Exploring EFL university lecturers' perceptions of benefits and challenges of using Audio-visual Aids

Dinh Thanh Hung[1*]

[1] Tay Do University, Can Tho City, Vietnam
[*]Corresponding author's email: dthung@tdu.edu.vn
[*] https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5764-8291
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ABSTRACT

Keywords:
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This descriptive quantitative study aims to examine how university lecturers think about employing audiovisual materials in terms of the benefits and challenges that they experienced in their EFL classes. The data was gathered from 155 English lecturers at universities in the Mekong Delta via a questionnaire that included 35 closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. The study's findings demonstrated that participants' attitudes about using audiovisual aids in their EFL classrooms are overwhelmingly favorable. These educators concurred that using audiovisual aids during class not only makes their teaching easier but also benefits students' language skills development and English vocabulary growth thanks to the engaging, interactive qualities of instructional materials. The findings also show that audiovisual assistance will be challenging when technological equipment is insufficient. To improve the effectiveness of their teaching, lecturers must also keep up with technology advancements and create lesson plans that incorporate audiovisual materials.

Introduction

According to Prensky (2001), "Today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors." The students, also known as the students of the twenty-first century, do not acquire knowledge in the same way that their teachers did when they were students. Therefore, teachers need technology that is appropriate for the teaching-learning environment. Technology has been incorporated as one of the key elements that might aid students in learning the language more efficiently in order to make it a success. As technology has advanced, new tools have been introduced into the study of languages.

These days, learners are encouraged to learn the target language by using a variety of audiovisual tools, like YouTube, since they are afraid to speak, afraid of wrong pronunciation,

useful vocabulary, and afraid of making grammar mistakes (Dinh, 2023). One of the finest approaches to do research on raising the language skills of English language learners with lesser competence is by using this most recent method.

A range of media and visual presentation techniques can be helpful for language learners (Wright, 1976). In other words, all audiovisual materials can aid in language learning if used correctly and in the right situations. While both the teacher and the student use their eyes and hearing during the teaching and learning process, learning begins with the eyes. Enabling virtual connection with language speakers via aural and visual means unquestionably aids in the understanding of a distinct culture (River, 1981).

It is simple to see how audiovisual aids can be applied effectively to teach and learn English. It is crucial to see how teachers reacted to this implementation in light of the technological integration strategy, a contemporary education trend. Therefore, this study aims to assess how university teachers view the advantages and implementation difficulties of employing audiovisual aids in EFL lectures.

Literature review

Audiovisual aids

Nowadays, it is impossible to imagine a teaching process without hi-techs and various audiovisual aids (Barseghyan, 2014). Audiovisual aids are instructional tools that are utilized in the teaching-learning process to enhance learning, simplify topics, and keep students' attention. Models, charts, film strips, radios, flip charts, televisions, and so on. are examples of teaching aids. In essence, all of these titles refer to the same advantage, which is that audiovisual materials are regularly employed by teachers, mentors, guides, facilitators, and mentors to enhance their verbal talent, leading to improved learning and constant focus, clarity, and curiosity on the part of students. Audiovisual aids are a potent tool that "invests the past with an air of reality." Through audiovisual aids, the students gain practical experience that concentrates their attention and helps them comprehend historical events. They appeal to the intellect by engaging the visual and aural senses (Jain, 2004). The purpose of audiovisual materials is to improve the teacher's capacity to deliver the lesson in a way that is effective, understandable, and simple for the students. Audiovisual resources help to learn to stay since children use numerous senses. It is crucial to raise awareness among educators, legislators, and school administrators about the value of promoting the use of audiovisual materials as a main teaching strategy in a curriculum.

Benefits of using audiovisual aids in EFL classrooms

Despite being a common trend among ELT practitioners, the use of these aids for language instruction has not received adequate research, particularly in the context of the Mekong Delta. A study on the efficiency of audiovisual aids in ELT in the context of Saudi Arabia was conducted by Mathew and Alidmat (2013). The authors assert that when language teachers are obliged to rely only on textbooks for language input, "teaching and learning become monotonous." In their study, they investigated the advantages of audiovisual teaching aids for

language instructors in undergraduate EFL courses. They learned that the results of their study suggest that both teachers and students benefit when audiovisual aids are used in language instruction. Both parties concur that it increases efficacy and intrigue.

Ivers and Baron (2002) claim that audiovisual instruction allows for the communication of knowledge in various methods and allows students to express their opinions to others. Additionally, it provides students with a channel of communication as well as new insights on how to gather and evaluate data. According to Reddy (2008), audiovisual education involves the use of interactive tools like radios, televisions, charts, posters, and models, as well as field trips and other activities.

