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Mutmainna, Munira

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Cloud Sharing and Web Tools in English Language Teaching in Bangladesh: Teachers' Attitudes

Munira Mutmainna[83]
Dhaka International University

Nowadays technology has become an inextricable part of our lives. The recent revolution in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) now offers broader choices and aspects for teaching and learning. Many earlier obstacles and learning or teaching barriers can now be overcome by the help of technology. Newer goals are being set to achieve in this era of technology enhanced learning. Cloud sharing is the use of technology to store, access and share various application using the cloud instead of the local server or local hard drive of one's computer. Using cloud sharing in education means using this technology in traditional teaching and learning environment, thereby benefiting both the teachers and the students. Cloud sharing applications provide an on-demand, convenient and user-friendly access to a usually vast storage of shared resources for the teachers as well as the students. In an English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, cloud sharing as well as other web tools can be used in various ways that can make the whole teaching-learning process more effective and interesting. This paper explains how cloud sharing can be integrated into an ESL/EFL class by giving a brief description of various cloud-sharing technologies that can be integrated into ESL/EFL teaching. This paper also talks about some other popular web tools that may play a significant role in ESL/EFL teaching and learning. It concludes by giving an overview of some of the teachers' opinions regarding the implementation of cloud sharing applications and other tools in ESL/EFL teaching-learning and what this implication entails.

Keywords: *ELT, ELL, ESL/EFL, cloud sharing, web tools, technology in education.*

Introduction

Using technology in education is nothing too novel in today's world. The growing popularity of web tools in an ESL/EFL classroom has given teaching and learning a new dimension. These tools are widely being used in the learning process in many educational institutions throughout the world. However, in spite of its' growing significance, the dependency on written assignments and paper resource materials in and outside the traditional classroom still lingers, especially in countries such as Bangladesh. Going through large amounts of texts and rigorous instructions only to submit one or a few written assignments and the teachers checking each of the scripts is most often than not a time and paper-consuming process that often renders the learning process void or ineffective. In such cases, the use of cloud sharing and other web tools can go a long way to ensure an effective teaching-learning environment.

Research Questions

The research probed into two questions:

1. How does cloud sharing along with other web tools influence EFL/ESL teaching?

[83] Correspondence should be addressed to Munira Mutmainna, E-mail: mutmainna.munira@gmail.com.

2. What is the attitude of the teachers in Bangladesh towards using cloud sharing and other tools in EFL/ESL teaching?

Literature Review

Several researches have taken place worldwide related to cloud sharing and using web tools in education. P. Molebash (1999) talked about how different technologies are creating different trends in education. As per Brandl (2002) and González-Lloret (2003), the internet is a helpful source for finding authentic materials. The internet offers the potential for an impressive increase in the usual learner-learner and teacher-learner interactions (Godwin-Jones, 2003; Salaberry, 2001). According to Murray and McPherson (2004), web applications have become a ubiquitous part of our lives. An incredible amount of users now communicates on the web through creating, sharing and recovering data (Warschauer and Grimes 2007; Lomicka & Lord, 2007). Studies conducted earlier reveal the imperative attitude to the acknowledgement and use of technology (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989; Liaw, 2002). B. H. Khan (2001) proposed a framework for web based learning. T. Laohajaratsang (2001) discussed web-based instruction in innovation for effective teaching and learning. Warschauer (1996) found that using the internet has a positive impact on students' motivation in a second-language learning classroom. R. Blake's research (2008) explains technology and foreign language learning in a digital classroom. El-Seoud, Ghenghesh, Seddiek, Nosseir, Taj-Eddin and El-Khouly (2013) describe the implementation of web-based education in Egyptian universities through cloud technologies. There have been several studies on the learners' outlook toward the Internet and e-learning (Colley & Comber, 2003; Tsai & Lin, 2004). Schneckenberg, Ehlers and Adelsberger (2011), in their case study, utilized cloud technology to improve instruction for business graduate students. The advantages of using the cloud platform, as well as the downsides of cloud implementation are illustrated by Sultan (2010). Ming-ming, Le-hua, Cong, Wei-hong (2012) conducted a case study where the authors proposed the architecture of advantages provided by the cloud applications. These and many other studies show that cloud sharing and web tools have a great positive effect on education, and more specifically, ESL/EFL teaching, even though some also believe that digital technologies function more as a distraction rather than an aid (Traxler, 2010).

