



Problems, Challenges and Prospects In Integrating ICT In English Language Teaching: Bangladesh Perspective

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Abstract. *This research paper explores the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) within the context of Bangladesh. The study delves into the various problems and challenges that educators face while incorporating ICT tools into ELT practices. It examines factors such as limited access to technology, inadequate digital literacy among teachers and students, and infrastructural constraints. The paper also highlights the potential benefits and prospects of utilizing ICT in ELT, including enhanced engagement, interactive learning opportunities, and exposure to authentic language resources. Drawing on qualitative data, the research aims to provide insights into the current status of ICT integration in ELT, shedding light on both barriers and opportunities. This analysis offers recommendations for addressing challenges and maximizing the benefits of ICT integration, thereby contributing to the improvement of English language education in Bangladesh's educational landscape.*

Keywords: *English Language Teaching (ELT), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Integration, problems, challenges, prospects.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an integral component of modern education systems worldwide. This trend is particularly relevant in the domain of English Language Teaching (ELT), where the use of digital tools and resources has the potential to revolutionize traditional teaching methods and enhance language learning outcomes. Within the context of Bangladesh, a country characterized by a growing interest in English proficiency due to its global significance, the integration of ICT in ELT presents both promising prospects and daunting challenges.

The intersection of ICT and ELT offers numerous benefits. Digital platforms provide access to a plenty of authentic language resources, such as online articles, videos, podcasts, and language learning apps, which can diversify learning content and make language learning more engaging. Additionally, the interactive nature of ICT tools facilitates active participation, self-directed learning, and instant feedback, contributing to a more learner-centered approach. Furthermore, the incorporation of technology in ELT can foster global connections, allowing students to communicate with English speakers from around the world and thereby improve their language skills in authentic contexts.

However, the journey towards effective integration of ICT in ELT in Bangladesh is rife with challenges. Limited access to technology, particularly in rural areas, poses a significant barrier to realizing the full potential of digital resources. Furthermore, teachers often lack the necessary training to effectively utilize ICT tools, inhibiting their ability to create engaging and pedagogically sound learning experiences. The digital divide, characterized by unequal access to technology based on socioeconomic disparities, further exacerbates these challenges, potentially leaving marginalized groups at a disadvantage.

This research paper delves into the complications of integrating ICT in English Language Teaching in Bangladesh. By examining the problems, challenges, and prospects associated with this endeavor, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved and offer insights into potential strategies to overcome obstacles and leverage the benefits of technology in enhancing English language proficiency in the country.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) in the context of Bangladesh presents a multifaceted challenge that demands careful examination. Despite the potential benefits that technology can offer to enhance language instruction and learning experiences, the process of seamlessly integrating ICT tools into the ELT curriculum faces significant obstacles and complexities. This study aims to address the following problems and challenges:

1. **Technological Barriers and Access Disparities:** Bangladesh's educational landscape is marked by varying degrees of technological infrastructure and access to digital resources. Many educational institutions, particularly in rural areas, lack the necessary hardware, software, and reliable internet connectivity to effectively integrate ICT tools into the ELT curriculum. This digital divide hampers the equitable implementation of technology-enhanced learning experiences and impedes the potential for comprehensive skill development.
2. **Pedagogical Hesitations and Resistance:** The integration of ICT in ELT requires a shift in pedagogical paradigms, encouraging educators to embrace innovative teaching methods that leverage technology. However, traditional teaching approaches, a lack of digital literacy among educators, and concerns about the effectiveness of technology-mediated instruction may lead to resistance and hesitations among educators. This resistance can hinder the adoption of ICT tools and inhibit their optimal utilization.

3. **Teacher Professional Development:** Effective integration of ICT requires educators to possess the necessary digital skills and competencies. However, the provision of comprehensive and ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to acquire these skills is often lacking. Without adequate training, educators may struggle to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices.

By elucidating these problems and challenges, this study seeks to illuminate the barriers that hinder the successful integration of ICT in ELT within Bangladesh. Through a comprehensive exploration of these challenges, the research aims to identify strategies, recommendations, and insights that can guide educators, institutions, and policymakers toward mitigating obstacles and enhancing the prospects of integrating ICT in English Language Teaching for more effective language instruction.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What is the attitude of the teachers of Bangladesh about integrating ICT in their ELT classroom practice?
2. What are the challenges of the integration of ICT in ELT classroom from teacher's perspective?

