICT greatly helped them during speaking and listening classes as the audio recordings helped them in clarifying a lot of confusion they faced, especially when it came to speaking and pronunciation.

The students said that it was very rarely that they faced any issues with ICT other than when the electricity would go out, however as the private universities have backup generators, the power outage would only last for a minute or so which the teacher is well experienced to handle.

The majority of the students said that ICT made the classrooms more engaging and helped in motivating them to collaborate with one other as well as the teacher. ICT also helped the students when it came to assignments and presentations as the use of ICT assisted them to gather and produce better assignments due to the vast amount of information present online.

However, some students also expressed their opinions that despite teacher's using ICT as a collaborative learning tool, ICT in classrooms were still more or less restricted to PowerPoint presentations; they felt that it would be of greater assistance if ICT use could be extended in diversified ways—for example, smart phones and social media should be frequently applied to bring innovations.

4.7 Teacher's Perspectives

Most of the teacher participants held positive, supportive and encouraging attitudes towards the integration of ICT within their teaching practices. Similar results corroborate the research findings reached. It was also revealed that the incorporation of ICT for the teaching of the English language has an impact not only on teaching practices but also on the learning processes.

As far as the teaching practices were concerned, the use of ICT seemed to be reflected on the instructors' assumed roles, the choice of the course topics, ways the teacher assessed the students work as well as the materials that they selected for teaching.

In taking classes with the support of ICT, the teachers no longer appeared to the students as controlling hi-tech academic authorities; they could rather present themselves as being learners as well, in addition to being the instructors, guides, trainers and counselors. This study also shed light on the topics that the instructor could apply for integrating ICT in language learning as not every topic required the use of ICT for teaching. For instance, from the research it was deduced that the instructors were much more inspired to integrate ICT use in the classrooms when they had to teach classes that focused on practicing speaking skills— where verbal pronunciation was being emphasized on, in addition to improving listening skills. Hence, the participating instructors were seen to be in a constant practice of observing and giving oral feedback to the students as a means to try in evaluating the efficiency of their ICT use on their students' learning.

The research findings also indicate that the teachers were known to have been using ICT quite regularly during their lessons. The programs and software that were known to have been used were Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Windows Media Player, Gmail, YouTube, among a couple of others as ICT tools. Still, knowledge of online learning applications is not very common among the contacted teachers.

Concerning the learning process, the use of ICT intervened in shaping the learners' attitudes and the skills that they needed to develop. In fact, the positive experiences and attitudes that teachers had experienced through the application of ICT seem to be transmitted to their learners whose behavior denotes an increasing devotion, commitment, perseverance, autonomy and motivation to ensure active and collaborative learning. It is through the use of ICT that teachers seek to develop mainly the learners' aural-oral skills, i.e., their listening and speaking skills together with a slight consideration to the improvement of the learners' critical and reflective thinking skills. Thus, the basic skills that teachers strive to develop are the learners' communicative oral competency and their ability to ensure adequate oral performance.

Despite the gains that are achieved on both teaching and learning, there are a number of hardships that have to be dealt with while implementing ICT such as the unavailability, the impracticality of some technological materials backed up with the lack of technical and personnel support.

Chapter 5

Findings and Analyses

5.1 Conclusion

It has been understood that students in English language classes are becoming more interested in participating in classroom communication as the trend of having a teacher-centered classroom is on the decrease. With modern development taking place in the educational sector, a revolution in education is occurring; the role of teachers, learners as well as how learning takes place is changing at a constant pace leading to further development. These developments are a working process that is happening with students across the globe.

From the research findings it was found that students without exposure to ICT usage in their English classes before they joined university possessed an unbiased attitude toward ICT; they started experienced ICT as a new item as part of their course requirement without knowing if that would be helpful or not—and eventually discovered ICT as a great tool for facilitating their motivation and approach toward English language learning. In contrast, students who had exposure to ICT prior to their university classrooms possessed this expectation of experiencing ICT-aided English language classroom as their previous experience with ICT in English classes at schools were very positive.

The findings also prove that every tertiary level educational institution needs to have well-structured learning support while integrating technology in their language courses and training. This study can also be taken as a recommendation for future language instructors to understand that training teachers' ICT skills is crucial in preparing the teachers to handle challenges that can occur while integrating technology in the classroom. It should also be taken into consideration that there is a strong correlation between the students' learning and their learning environment. Hence, a classroom that is well equipped with ICT has a more positive impact on the students learning process.

5.2 Recommendations

ICT has now become a part of the teaching and learning arena no matter what the geographical location is. Accordingly, with proper utilization of technology in academia, there is a great potential in developing learners' learning and overall performance. This can

only be achieved with both the parties cooperating in the educational field, as it falls upon the responsibility of the teachers to encourage students' learning with whatever means, whether with ICT or without it.

With ICT in the picture, education can now be all the more dynamic and interesting as the instructors have the means to get students involved with lessons that requires collaborative work through ICT in teaching can bring in newer ways to enable the teaching and learning process to be more motivating as these days there are a number of tech-tools and applications that can make a significant impact making the learning process more interesting.

