TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS TO TEACH ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL: ABBA PASCAL GIRLS' SCHOOL IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perception on the use of audiovisual materials to teach English speaking skill at Abba Pascal Girls' School, the only girls' school in Wolaita Zone. The subjects used for this study were six English teachers of grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. All of them were taken as participants without sampling due to their manageable number and the nature of the study. A descriptive research design was employed having the qualitative data collected through interview. The data were thematically organized, categorized and examined in the form of statement to understand the emerging patterns of responses. The results indicated that all English teachers of grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 at Abba Pascal Girls' School have positive perception on the use of audiovisual materials to teach English speaking skill.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated English teachers have no problem in the understanding the concept of audiovisual materials and they have positive attitude towards these materials. The problem is the defects in the practical use of these materials in actual classrooms of English speaking skill.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language teaching is a complex process. It needs in-depth follow up from teachers in order to make the learners informed and have a practice of what they learn. In this complex process of language teaching, technology plays a critical role to practically transfer scientific knowledge to the learners using different machines. It is a fact that technology cannot be separated from the interaction of teaching and learning. i.e., teachers should select relevant technologies to their teaching-learning situations to help their learners learn better (Ismail, 2006). For example, when an English teacher teaches speaking skill, audiovisual materials make teaching and learning process more practical and interactive. Audiovisual materials aid language lessons more interesting and live. They play a vibrant role in taking the attention of students towards the teacher or the topic. These materials do have also a vital contribution in teaching and learning process of English speaking skill (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

The scholars like Dike (1993) and Singh (2005) conceptualize audiovisual materials differently due to their usage. According to Singh (2005) audiovisual materials are devices that increase individuals' English speaking skill by sight and sound. The same author added saying that audiovisual materials are instructional devices that are used in the classroom to encourage learning and make it easier and interesting. On the other hand, Dike (1993) defined audiovisual materials as those materials that do not depend solely upon reading to convey meaning. They may present information through the sense of hearing as in audio resources; sight as in visual resources or through a combination of both. According to Thamil (2007) audiovisual materials are devices that can be used to make the learning process more focused, realistic and dynamic. They are also materials by which learning process is encouraged and clarified (ibid).

Even though the aforementioned scholars defined audiovisual materials differently, they do have the same key points. All their definitions highlight the fact that audiovisual materials mean "exposure to real language" (Widdowson, 1990). According to Anzaku (2011) the term "audiovisual material" is commonly used to refer to instructional materials that are used to convey meaning without complete dependence upon verbal symbols or language. Undoubtedly, audiovisual materials are those instructional aides, which are used in the classroom to encourage teaching learning process of English speaking skill. On the other hand, according to Riri (2011) audiovisual materials are tools of record to improve speaking skills that are used for several times and more than others.

There are several types of audiovisual materials such as filmstrips, tape recorders, cartoons, flipcharts, slide projectors, video compact discs, multimedia, radios, maps, graphs, models, posters, pictures, flashcards, etc. that are effectively used for teaching speaking skill. Audiovisual materials have various advantages. They help to make the learning process more effective and conceptual and let teachers grab the attention of students (Charles and Robert, 1998). They also enhance the energy level of teaching, free the overburdened classrooms and provide teachers a realistic approach in teaching of speaking skill (Umar, 2014).

The researchers of the current study were inspired to conduct this study in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 at Abba Pascal Girls' School due to the following reasons. The first and the main reason was that there was no research that was conducted on the same topic at the targeted school; however audiovisual materials are available there. Therefore, having considered the availability of audiovisual materials and the need of English speaking skill to such a level of students, the researchers were initiated to conduct this research on teachers' perception towards the use of audiovisual materials to teach English speaking skill. The second reason was that of the proximity of the targeted institution to the researchers. This is to say, one of the researchers was working at the targeted school and it created a good opportunity for them to conduct this study.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
2.1. Research Design

The researchers used descriptive research design for this study. The reason is that it is suitable to describe systematically the facts and characteristics of a given research variable factually and accurately. Using this research design, the researchers described the perception of teachers towards the use of audiovisual materials in teaching English speaking skill. The data were collected using interview from six English teachers of grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 at Abba Pascal Girls' School. Then, the results were analyzed using qualitative approaches of data analysis.

2.2. Setting of the Study

The research was conducted at Abba Pascal Girls' School, which is found in Wolaita Sodo town in Wolaita Zone, South Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State of Ethiopia. It was the only girls' school in Wolaita Zone, which had six English teachers in grades five, six, seven and eight in the year 2008 E.C. This unique school

was selected as a research setting due to the researchers' familiarity of the school and their understanding of the research problem understudy.

2.3. Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were all English teachers of grades five, six, seven and eight at Abba Pascal Girls' School. The reason why the teachers were selected was that they were assumed to provide tangible and accurate data for this study due to their direct contact with audiovisual materials while teaching English speaking skill.

2.4. Sampling Technique

Due to the manageable number of the entire population, the researchers did not use any type of sampling technique for this study. Thus, six English teachers of grades five, six, seven and eight were directly taken as the informants of this study.

2.5. Instruments of Data Collection

To gather valid and reliable data from the targeted population and achieve the intended objective of the study, the researchers used interview as the sole instrument of data collection. The reason why the researchers used only interview for this study is that the study is all about the perception of teachers (without including any other variables). Thus, it is not simple task to elicit information regarding one's perception using other tools of data collection (questionnaire, observation, etc.) except interview.

2.6. Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed and interpreted the collected data by using qualitative approach of data analysis. This approach was used to express the actual words of the respondents. Then, the researchers analyzed the words of "horse's mouth" in thematically organized pattern.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the data collected from the target population on the general concept of audiovisual materials, the respondents have an adequate understanding of the concept of audiovisual materials. As to their understanding, audiovisual materials are the materials that are used for teaching/learning process; specifically in the actual classroom. These materials make the classroom participatory, live and permanent. The above data agrees with the findings of Oketunji (2000). That is, in most cases, English teachers have no problem in the understanding of the concept of audiovisual materials. She added (ibid), the problem is the defects in the practical use of these materials in actual classrooms of English speaking skill.

The teachers in the face-to-face interview mentioned some of the audiovisual materials that can possibly be used in English speaking classroom: television, radio, LCD (Liquid Crystal Display) projectors, DVD (Digital Versatile Disc), flash cards, laptop computers, microphones, film strips, animated cartoons, multimedia, tape recorders, chalk boards, flip charts, maps, graphs, models, objects, posters, pictures, etc. These materials have multi-dimensional benefits in teaching English speaking skills, as some of the interviewees stated. For example, one of the interviewed teachers stated saying:

> *English speaking skill is an interactive process of forming meanings which needs someone to convey his/her verbal and non-verbal messages using audiovisuals for the sake of mutual communication benefits.*

The above quotation clearly indicates the importance of audiovisual materials in making our messages visible during oral communication. Supporting this idea, Burns and Joyce (1997) argued that speaking is an interactive

process of constructing meaning that involves the use of audiovisual materials for clarity of the information communicated. This implies that speaking is a skill that is needed by someone to have verbal and non-verbal interactions with others in order to convey information, influence the interlocutor and negotiate meaning.

In response to the question that inquires the teachers' outlook on audiovisual materials in terms of teaching English speaking skill, one of the interviewed respondents claimed that audiovisual materials are ideal in teaching English speaking skills. This data agrees with the findings of Ngozi *et al.* (2012) who stated that the audiovisual materials have the key place in teaching English speaking skill. Thus, there are several benefits of using audiovisual materials in teaching speaking skill. It encourages the participation of learners in speaking classroom, stimulates the interests of the learners and serves as sources of information for teachers and learners.

Another interviewed teacher responded that audiovisual materials help teachers to visualize the content of the classroom and make the learners more attentive, interested and engaged in classroom tasks. As he reflected, these materials are used to introduce any topic to the learners, and to make it more real and contextualized. Confirming similar idea, another interviewed teacher argued that learners get an overview of the lesson and can generate ideas better when they use audiovisual materials in speaking skill. The rationale, as one of the interviewed teachers responded, is the audiovisual materials minimize the ambiguity of the lesson which is orally presented to the learners in English speaking classroom.

For the interview question related to the teachers' interest of using audiovisual materials to teach English speaking skill in their actual classroom, all the respondents reflected their experience that they have been interested in using audiovisual materials. For instance, one of them stated saying:

> *Audiovisual aids materialize the teaching/learning process of English speaking skill; hence encourage the participation of students. On the other hand, these materials scoop up both the attentions of teachers and students. Thus, I frequently use these materials for teaching English speaking skill.*

As replied by one of the interviewed teachers, there were audiovisual materials in the targeted school that helped teachers to develop positive attitude in using them in English speaking classroom. The same interviewed teacher stated that he uses the audiovisual materials because of his positive attitude towards them which helped his students to meet their language learning goals in a limited period of time. He further stated that the audiovisual materials also help him to overcome the physical difficulties of presenting his subject matter while teaching English speaking skill. Another interviewed teacher supported the same argument and said that the audiovisual materials scoop up the attention of the learners and make their learning meaningful *i.e.*, it helps the learners consistently remember whatever they learn in their classroom when they are in demand.

Even though the teachers understudy use audiovisual materials frequently for teaching speaking skill, they reflected that there is complexities in the use of them. One of the teachers stated that as there is high stake of technological advancement in these days, audiovisual materials are replaced by new technologies which are not familiar to many of the students in primary schools. As he argued, using these materials to teach speaking skill is not that much simple task to him. "Based on my observation," he says, "many of my students like the use of audiovisual materials when I teaching English speaking skill; but sometimes they get into confusion due the complexity of such the materials. However, the use of these materials has countless benefits for my students and for me too".

Supporting the point of view of the countless benefits of audiovisual materials, Umar (2014) claimed that the use of computerized new technology as audiovisual materials motivate the reluctant English learners to practice speaking frequently. Thus, the use of this technology provides English learners opportunities to practice English by minimizing teacher-fronting, making learning materials authentic and solving the learning difficulties of the students. When properly used, these materials save the time of both the students and the teachers, create the

opportunity to get live education and make the learners to adapt native accents (Safia, 2013). Besides, one of the respondents reflected his belief saying:

> *New technology gives matchless opportunity and benefit in teaching-learning process of* English
> *speaking skill. Besides, it boosts the language learning interests of students in EFL context.*

On the other hand regarding the question of the students' feedback while they teach them English speaking skill using audiovisual materials, the respondents reflected their observation that their students have a positive attitude. One of the interviewed teachers stated that all of his students actively participate in his English speaking classroom when they learn speaking skill using audiovisual materials. He added that his students stay awake without being bored during learning English speaking skills with the help of audiovisual materials. He further commented saying:

> *It is due to the positive contribution of audiovisual materials that my students are being alive and*
> *follow me attentively when I am teaching English speaking using audiovisual materials. The*
> *reason is audiovisual materials create conducive environment in the classroom, pinch the attention*
> *of students and refresh their minds as well.*

In general sense of speaking, the respondents have positive perception towards audiovisual materials and are motivated to use them to teach English speaking skill. The reason, as some of them stated is that audiovisual aids materialize the teaching learning process of English speaking skill. Besides, the respondents pointed out some of the factors that motivate them to use audiovisual materials at the targeted school to teach speaking skill: their positive attitude, the availability of the materials, students' interest to learn English speaking skill through audiovisual materials and the suitability of the materials. On the other hand, the advancement of new technology has its own positive contribution to the use of audiovisual materials in teaching English speaking skill. As this technology materializes and pinches teaching and learning process of speaking skill, bringing them into the classroom makes the environment of the classroom participatory and alive.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

The findings of this study implied that the respondents have an adequate understanding of the concept of audiovisual materials in terms of teaching speaking skill. They also have positive perception towards the materials as they believe that audiovisual materials substitute monotonous teaching environments and make teaching and learning process alive. As clearly stated in the results and discussion section audiovisual materials also stimulate thinking and improve learning environment in the classroom. The findings also showed that the respondents are interested in teaching speaking skill using audiovisual materials. On the other hand, the advancement of new technology provided much contribution to audiovisual materials in terms of teaching English speaking skill. As the findings indicated, students have high interest in learning English speaking through audiovisual materials and showed active participation during speaking sessions with the help of audiovisual materials.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations have been forwarded.

- Audiovisual materials should be presented in a more simplified pattern to teach English speaking skill at the targeted school.
- The school should promote the use culture of audiovisual materials for teaching speaking skill.
- New technologies should be promoted well at the targeted school in order to avoid familiarity problems of the students when used in English speaking classroom.

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