Teachers can significantly alter both the classroom environment and the way they teach by using audiovisual aids. Teachers can communicate a topic both vocally and visually by employing audiovisual aids in the classroom, which is very beneficial for the students to pay more attention during the lecture. They are able to relate verbal and nonverbal communication as well as abstract and concrete problems. The learners may have trouble understanding the material, and they may also have trouble understanding what the teacher is going to say. However, teachers can improve their students' understanding by utilizing a variety of visual aids. Students can readily understand the material if the verbal and visual components are provided together. According to Mayer (2001), learning accelerates when instruction is offered in class utilizing both words and visuals.

Potential challenges of utilizing audiovisual aids in classrooms

Although audiovisual aids assist language teachers in their instruction, this does not mean that they are without drawbacks. Ineffective audiovisual material selection might occasionally be useless. The main drawbacks, according to Cakir (2006), are expense, inconvenience, upkeep, and, in certain circumstances, a fear of technology. Additionally, the quality of the copies or self-produced materials, as well as the sound and picture, might not be perfect. Moreover, there is a lack of training to create lesson content that integrates technological applications, as well as technical issues that have an impact on the teaching and learning process (Vo & Le, 2023). Sahin (2016) claimed the challenges encountered in the use of audiovisual aids are concluded to arise from curriculum design, technical constraints, and video selection. Otherwise, the students find it monotonous and pointless. Therefore, there are a few things to think about while using audiovisual materials in the classroom. The goal cannot be achieved if the materials are not carefully chosen. The linguistic level of the audio or video may not always be suitable for learners. As a result, they are unable to understand the materials, which may cause a significant level of worry in the students. Additionally, it might be very challenging for university-level students to locate audiovisual resources at times. The audiovisual aids may mislead and confuse students if they are unrelated to the topic. Because of this, educators must choose their students' audiovisual materials carefully.

Research Questions

To fulfill the target of this study, a survey was seeking to find out the answer to this research question:

What are teachers' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using audiovisual aids in EFL classrooms at universities in the Mekong Delta?

Methods

In order to understand how university lecturer thinks about the use of audiovisual aids in EFL classes and any challenges they may encounter, the study used a descriptive quantitative approach to collect data from 155 participants using 35 Likert scale items in the form of an online questionnaire. Since it is believed to be objective, can be used to a huge population, and is useful when a researcher wishes to determine the quantity or frequency of a phenomenon, the quantitative approach was chosen (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2006).

The participants were 155 lecturers from 11 universities in the Mekong Delta, with approximately 55% of them being female and 45% of them being male. The lecturers voluntarily participated in the research as they acknowledged having audiovisual material resources and using them frequently in their teaching procedure with the assistance of the Dean's Committee.

Results and discussions

The mean score of four clusters, necessity, efficacy, applicability, and convenience, was subjected to a descriptive statistics test. Table 1 displays the teachers' opinions about the advantages of using audiovisuals for teaching English. According to the study's participants, who gave audiovisual aids mean scores of M=4.09 and M=4.03, respectively, they were seen as both extremely necessary and effective in English teaching methods. Additionally, other characteristics of audiovisual aids, such as their utility and applicability in language teaching, were viewed favorably. The average scores varied from 3.89 to 3.98.

Table 1. Lecturers' perceptions towards the beneficial factors of audiovisual aids in (N=155)

	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Necessity	3.00	5.00	4.0910	.51736
Utility	2.90	5.00	3.9865	.35735
Applicability	3.00	4.88	3.8976	.35876
Efficiency	3.00	5.00	4.0329	.37080

Necessity

Table 2 displays the results for need. With mean ratings of M=4.04 and M=4.08, respectively, the analysis's findings demonstrate that teachers strongly value the regular use of audiovisual aids and the necessity of using them in English language teaching procedures. Teachers strongly agree that employing audiovisual aids in the teaching of English is beneficial in both ways.

Table 2. The necessity of using audiovisual aids in EFL classrooms (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q1: Applying audiovisual aids in teaching English is necessary.	3	5	4.04	.728
Q19: English lecturers should often use audiovisual aids in teaching periods.	3	5	4.08	.461

It is clear that information technology has improved the existing environment for teaching foreign languages. With important additional information, audiovisual aids make teaching and learning more engaging and understandable. The qualities of audiovisual aids also assist teachers and students in communicating more effectively during teaching and learning.

Efficiency

Table 3 presents the results regarding efficiency. Ten items were used to examine instructors' impressions of the efficiency of employing audiovisual aids, and the results show that teachers had a very favorable opinion of the benefits of audiovisual-based sessions in English instruction. Innitially, students' motivation to study is increased when audiovisual aids are included in language instruction (M=4.12). Moreover, the audiovisual components of educational materials also hold the students' attention pretty well (M = 4.07). These educators also concurred that audiovisual features offer realistic materials and have positive impacts on language learning (M=4.09) and that the functions of audiovisual aids can attract students' attention during sessions (M=4.02).