Among the innovations that the teachers can implement with the use of ICT is that they can use online platforms for assignments as a way to open communication with the students. This will help create an online community where the students will feel at ease to ask questions as well as share their ideas and opinions about any given topic while clarifying queries that students who are more introverted may feel during classroom question and answer sessions. The teacher can then use the information that they get from the online platforms to gather data and understanding about each of their students. By assigning students to work on lessons online, the teachers can also save up class time and utilize the class time more efficiently. Based on this study, future researchers should further try to undertake more researches on this field to highlight the benefits and challenges of having a combination of ICT with approaches that place more focus on students learning that is more dynamic. More research on the effect that ICT has on learners learning process will open new areas for suggestion in the use of ICT by educators.

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Appendix 1

Written consent for participants

Research topic: **Impact of ICT on undergraduate English students with and without prior ICT exposure**

Dear Participant,

I will highly appreciate you volunteering to take the time from your busy schedule to be a part of my academic research paper. The following interview that we are about to do is to get feedback from your own personal experiences of having technological materials or ICT in your English language courses and how it affects your learning process.

Kindly be informed that your personal information will not be mentioned at any place of this study and will be kept strictly confidential to uphold ethics in this research.

I have provided my contact information below in case you may have questions regarding the use of your information in my research.

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Appendix 2

Open-ended questions for undergraduate students

1. What types of ICT materials are used in your English language classes?

2. Did you have any exposure to ICT in your English classes before coming to the university? If yes, then how?

3. Do you think that the use of ICT in your classroom has increased your attitude positively towards learning English? Why or why not?

4. Do you think that the use of ICT in your classroom has increased your motivation towards learning English? Why or why not?

5. Do you require doing any assignments at home using ICT?

6. Do you face any challenges with ICT when learning English? If yes, what are those?

7. How far are you happy with your teacher's role in dealing with ICT in the classroom?

8. Briefly mention your overall opinion regarding your experience with ICT in your English classroom.

Appendix 3

Open-ended questions for English teachers

1. What types of ICT materials do you use in your English language classes?
2. What are the skills you seek to develop in the students through the use of ICT?
3. Do you think that the use of ICT has increased your students' attitude positively towards learning English? Why or why not?
4. Do you think that the use of ICT has increased your students' motivation towards learning English? Why or why not?
5. Do your students require doing any assignments at home using ICT?
6. Do you face any challenges with ICT while teaching English? If yes, what are those?
7. In case your students face any challenges, how to do you assist them?
8. How far are you satisfied with your role in dealing with ICT in the classroom?

Appendix 4

Close-ended questions for English teachers

(Please tick mark the options that best suits to you)

1. Do you use ICT during teaching English?

A. Most of the time

B. Not always

C. Moderately

D. Substantially

2. What are the ICT materials that you use to teach in English language classes? There can be more than one choice.

A. PC / Laptop

B. Projector

C. Sound System

D. Virtual Remote

3. Do you think the use of ICT in your classroom has increased your students' attitude positively towards having ICT to assist in learning English?

A. Most of the time

B. Not really

C. Moderately

D. Substantially

4. Do you think that the use of ICT in your classroom has increased the students' motivation towards learning English?

A. Yes

B. Not really

C. Moderately

D. Substantially

5. Do your students require doing any assignments at home using ICT?

A. Yes

B. No

6. Do you face any challenges with ICT while teaching English?

A. Yes

B. To some extent

C. No

7. Do you feel satisfied with your role in dealing with ICT in the classroom?

A. Yes

B. To some extent

C. No

8. What percentage of ICT usage in the classroom do you prefer as a teacher in overall terms?

    A. 100% Teacher centered (i.e. no ICT use during class)

    B. 50% Teacher, 50% ICT

    C. 25% Teacher, 75% ICT

    D. 75% Teacher, 25% ICT

    E. 100% ICT (i.e. teacher teaches class through video)

Appendix 5

Close-ended Questions for students

(Please tick mark the options that best suits to you)

1. What are the ICT materials that are used in your English language classes? Tick those that are used in your English classes.

    A. PC / Laptop

    B. Projector

    C. Sound System

    D. Virtual Remote

2. Did you have any exposure to ICT in your English classes before coming to the university?

    A. Yes

    B. No

3. Do you think the use of ICT in your classroom has increased your attitude positively towards having ICT to assist in learning English?

    A. Yes

    B. Not really

    C. Moderately

    D. Substantially

4. Do you think that the use of ICT in your classroom has increased your motivation towards learning English?

 A. Yes

 B. Not really

 C. Moderately

 D. Substantially

5. Do you require doing any assignments at home using ICT?

 A. Yes

 B. No

6. Do you face any challenges with having ICT for learning English in the classroom?

 A. Yes

 B. To some extent

 C. No

7. What percentage do you prefer the role of the teacher should be concerning the use of ICT in the classroom?

 A. 100% Teacher centered (i.e. no ICT use during class)

 B. 50% Teacher, 50% ICT

 C. 25% Teacher, 75% ICT

 D. 75% Teacher, 25% ICT

 E. 100% ICT (i.e. teacher teaches class through video)

Appendix 6

FGD question:

Briefly mention your overall opinion regarding your experience with ICT in your English classroom. (You are free to express any kind of thoughts).