These research questions serve as a starting point for investigation into the integration of ICT in English Language Teaching in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past few years, there has been a notable surge in the incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) within the realm of education, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT). The adoption of ICT tools and resources in ELT holds promise for enriching language learning experiences, promoting active engagement, and bridging the disparity between conventional teaching methodologies and the evolving needs of the digital era.

Kachru (1985) emphasized the importance of recognizing the varieties of English spoken around the world, categorizing them as Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle. The inner circle indicates the countries where English is the first language, i.e. England, the USA, Canada, Australia. The outer circle refers to the countries where English is widely used and in many cases as the second language, i.e. India, Bangladesh. The last one is the expanding circle where English is learnt as a foreign language. For example, when people learn English in Japanese, it is considered as a foreign language. Looking into the circles, we find

Bangladesh into the outer circle. In the context of Bangladesh, where English is not officially the second language, it is a mandatory subject in schools from class 1 to 12, the integration of ICT in ELT poses both opportunities and challenges.

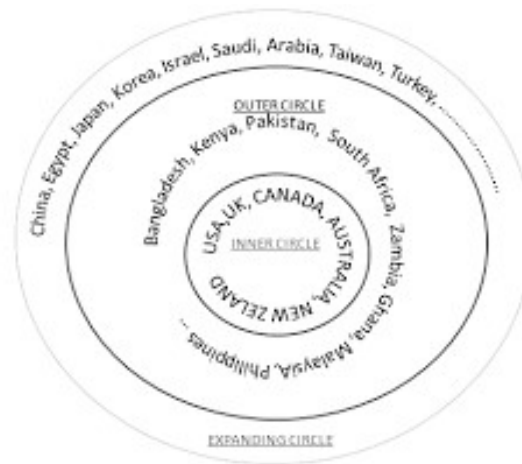


Figure: Concentric circle model (Adapted from Kachru (1997))

One of the key challenges of integrating ICT in ELT in Bangladesh is the digital divide. Despite advancements in technology, there is still unequal access to digital resources among students, teachers, and schools. This divide can exacerbate educational inequalities and hinder the effective implementation of ICT-based teaching strategies (Smith, 2007).

Additionally, the use of ICT tools requires a shift in teaching methodologies and pedagogical approaches. Traditional teaching methods might not align with the interactive and collaborative nature of ICT tools. Teachers need to adapt their teaching techniques to effectively leverage the potential of digital resources (Warschauer, 2006).

Furthermore, the integration of ICT in ELT requires adequate training and professional development for teachers. Many educators in Bangladesh might not be familiar with the effective use of technology in the classroom. Adequate training is essential to empower teachers to confidently incorporate ICT tools while addressing their concerns and reservations (Levy, 2002).

Despite these challenges, the prospects of integrating ICT in ELT in Bangladesh are promising. ICT can provide authentic and up-to-date language materials, encourage autonomous learning, and facilitate real-world communication practice (Chapelle, 2001).

According to Zhao and Cziko (2001), three essential conditions influence teachers' adoption of ICT in their classrooms:

- i. Teachers must believe in the potential of technology.

ii. Teachers must perceive that there are no significant barriers or disruptions associated with technology use.

iii. Teachers must feel confident in their ability to control and effectively utilize technology.

Thus, teachers' beliefs and self-confidence play a significant role in determining whether they choose to incorporate ICT into their teaching practices. Given its potential to enhance the teaching and learning process, ICT has become a pivotal factor in education, motivating and engaging learners while facilitating quicker and enriched learning experiences.

ICT facilitates a transition from a teacher-centric to a learner-centric classroom by tailoring instructional strategies to meet the unique needs of individual learners. This empowerment of students fosters a sense of autonomy and responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, it is crucial to examine the factors that deter teachers from integrating ICT into their English language classrooms.