Cloud Sharing

The word "cloud" is used as a metaphor in the term 'cloud sharing'. According to Wikipedia, "Cloud storage is a model of data storage in which the digital data is stored in logical pools, the physical storage spans multiple servers (and often locations), and the physical environment is typically owned and managed by a hosting company. These cloud storage providers are responsible for keeping the data available and accessible, and the physical environment protected and running." Using cloud, one has the freedom of accessing a material anywhere at any time and sharing it with one or multiple people. Cloud sharing, in today's world, is giving a new dimension to how people communicate, share and learn from each other.

Following the theme of collaborative learning, cloud sharing facilities combined with other web tools can prove to become an effective and efficient practice in EFL/ESL teaching in educational institutions. There are many cloud storage services available nowadays. These services range from totally free ones to paid ones. This paper discusses some of the most prominent cloud sharing applications such as Google applications, Dropbox and OneDrive which, with or without other web tools, can prove to be quite beneficial for the whole teaching learning process.

Google Drive

Created by Google, Google Drive is a cloud sharing application that lets the user/s create, store and share a huge number of files. Precisely speaking, one can start off with 15GB of free cloud space. Launched in

2012, Google Drive encompasses some other Google applications such as Google Docs, Slides and Sheets. It is possible to work both online and offline and sync the files as per one's needs. These applications altogether enable the learners to work simultaneously. It is specially helpful where several students are to submit assignments to the teacher. The students have the opportunity to edit and rearrange their assignments since they are easily accessible. Even other students can be given the chance to see and comment on their classmates' assignments. The teachers and students can work collaboratively on any file at the same time because it can be updated in real time. Students can work as groups for presentations or projects using this application as per their convenience, even when they are physically apart from each other. Google, altogether, changes the way teachers and students communicate via the internet.

Dropbox

Dropbox is a web application that can be used to store, organize and share any content across various platforms. Similar to Google Drive, files can be stored in an online cloud and can be accessed anywhere given one has access to the Internet. It can be used as a personal storage as well as connecting and sharing platform for both students and teachers. As mentioned in their site, Dropbox is "a home for all your photos, docs, videos, and files. Anything you add to Dropbox will automatically show up on all your computers, phones and even the Dropbox website — so you can access your stuff from anywhere. Dropbox also makes it super easy to share with others, whether you're a student or professional, parent or grandparent. Even if you accidentally spill a latte on your laptop, have no fear! Relax knowing that your stuff is safe in Dropbox and will never be lost" (Dropbox, n.d.).It allows the students and teachers to access the files and work from anywhere trough mobile phones, tablets, laptops or computers. Using the application, teachers can easily share necessary files, notes and assignments with the students and thus avoid the hassle of mailing numerous amounts of files to each student individually. This online cloud allows students to create, access, store, share and retrieve any file at any time they need. Students who may have missed a class or lecture can access it if it is available in the cloud.

OneDrive

OneDrive, or previously known as SkyDrive, is also a file hosting and sharing application. Owned by Microsoft, this application allows the users to save, sync, access and share files using various devices. Similar to Google Drive, OneDrive users get a15GB of storage for free and can get more through a paid account. This application can be used in educational institutions to store thousands of files with secured and easy access to the teachers, students, administrators and even parents. The content saved and shared online can be accessed anywhere at any time, meaning that the teachers can create, manage, share and collect everything they need in one place and the students can access all the resources required for an assignment or a presentation at their individual convenience as well. Additionally, since it is an application by Microsoft, the users get automatic free access to web versions of Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Survey and OneNote, which means the users are able to create, collect and share class works and do other educational activities without using different versions of these applications.

Other Web Tools

Blogs

Blogging is one of the very recent web tools that has garnered popularity among the Internet users. According to a study (Ray and Hocutt, 2013), about 12 million adults maintain a blog and 57 million read blogs. Nowadays, blogs are becoming increasingly popular in the EFL (English as a Foreign Language)/ESL (English as a Second Language) teaching-learning context. Teachers can set up a blog and the whole class can participate without much hassle. Blogging introduces a new dimension to the whole teacher-student

interaction. A study done by Ellison and Wu (2008) suggests that college student may be more engaged in writing if they are given the opportunity to participate in writing for blogs. As per this study, a number of students found that blogs provided opportunity for meaningful engagement and interaction while helping to develop their own voice. Blogging inspires collaboration and students get the chance to learn from each other as well.