Table 3. The efficiency of using audiovisual aids in EFL classrooms (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q2: The functions of audiovisual aids can engage learner's attention in the lessons	3	5	4.02	.604
Q3: Lessons taught with audiovisual aids can make the classroom atmosphere more interesting.	3	5	4.06	.705
Q4: Using audiovisual aids can increase learners' retention of the contents.	1	5	3.66	.847
Q13: Audiovisual aids provide various applications to teach vividly.	2	5	3.77	.818
Q20: Students are excited to learn with audiovisual aids	2	5	3.78	.875
Q21: Students are excited with audiovisual features in instructional materials	3	5	4.07	.512
Q22: Using audiovisual aids makes students learn actively.	2	5	4.07	.604
Q23: The authentic materials that audiovisual aids provide have a positive impact on language learning.	3	5	4.09	.409
Q24: Students' motivation to study increased when audiovisual aids are included in language instruction..	2	5	4.12	.613
Q25: The participation of students increases when audiovisual aids are used in language instruction.	3	5	4.08	.603

It may be concluded that the participants enjoyed (highly agreed) the effectiveness of audiovisual aids in encouraging pupils to study, creating enthusiasm, enhancing interaction, and actively and successfully picking up the target language.

Applicability

The results for applicability are displayed in Table 4. The results of the investigation show how much teachers respect the requirements for employing audiovisual aids in listening (M=4,15), vocabulary (M=4,12), and phonetic instruction (M=4,04). There was unanimous agreement on how these criteria should be evaluated. In contrast to other teaching tools, audiovisual aids are made with a variety of multimedia information, such as pictures, annotations, audio, video, games, simulation experiments, guilds, voice recordings, and spelling, to improve learning and let teachers assess their own students' degree of knowledge acquisition. According to educators, using audiovisual tools to teach vocabulary, phonetics, and listening skills is highly effective.

Table 4. The applicability of audiovisual aids in EFL classrooms (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q5: Audiovisual aids can be used to teach all language skills and knowledge.	3	5	4.01	.592
Q6: Audiovisual aids are used most effectively in teaching *listening*.	3	5	4.15	.722
Q7: Audiovisual aids are used most effectively in teaching *speaking*.	2	5	3.68	.634
Q8: Audiovisual aids are used most effectively in teaching *reading*.	3	5	3.62	.584
Q9: Audiovisual aids are used most effectively in teaching *writing*.	2	5	3.61	.706
Q10: Audiovisual aids are used most effectively in teaching *vocabulary*.	3	5	4.12	.596
Q11: Audiovisual aids are used most effectively in teaching *grammar*.	2	5	3.54	.808
Q12: Audiovisual aids are used most effectively in teaching *pronunciation*.	3	5	4.04	.468

Teachers also gave an average evaluation of the requirements for audiovisual aids in speaking, reading, writing, and grammar. Although communicative competency is the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language, teachers still believe that using audiovisual aids to teach speaking (M=3,68), reading (M=3,62), and writing (M=3,61) is ineffective. University students should also practice speaking and writing because audiovisual aids are not very good at these activities. In actuality, rather than using digital devices, teachers still need to assist learners with their speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Utility

Table 5 provides the outcomes for the utility of using audiovisual aids in EFL classrooms. The analytical findings show that teachers had a favorable perception of the practical requirements of audiovisual aids. For instance, the participants believed that audiovisual aids could save them time when preparing lesson plans (M = 4.06) because of the electronic tools' clear, vivid examples and illustrations, and according to the findings, using audiovisual aids when teaching can help teachers improve their delivery of material and foster a highly engaging learning environment. Teachers did not realize, however (M = 3.81), how effectively audiovisual aids can take the place of conventional teaching tools like chalkboards, flashcards, etc.

Table 5: The utility of using audiovisual aids in EFL classrooms (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q14: Audiovisual aids can adjust traditional teaching aids (chalk board, flash cards, ...)	1	5	3.81	.921
Q15: Teaching English with audiovisual aids is convenient.	3	5	4.07	.548
Q16: Audiovisual aids can help teacher save time to prepare teaching plan.	3	5	4.06	.523
Q17: Audiovisual aids can help teacher create activities more easily	3	5	4.15	.396
Q18: Examples and illustrations are shown clearly by audiovisual aids	3	5	4.07	.666

Challenging factors

External challenging factors

 Table 6 lists the outcomes of external challenges. The study's participants were in agreement that audiovisual aids could not be employed in the absence of digital equipment such as computers, monitors, projectors, etc. (M = 4.16), as well as in the absence of support from the school board and management levels (M = 4.06). Additionally, if the internet connection is unstable, audiovisual assistance cannot be used (M = 4.01). In order to employ ICT in foreign language teaching more successfully, EFL classrooms must be outfitted with projectors and sound systems, according to the rejuvenation of learner-centered teaching approaches. University management support and adequate material facilities are essential to increase the use and efficacy of audiovisual aids in EFL classes.