The integration of ICT in English Language Teaching in Bangladesh offers both challenges and prospects. Addressing issues such as the digital divide, pedagogical shifts, and teacher training is crucial to harness the potential benefits of technology in language education. As the field continues to evolve, careful consideration of these factors is essential to ensure that ICT integration enhances the quality of English language learning in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct this research, a quantitative approach was followed by the researcher. Twenty English teachers teaching in different universities in Bangladesh were randomly selected. A questionnaire was developed to record the problems, challenges and prospects of integrating ICT in ELT in Bangladesh. The questionnaire was divided in two major sections: one was to find out the Attitude towards ICT integrated ELT and the other one was to find Challenges of the integration of ICT in ELT classroom.

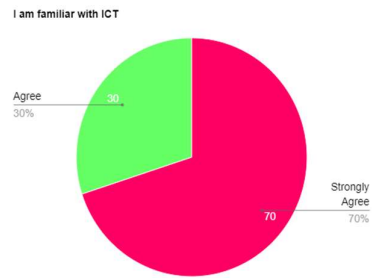
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The obtained data from two sets of questionnaires are analysed in order to study integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) within the context of Bangladesh to identify the problems and challenges faced by the teachers in the actual implementation of ICT in teaching learning process.

1. Attitude towards ICT integrated ELT.

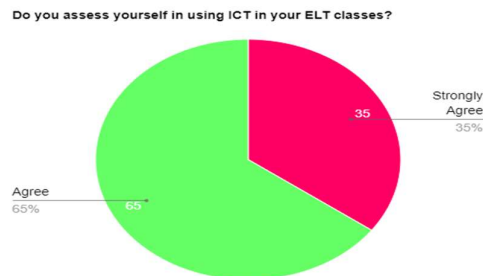
(i) I am familiar with ICT

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	14	6	0	0
Percentage	70	30	0	0



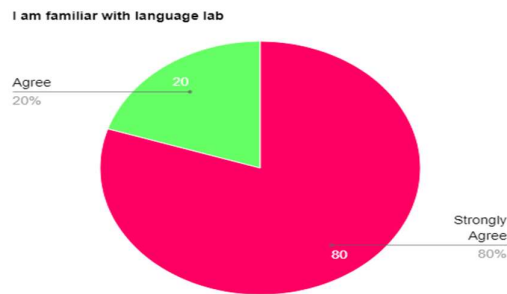
(ii) Do you assess yourself in using ICT in your ELT classes?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	7	13	0	0
Percentage	35	65	0	0



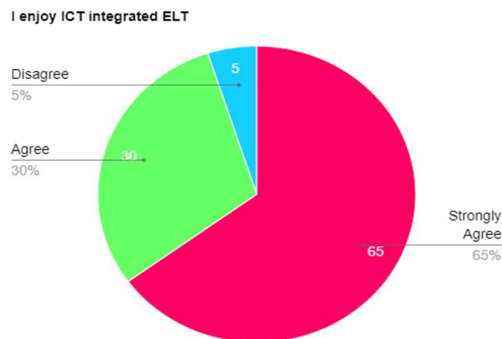
(iii) I am familiar with language lab

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	16	4	0	0
Percentage	80	20	0	0



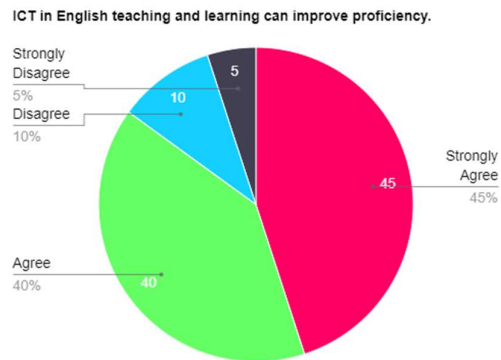
(iv) I enjoy ICT integrated ELT

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	13	6	1	0
Percentage	65	30	5	0



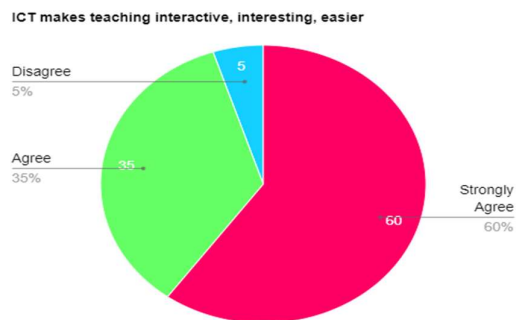
(v) **ICT in English teaching and learning can improve proficiency.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	9	8	2	1
Percentage	45	40	10	5