Podcasts

Podcasting is a quite new phenomenon on the Internet. It can still be considered as a relatively unfamiliar tool when it comes to the integration of web tools in teaching-learning contexts. The term "Podcast" originates from "POD" as in 'Personal On Demand' and "Broadcast" (Smythe and Neufeld, 2010). According to Pozzobon(2008), "A Podcast can be described as a regular audio or video program accessible via the Internet, which can be downloaded to the computer or a personal player, making it available to be listened or viewed whenever the user wants." According to a study of Bell, Cockburn, Wingkvist and Green (2007), there are approximately 10,000 different podcasts available on a variety of topics. Podcasts are quite easy to create and share. They can be syndicated and used with Really Simple Syndication, or also known a RSS and Atom technology, allowing the content pushed to the users or to be automatically downloadable (Dixon and Greeson 2006; Maag 2006).Podcasts can be more interesting to the learners and more likely to reflect the complexities of the language in real life situations than regular materials (Bell, 2005).Podcasts can be of different types (Stanely as quoted in Pozzobon, 2008) such as a. Authentic Podcast: For general people and suitable for advanced level learners; b. Teacher Podcast: Created by teachers in order to help students by providing what is not available elsewhere or something in the local context; c. Student Podcast: Produced by the learners, sometimes with the help of the teachers. Since nowadays people are more web-dependent, podcast files in their cloud-based formats may have a greater appeal to the learners than anything traditional.

As a cloud-based tool, podcasting has the ability to offer wonderful benefits to language learners, especially for speaking and listening. Similar to blogging, podcasting has no time constraints, meaning the learners can access the content and learn anywhere at any time.

Prezi

Prezi is a software company created in officially in 2009 by Hungarian creators Péter Árvai, Szabolcs Somlai-Fischer and Péter Halácsy. It is a cloud-based presentation software and storytelling application that is used to convey and share created ideas. It is similar to Microsoft PowerPoint in the sense that users can present information through Prezi. Unlike PowerPoint, however, Prezi primarily needs the internet to work, though there is an option to show the presentation offline once its completed online and downloaded. Prezi presentations are different than PowerPoint ones as they do not follow a traditional slideshow format. It is more free-flowing, having employed a Zooming User Interface or ZUI, in which the users are allowed to zoom in and out of the presentation media called the "Prezi Canvas". One of the major advantages of using Prezi is that it enables the teachers and learners to represent non-linear concepts in a visually engaging way. It can be used by both teachers and students and is quite appropriate for all ages. Moreover, it is mostly free. There is an option to make the Prezi presentations private if one has a paid account in it. Teaching and learning can gain a whole new dimension through Prezi as it provides a new technique drawing and maintaining learners' attention.

There are several benefits of using cloud sharing and other web tools in teaching and learning process. Some of the major benefits are:

Accessibility

One of the major perks of cloud sharing is its' wide accessibility. It is accessible at any time anywhere, and that too from a wide range of devices. A material originally shared using a desktop computer can be accessed and re-shared through mobile phones, tablets, laptops and so on.

Affordability

One of the biggest factors when using technology in education is the expense. Most of the time, better technology requires bigger price, which is a matter of concern for teachers or educational institutions. Cloud sharing is a service that requires a little or no cost to be paid. Another important factor is time. One of the primary reasons for using any technology in education is because it usually saves a lot of effort and time. Cloud sharing goes a long way to meet the teaching-learning needs within a reasonable amount of time.

Reliability

Cloud storages and the aforementioned tools are more reliable than any local storage or hardware system. The users also do not have to worry about sudden hardware failures and loss of data. If any file is deleted or lost from the local drive, it can be easily downloaded again if it is there in the cloud.

Little or No Upgrades

Unlike local storage or hardware that needs frequent upgrades, cloud storage and web tools in general do not require any such improvements. Everything is managed virtually and kept in an OTG (on-the-go) format. Applications like Google Drive do charge a little for upgraded and increased storage space but it is not compulsory to buy any in order to use the basic storage features.

Motivation

As it is quite user-friendly to share and access files stored in the cloud, it ultimately results in a large number of motivated users. Teachers are motivated because it requires a lot less time and saves the unnecessary efforts. Learners are motivated because of the easy-to-access create, edit and sharing options.