Table 6. The *external challenges* of audiovisual aids use in EFL classrooms (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q26: In case of digital devices (a computer, screen, or projector) are insufficient, audiovisual aids cannot be used.	2	5	4.16	.624
Q27: Audiovisual aids can not be used in case internet connection is not stable.	3	5	4.01	.710
Q28: Audiovisual aids can not be applied in the case of a lack of administrative support.	3	5	4.06	.489
Q29: Audiovisual aids cannot be applied easily in traditional classes	2	5	3.47	.569
Q30: Audiovisual aids cannot be applied in overcrowded classes.	2	5	3.45	.546

Nevertheless, teachers acknowledged that in traditional classes (M = 3.47) and in classes with a high student enrollment (M = 3.45), audiovisual aids can still be employed without issues. As a result, in any setting, the courses can be delivered directly to students via electronic learning tools. As a result, the availability of big classrooms does not pose a significant obstacle to the use of audiovisual aids.

Internal challenging factors

Table 7 lists the outcomes of internal difficulties. According to the analytical findings, teachers truly struggle with IT abilities while utilizing audiovisual aids (M = 4.15), which makes them uneasy about the range of features in electronic teaching materials (M = 4.06). In order to properly employ audiovisual aids, the participants overwhelmingly concurred that they must upgrade their technological skills (M = 4.05).

Table 7: The internal challenges of audiovisual aids use in EFL classrooms (N=155)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Q31: Lecturers may feel uneasy since the various ways that audiovisual aids can be used.	3	5	4.06	.329
Q32: Lecturers who lack IT abilities may encounter some challenges when using audiovisual aids.	2	5	4.15	.397
Q33: Lecturers must invest more money to get a user account or upgraded version.	2	4	3.46	.522
Q34: The preparation of lesson plans for teaching with audiovisual aids requires extra time from lecturers	2	4	3.79	.430
Q35: To employ audiovisual aids, lecturers must upgrade their technological abilities.	3	5	4.05	.342

When teaching English utilizing audiovisual aids, teachers obviously need to have some level of information technology (IT) expertise in addition to their professional credentials. When using audiovisual aids, this requirement decides whether the lecture will be successful. There are several limitations to ICT use in teaching and learning, though. To tackle the challenges that arise while employing audiovisual aids in the classroom, teachers must have a sufficient understanding of and experience with ICT.

Discussion

The main takeaway from this study's findings is how valuable audiovisual teaching and learning resources are. Here, it is clear how different approaches to teaching languages encourage the use of audiovisual aids. It has also been noted that language education is more engaging when teachers use a variety of audiovisual aids in EFL classes. When engaging audiovisual materials are used in the classroom, students are highly motivated and focused. Other academic research has found that audio visual aids can be used to enhance language skills, such as vocabulary and listening. This study examined the challenges of using audiovisual aids in language training based on previous studies. Based on the results of the aforementioned studies, a hypothesis that "language teaching becomes effective and dynamic by the use of different audiovisual materials" may be created. In an effort to come up with answers to the research questions that are supported by evidence from many studies (Sahin,2016; Barseghyan, 2014), this study has taken into account the findings and conclusions of the research.

Conclusion

It has been discovered that the participants believe that the lesson's contextualization is one of the greatest benefits of audiovisual aids. Using audiovisual resources, teachers can enhance the effectiveness of their classes and provide context. The visual aids and the teachings are simply correlated in the minds of the students. Furthermore, including pictures in the teachings has a lasting effect on the minds of the students. In their investigation, Mathew and Alidmat (2013) discovered comparable findings. They discovered that lessons may be made simple to understand by using audiovisual resources. Images that a student views on a screen are more readily understood and kept than detailed reading materials. According to the student, using audiovisual aids allowed students to retain information for a longer amount of time. The results of the study also demonstrate that the incorporation of audiovisual components motivates pupils and lessens their anxiety. These make the classroom more interactive and dynamic by bringing the outside world in. Both teachers and students who are taking language classes might benefit from using various audiovisual tools. Audiovisual aids also enhance the language teaching and learning process by motivating the students and boosting language skills, such as making the session engaging and fascinating, among other ways. If teachers can employ audiovisual aids effectively, language learning and teaching can be made more efficient.

Acknowledgments

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Biodata

I graduated from Dong Thap University with a bachelor's degree of English Teacher Education in 2016 and obtained a Master's Degree of Principles and Methods in English Language Education in 2020. I am working as an English lecturer at Tay Do University and studying for a PhD program in Theory and Methods of Teaching English at Tra Vinh University.