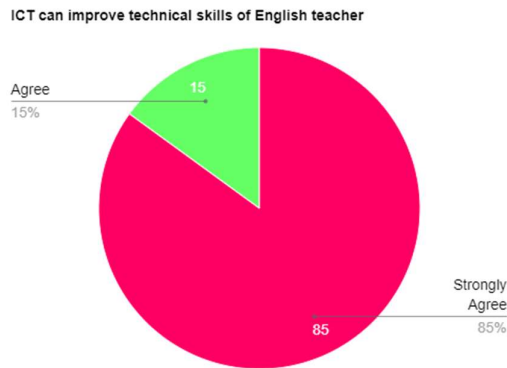
(vi) **ICT makes teaching interactive, interesting, easier**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	12	7	1	0
Percentage	60	35	5	0



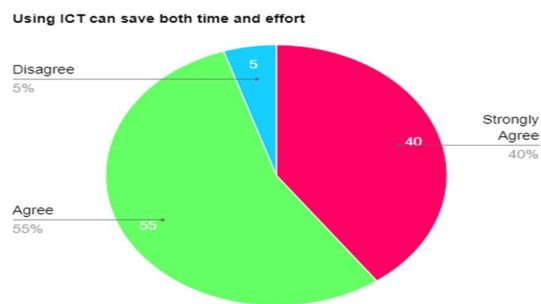
(vii) ICT can improve technical skills of English teacher

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	17	3	0	0
Percentage	85	15	0	0



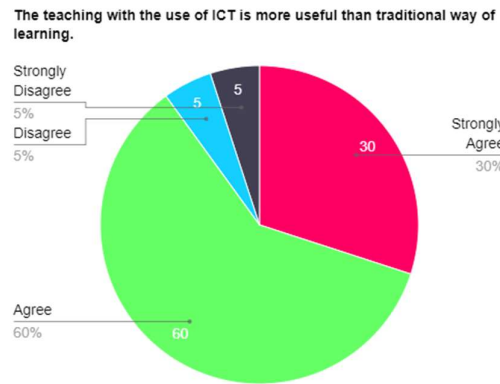
(viii) Using ICT can save both time and effort

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	8	11	1	0
Percentage	40	55	5	0



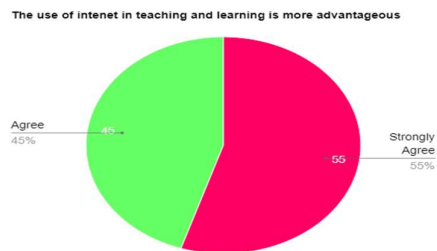
(ix) **The teaching with the use of ICT is more useful than traditional way of learning.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	6	12	1	1
Percentage	30	60	5	5



(x) **The use of internet in teaching and learning is more advantageous**

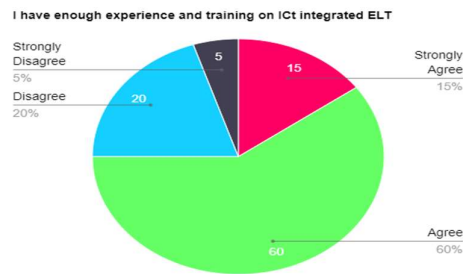
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	11	9	0	0
Percentage	55	45	0	0



2. Challenges of the integration of ICT in ELT classroom

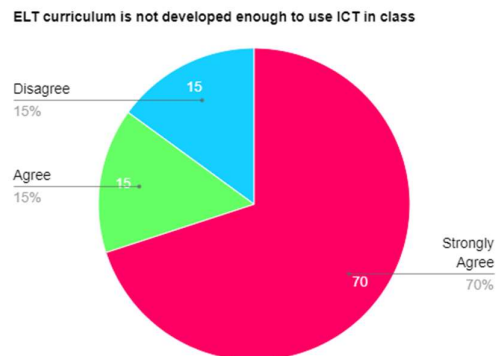
(i) I have enough experience and training on ICT integrated ELT

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	3	12	4	1
Percentage	15	60	20	5