The Study

A study was conducted for the research to see what some of the teachers' perception was regarding the use of cloud sharing and web tools in language teaching. The subjects of the study were 12 language teachers from tertiary level. Their ages ranged from 25 to 40 with their teaching experience ranging from less than 2 years to more than 10 years. The study, conducted in the year 2016, employed a three-part questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire focused on getting the basic information of the participants and the second part used a multiple-choice questions using a four-point Likert-scale to find out their opinions and attitudes for using the internet in language teaching. The third part consisted of open-ended questions. The feedback from the questionnaire was then analyzed.

Findings and Discussion

The feedback from the teachers of the second section of the questionnaire is given in Table 1.Most of the teachers (83.33%) agreed that the internet can be used in traditional teaching. In answer to whether web tools can provide the class with useful learning materials, 78.33% of the teachers agreed that they can. 66.67% teachers agreed to the question that cloud sharing can contribute largely in the whole teaching-learning process. To the question of cloud sharing acting as an alternative to counseling classes, 41.67% of the teachers agreed. Regarding the question that it is easy to create and share files online for teaching and learning EFL/ESL, 66.67% of the teachers agreed. 58.33% of the teachers agreed that cloud sharing

and web tools encourage effective teacher-learner interaction. To answer whether the use of cloud sharing applications and web tools motivates the learners to learn collaboratively, 66.66% of the teachers agreed that they do. As to the use of web tools by the learners in order to learn English by themselves, 50% teachers showed their agreement. 58.33% of the teachers believed their using various interesting web tools like podcasts, blogs and Prezi presentations would result in more attention and participation from the students. As to whether these tools and applications can play the role of a second tutor for the students, 50% teachers showed their agreement. Majority of the teachers (83.34%) agreed that the teachers in our country need more training in using cloud sharing and web tools. 75% of the teachers believed that the teachers and students need more access to the web and cloud sharing tools. 75.33% of the teachers personally agreed that they either like or would like to use the web tools and cloud sharing applications in their classroom teaching as much as possible.

Disagreements in answers to some of the items were also found. 33.34% of the teachers disagreed that cloud sharing can contribute largely in the whole teaching-learning process. 58.33% did not agree that cloud sharing can be an effective alternative to real-life troubleshooting and counseling classes. In answering whether learners can learn to use web resources for learning English on their own, 50% of the teachers disagreed. Additionally, 50% of the teachers did not agree that the web tools and applications can play the role of a second tutor for the students. Of the total participants, 25% of the teachers disagreed that the teachers and students need more access to the web and cloud sharing tools.

Table-1
Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The internet can be used in traditional teaching.	0%	16.67%	25%	58.33%
2. Web tools can provide the class with useful learning materials.	0%	16.67%	8.33%	75%
3. Cloud sharing can contribute largely in the whole teaching-learning process.	16.67%	16.67%	50%	16.67%
4. Cloud sharing can be an effective alternative to real-life troubleshooting and counseling classes.	25%	33.33%	25%	16.67%
5. It's easy to create and share files online for teaching and learning EFL/ESL.	0%	33.33%	41.67%	25%
6. Cloud sharing and web tools encourage effective teacher-learner interaction.	16.67%	25%	50%	8.33%
7. The use of cloud sharing applications and web tools motivates the learners to learn collaboratively.	0%	33.33%	58.33%	8.33%
8. Learners can learn to use web resources for learning English on their own.	41.67%	8.33%	50%	0%
9. Using various interesting web tools like podcasts, blogs and Prezi presentations would result in more attention and participation from the students.	8.33%	33.33%	50%	8.33%
10. These tools and applications can play the role of a second tutor for the students.	16.67%	33.33%	50%	0%
11. Teachers in our country need more training in using cloud sharing and web tools.	0%	16.67%	41.67%	41.67%

12. Teachers and students need more access to the web and cloud sharing tools.	0%	25%	50%	25%
13. I like/ would like to use these tools and applications in my classroom teaching as much as possible.	25%	0%	58.33%	16.67%

The open ended questionnaire asked the teachers about the advantages and disadvantages of using web tools and cloud sharing in language teaching and learning. Among some of the advantages the teachers noted were flexibility, accessibility and motivated learning. Students can learn and share from anywhere with the help of these tools. The easy accessibility and innovative features of these tools and applications make learning and sharing more interesting. It helps bridge the teacher-student communication gap that often occurs in traditional teaching. Teachers can remotely instruct a class and assess their progress through the effective use of cloud sharing applications and other web tools. Teaching and learning resources can be conveniently found, shared and validated.

