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THE EXPERTISE OF AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS IN LEARNING ENGLISH A CASE STUDY IN AL-MAARIF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper sheds the light on the importance of audio-visual aids, for both the lecturers and learners at Al-Maarif University College. Those aids can serve as many functions in coaching English as a foreign language. Recently it had a critical role in developing many institutions world wide. Every English education and learner must understand the various natures of audio-visual aids because he/ she can use those aids efficaciously in teaching English inside the classes.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, there is a growing importance for studying the usability and efficiency of teaching aids, due to its direct effects on developing learners' comprehension and reduces efforts. One of the main goals for adopting audio-visual aids in learning is creating a comprehensible and interesting learning process. The efficiency of those aids related to investing in past experience within the air of modern realities. Those aids had undergone a long process of developing, application and assessment during the past literature. This process of enhancement evolved from one stage to another under the supervision of Communication Theory. The aim of this process of improvement is supporting the educational practice with well-formulated instruments that enhance learner's understanding and reduce time and efforts which educational process required. Abdul hafiz Salaman (2014) described it as, "Teaching aids are instruments and materials used by the teacher to improve teaching and process." (p.15).

Learning English as a foreign language become the worldwide field that attracts researchers, due to the growing demand for learning English and looking for

proper instructions and tools that facilitate learners' comprehension. Those tools approved its efficiency in the educational field as effective substitutes for direct learning experiences, for example, Audio-visual aids support poor readers and slow-learners to acquire knowledge from textbooks. Learning process controlled directly by the required time, effort and money required to achieve learning targets by the implementation of Audio-visual aids to enhance learner's knowledge through pictures, films, etc.

The main objectives for implementing audio-visual aids in educational practice are:

1. Instructional aids help to expand instructional methods' criteria in order to come across individual differences among learners.
2. It provides direct sense experience to learners.
3. It increases the interests in learning the language.
4. It creates an effective learning process.
5. It enables variety to teaching exercises.
6. It makes the lessons enjoyable.
7. It makes the learning experience appear real, living and vital.
8. It decreases teachers talking.
9. It plays a crucial role in enriching education by adding dimensions and limited effects and distinct curriculums.
10. It saves students time and energy.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teaching aids are strategies, which presents units of knowledge by auditory, visual stimuli or both visions in order to enhance the learning process. It considers as supplementary instruments to instructors' directions during the study of textbooks. Many scholars have addressed the importance of teaching aids for learning English. The fair definition for visual-aids described them as tools that devote earlier skills within the air of authenticity (Rather, 2004). It can supply learners with proper data that motivate their previous related knowledge in understanding current phenomena. Previous studies in the literature acknowledge the usability of visual-aids and consider them as a practical contribution of learners in classes.

In addition, it was recognized that adopting visual aids raised learners' spirits by the adopted body and visual activities which strength controlling learning activity. This reality indicated by Jain (2004) who cited a Chinese proverb "One sighted is worth, a hundred words". Various studies admit that learning by practice contributes in better learning progress. Other scholars indicated that visual aids supply educators with professional and consistent learning platform (Mohanty, 2001). This supports the academic field with various opportunities for developing learners cognition and encode new knowledge. This process will facilitate the process of knowledge transfer from teachers into learners. It had been reported that video aids can ensure genuine language acquisition and a deeper

understanding of the topic (Çakir, 2006).

A study prepared by Agun&et. al.(1977), represented a better example for implementing visual aids such as audio aids and physical objects. It approved the capability of certain visual aids chosen for a specific task to enhance learning practice. There are many other forms of visual aids such as wall charts, pictures, symbolic materials and other audiovisual aids like television, radio, and projectors with sound attributes. Another related study conducted by Ozaslan & Maden (2013) found that learners' performance had been develop by the application of some visual materials. Additionally, they acknowledge the usability of PPT slides to enrich the content of lectures and makes the content more attractive to draw learners' attention easily (p.42).

Recently, the investment for implementing technology within the field of education in Iraq had a positive impact on the learning environment. Various studies had been carried out for the purpose of educational reform, particularly in developing learners' skills. The current research considered as one of those studies sponsored by Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to assess and improve the learning environment at Al-Maarif University College. All the classes in the university equipped with required technological teaching aids to ensure facilitating the learning process. However, many other visual tools are supplied such charts and sketches and marker boards which can present a clearer description by the use of distinct colours (Chorley, 1966).

Learning a second language considered as a challenging task for adults. English language had a worldwide concern around the world. Thus, various studies indicated the importance of using teaching aids in order to facilitate the process of language learning. This reality had been applied to numerous fields of knowledge as well as language acquisition. This research aims to find out to what extent do visual aids can facilitate language lessons and achieve dynamic and effective class participation. In addition, it aims to examine the usability and efficiency of audio-visual materials in the learning process. Those points are investigated in order to have a clear view for implementing those tools in language teaching at Al-Maarif University College.

METHODOLOGY

The current research consists of (25) undergraduate students in English language department at Al-Maarif University College, Iraq. The participants will be in their second semester of the last academic year of their study. All the participants of the current research were native Arabic speakers who learn English as the major of their undergraduate study. The syllabuses of their study combined with some audio-visual materials. Because the current study deals with the usability of visual aids in EFL classes, participants' responses will be collected during their ordinary daily classrooms. The responses will be used for assessing the understanding and application of visual aids in EFL classrooms, particularly at Al-Maarif University College.

The tool of data collection in the current research will be a questionnaire that contains qualitative and quantitative questions. This process of data collection aims to offer further explanation for the quantities by qualitative description. The questionnaire will consist of ten questions on the usability of visual aids in EFL classrooms. Some of those questions are open-ended while other questions are close-ended. This mixed method aims to fulfil the target mix mode of current research. In addition, it aims to extract and involve in a deeper understanding of the current investigation by the participants. The answers will be collected from participants in one session during their daily class. Further explanation will be offered to participants if requested. The research ethics will be maintained by keeping the answers with the researcher for research purpose only.

FINDINGS

THIS section will contain both the findings of the current investigation and data analysis. The answers on the questions (1,4and 7) will be short answers (Yes or No), while other questions will be based on participants' background knowledge and experience in using visual aids. The quantitative answers of participants will be shown in tables as bellow;

Table:7.1. The first item of the test

Item	Answer	Total	Ratio
Do you require any assistance from your instructor to use visual aids in the class?	Yes	17	75.4%
	No	8	25.6%

The answer to the first question shown in Table1.1. It had been identified 75.4 % of the participants required assistance from their instructors to use visual aids in the classroom. However, 25.6% of the participants did not show any sense of the necessity for assistance. These findings indicate that some of the participants found visual aids unimportant assistance tools in English language classes. Participants' answers on the second and third questions showed that some students don't comprehend the data presented to them in the conventional teaching methods, even by utilizing various visual aids which aims to increase their understanding. Different other perspectives had been identified related to expanding learners' skills in English language by tuning in to native speakers for further engagement in the classroom. Participants' answers showed that visual aids could be valuable when educators discover certain language terms hard to explain on the sheets. In addition, they found it helpful in developing their comprehension in classes.

Other answers demonstrated that educators don't have to utilize various media helps in the study classrooms. Participants stated, "a few instructors can convey ideas and offer more understanding to the students without the utilization of visual aids". These participants indicated that instructors can deliver their thoughts on

the syllabus without utilizing broad media assistance in the classroom. This adds more ideas on the usability of traditional techniques of learning.

Table 7.2: the second item of the test

Item	Answer	Total	Ratio
Do your teachers adopt visual aids in the classrooms?	Yes	15	66%
	No	10	40%

An overview of the participants' answers shared common students' opinion that English instructors in Headways English courses and concentrated courses utilizing visual-audio aids. However, 40% of the participants' answers showed that English instructors do not utilize audio or visual aids in the study classroom. It is worth to mention that most of English Language course books designed with sound materials. However, every educator differs in his/her conceptualization, hypothesis, understanding for general English courses and they shared their own learning experience with their students during the process of learning. It could be noted that the current investigation approved that some educators do utilize visual or audio aids while others don't use them during the course. These educators read aloud the listening parts to their students because they thought utilizing various audio materials attached to the texts will pose difficulty for students to understand, due to the speed and accent of the speaker. This will be related to some difficulties in students' understanding.

Table 7.3: the third item of the test

Item	Answer	Total	Ratio
Do you think visual aids are suitable useful tools in classrooms?	Yes	17	75.4%
	No	8	25.6%

Finally, some observations had been recorded on the participants' answers during the process of data collection. It was noticed that the questionnaire was a useful tool to collect valuable data for their response to various visual aids. English capability dimension of the understudies was considered while making the poll. Additionally, participants' proficiency in English language affects understanding some questions as well as participants' ability to express their thought in English. Some participants required an interpretation or translation for some questions in Arabic language to ensure full comprehension.

CONCLUSION

The findings of current research approved the usability of visual aids in classrooms for improving learning environments. The expertise utilization of those aids would make the class wonderful and pleasant, progressively. It

approved the utilization of visual materials when it directly connected to course materials. The research presents some observations on students' assessments for utilizing visual aids in classrooms. Thus, further investment is required in developing the conceptualization of visual materials in the educational settings for developing learners' knowledge during the process of learning. Additionally, it had been approved that various visual aids decreased students' required time and efforts for comprehension, as well as invigorate students' creative energy, and improve their sense of observation. In conclusion, this investigation would be relevant for more students and educators for a fruitful utilization of visual aids in classrooms.

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