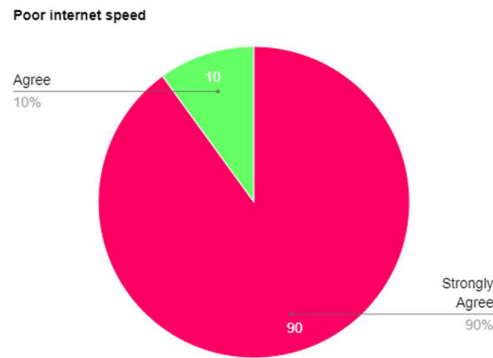
(ii) ELT curriculum is not developed enough to use ICT in class

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	14	3	3	0
Percentage	70	15	15	0



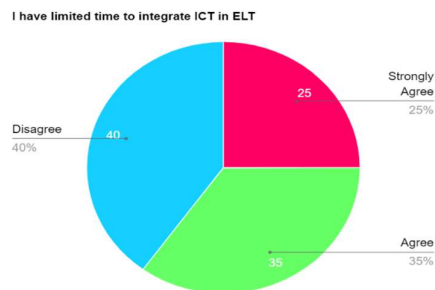
(iii) Poor internet speed

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	18	2	0	0
Percentage	90	10	0	0



(iv) I have limited time to integrate ICT in ELT

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In number	5	7	8	0
Percentage	25	35	40	0



FINDINGS

The data analysis reveals a generally positive attitude among English teachers in Bangladesh towards the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT). A substantial majority of respondents express familiarity with ICT, with 70% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. Moreover, a significant proportion of teachers, comprising 35% strongly agreeing and 65% agreeing, assess themselves as proficient in using ICT in ELT classes. This suggests a high level of confidence and comfort among educators in utilizing technology for instructional purposes.

Furthermore, the findings indicate a prevalent enthusiasm for ICT-integrated ELT, with a majority of respondents expressing enjoyment and preference for such teaching methods. Notably, a significant number of teachers believe in the efficacy of ICT in enhancing proficiency and technical skills, with 85% strongly agreeing that ICT can improve the technical skills of English teachers. Additionally, the majority perceives ICT as a time-saving tool and acknowledges its advantages in making teaching more interactive, interesting, and efficient.

However, despite the positive attitudes towards ICT integration, the data also highlights several challenges faced by educators in the implementation of ICT in ELT classrooms. A notable concern is the perceived inadequacy of training and experience in ICT-integrated ELT, with only 15% strongly agreeing and 60% agreeing that they have sufficient experience and training. This underscores the importance of professional development initiatives to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively utilize ICT in their teaching practices.

Moreover, the findings reveal significant hurdles related to infrastructure and curriculum development. The majority of respondents believe that the ELT curriculum is not sufficiently developed to incorporate ICT, while poor internet speed poses a significant challenge for effective ICT integration. Additionally, time constraints emerge as a key obstacle, with a notable proportion of teachers perceiving limited time for integrating ICT in ELT as a significant challenge.

In conclusion, while English teachers in Bangladesh exhibit a positive attitude towards ICT-integrated ELT, there is a pressing need to address challenges related to training, curriculum development, infrastructure, and time constraints. Addressing these challenges will be instrumental in facilitating the effective integration of ICT in ELT classrooms, ultimately enhancing the quality of English language education in Bangladesh.

LIMITATIONS

- In general, the accuracy of the respondents' responses determines the findings of surveys.
- Although there are thousands of ELT teachers, our research relies on some of the selected teachers.

CONCLUSION

This research sheds light on the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching (ELT) within Bangladesh, revealing a positive outlook among educators despite significant hurdles. The study underscores the enthusiasm among English teachers for incorporating ICT tools into their teaching practices, recognizing the potential benefits such as improved proficiency, enhanced technical skills, and greater teaching efficacy. However, the research also highlights persistent challenges including limited training, curriculum gaps, connectivity issues, and time constraints, emphasizing the pressing need for comprehensive solutions. To fully harness the potential of ICT in ELT, concerted efforts are required to address these challenges through tailored professional development programs, curriculum enhancements, and infrastructure upgrades. Ultimately, by overcoming these obstacles and capitalizing on the opportunities presented by ICT, stakeholders can pave the way for a more inclusive, engaging, and effective English language learning environment in Bangladesh.

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