Some disadvantages were also mentioned by the teachers as a part of the open-ended questionnaire. These advantages were mostly related to implementing and using cloud sharing and web tools in ELT classes in Bangladeshi context. There are some very common issues like malicious threats of files being hacked or stolen in cloud sharing applications. Many web tools and cloud sharing applications tend to face technological vulnerabilities all of a sudden. Privacy becomes a very big matter of concern and no data or resource is safe in such situations. In the context of Bangladesh, another issue is accessibility. Though cloud sharing applications and web tools are easily accessible, they require an internet connection, something that is not always available to our teachers or learners. Sharing resources and giving assignments online becomes futile if majority cannot access the materials. Moreover, it is possible for the students to not be attentive enough and get distracted while using the web. Another disadvantage is since the teachers are not well-acquainted and well-trained to use the web tools and cloud sharing applications, any critical technical difficulty may render the teaching-learning process ineffective.

The study reflected a generally positive attitude of the teachers in using cloud sharing and other web tools in EFL/ ESL teaching. Majority of the teachers agreed that the internet can be used in teaching language and web tools can be a useful source for finding and creating learning materials. The teachers find it convenient to create and share files in the web for teaching EFL/ESL and believe that cloud sharing applications and web tools can create a collaborative learning environment for the learners. Most of the teachers seemed to agree on providing the teachers with more training so that they can successfully integrate cloud sharing applications and other web tools in EFL/ESL teaching.

Conclusion

The study aimed at finding out the influence of cloud sharing and other web tools in EFL/ ESL teaching. It also intended to observe the attitudes of the Bangladeshi teachers regarding the use of these sharing applications and tools in teaching and learning. From the findings of the study, it is evident that the teachers have generally positive views in regards to using cloud sharing along with other various web tools in English language teaching and learning. They believe that cloud sharing can have an important effect on teacher-learner interaction and collaborative learning. Additionally, the use of web tools can make learning and teaching motivating and impactful. However, there are some basic concerns to deal with when implementing these tools in language teaching. Issues like security breach, misusing the internet and file theft can be of big concern, specially in countries such as Bangladesh. Furthermore, the lack of ample training and getting teachers acquainted with such technology hinders the use of these tools and applications. Based on the findings, it can be asserted that the implementation of cloud sharing

and various web tools may be successful if the faculty as well as the authorities of an educational institution come forward together with a commitment to provide financial and moral support and sufficient access to necessary equipment required for an effective integration of cloud sharing applications and other web tools.

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Appendix

Please respond to all the sections of the questionnaire:

Section 1

Age:
Sex:
Teaching Experience:

1. Do you have internet access at home?
- Yes. - No
2. Do you have access to the Internet at home?
- Yes - No
3. Do you use the Internet in your classroom for teaching purposes?
- Yes - No
4. Do you use various web tools while preparing teaching materials?
- Yes - No

Section 2

Please indicate the level of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements, by circling the number that best represents your answer.

Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2
Agree = 3 Strongly Agree = 4

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The internet can be used in traditional teaching.	1	2	3	4

Web tools can provide the class with useful learning materials.	1	2	3	4
Cloud sharing can contribute largely in the whole teaching-learning process.	1	2	3	4
Cloud sharing can be an effective alternative to real-life troubleshooting and counseling classes.	1	2	3	4
It's easy to create and share files online for teaching and learning EFL/ESL.	1	2	3	4
Cloud sharing and web tools encourage effective teacher-learner interaction.	1	2	3	4
The use of cloud sharing applications and web tools motivates the learners to learn collaboratively.	1	2	3	4
Learners can learn to use web resources for learning English on their own.	1	2	3	4
Using various interesting web tools like podcasts, blogs and Prezi presentations would result in more attention and participation from the students.	1	2	3	4
These tools and applications can play the role of a second tutor for the students.	1	2	3	4
Teachers in our country need more training in using cloud sharing and web tools.	1	2	3	4
Teachers and students need more access to the web and cloud sharing tools.	1	2	3	4
I would like to use these tools and applications in my classroom teaching as much as possible.	1	2	3	4

Section 3:

Please answer the following questions:

a. What are your opinions on the advantages of using web tools and cloud sharing in language teaching-learning?

Ans:

b. What are your opinions on the disadvantages of using web tools and cloud sharing in language teaching-learning in Bangladesh?

Ans: