USE OF DIGITAL CONTENT IN ENSURING INTEGRITY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVE OF BANGLADESH

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Abstract: The use of digital content (DC) in teaching and learning English has become a buzzword. Infusing DC into the English teaching-learning process is really important as it caters the needs of the contemporary learners. At the same time, the availability of DC allows learners to adopt many unfair means by copy-pasting. So, it is important to ensure the integrity for teaching and learning in today's world. This study focused on exploring the actual use of DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at grade IX–X of Bangladesh and finding out the challenges of using DC in ensuring integrity. A mixed method design (Creswell, 2012) has been employed to conduct the study. To accomplish the study, data has been collected from teachers, students and content specialists by using semi-structured interview schedule, semi-structured questionnaire, FGD and classroom observation checklist. The data was analysed in mixed approaches using simple statistics and thematic analysis process and presented through tables and graphs. The result and detailed analysis of the study have brought out that most of the teachers use free plagiarism software for tracing out unethical writings in English for ensuring integrity in English subject. This study also brings into light that lack of necessary equipment (there is no plagiarism checking software in the observed school) and teachers' negative attitudes toward using DC are the prevalent challenges of using DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English. In this circumstance, the study suggests that schools should be provided with new equipment such as plagiarism checking software strategically and equitably for frequent and successful trace out, and teachers should get training on how to use DC effectively in ensuring integrity.

Introduction

Digital technology is ubiquitous in most of the world. Due to the abundant presence of digital technology English teaching-learning process has also undergone a sea-change. Consequently, various digital contents (DC) are used in the teaching-learning process. It is therefore important to extend the notion of teaching and learning beyond the traditional modes of listening, speaking, reading and writing by including various DC for English subject.

Recent movements in the field of the English language teaching and learning have ushered in a new era for digital content. Driven by the digital content revolution, powered by eBooks, PDF files, software and apps and so on, many students are studying when and where they choose and any topics they wish. This facilitates the teaching-learning process of English language, as English is a skill based subject. DC opens many

avenues to practice the skill of English. The easy obtainability of DC sometimes drives students to copy and paste in their assigned work without proper acknowledgment and reference which led them to plagiarism. On the other hand, teachers can use many DC to trace out such kind of unethical works done by the students such as ordered students to submit soft copy of the assignment via email so that teacher will easily ensure integrity amongst the students. This study was undertaken to gauge such actual situation from the secondary level of education of Bangladesh.

Since ICT is placed in every aspect of teaching and learning, language teachers need to understand its potentiality as well as utilize it to enhance their development to cope with the changing nature of education system (Vethamain, 2009). With a view to integrating ICT in education, the ICT policy (formulated in 2009) suggests preparing digital learning content. By starting the use of ICT in education, a2i has introduced the digital content in Bangladesh (a2i, 2011). Now, most of the students and teachers of the secondary schools are habituating with DC but concern is that how appropriately they can adapt or adjust with and how they ensure the integrity in education when they use DC. This study focuses on it. Hence, the study was carried out.

In Bangladesh secondary school classroom teaching, the use of digital content or e-learning technology is increasing gradually (Didar, Abdullah, Abul & Jamal, 2011). At present, there are 3287 junior secondary schools, 13275 secondary schools, 1558 higher secondary schools, and 5626 secondary and 1105 higher secondary madrasahs in Bangladesh (Alauddin et al, 2010). Access and use of DC for ensuring integrity at these secondary schools in teaching and learning English were examined by this study.

Consequently, the focal aim of the study, was to explore the use of DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh. Underneath the focal aim following specific objectives were seeking out through this research study:

- to explore the actual use of digital content (DC) in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at grade IX–X
- to find out the challenges of using digital content (DC) in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at grade IX–X

Literature Review

Literature review is known as the platform for the research study. This section deals with reviewing of the previous studies relating to the areas of this research, models related to the study, cites, conceptual patterns, theories, definitions, figures, comparisons etc. to obtain clear insights about this study. All the reviewed literature such as books, articles and relevant thesis papers are discussed under several different concepts into the following sections.

Digital Content

Digital content (DC) is any type of content that exists in the form of digital data with digital storage system. Forms of digital content include information, audios, videos, images, pictures, animations, streamed audios and videos, files etc. Baker (2010)

denominates that Digital content in the form of digitised photographs, images, videos and audios can be accessed and used in collaborative learning environments, the use of interactive digital content (i.e. learning objects) typically involves individual learners engaging with a critical educational concept. On the other hand, Lamanauskas, Slekiene, Raguliene & Bilbokaite, (2011) posited that DC is a sort of content which is available in digital form. In this regard, Garcia (2006) stated that while talking about digital content I meant anything that could be created and stored digitally and used to support teaching and learning, and also items such as a useful URL, apps, software, a text document or presentation file and in some cases a package of content or structured set of course materials and tasks are known as DC.

Integrity in Education

Previously, when few people had entrance to formal education and it was expected that educated persons would display civilized behaviour, decency, good manners and ethical conduct, on the other hand, uneducated persons would display uncivilized behaviour and mostly crimes were committed by them. However, with a huge expansion of the education system and time, there is a noticeable decline in the characters, ethics, moral values and integrity (Shelly & Jain, 2012). But now-a-days, scenario is quite the opposite. Crimes are still committed by students coming out of schools and colleges and well-educated people (Shelly & Jain, 2012). So, it is a great matter of concern that we should uplift the integrity in education.

According to the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI) (2014) "integrity is a commitment to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility." (p. 6). Integrity in education is essential for maintaining excellence and for keeping the public's trust. For an educational institution, it is a commitment to creating an environment that promotes responsible conduct by embracing standards of excellence, trustworthiness, and lawfulness and then assessing whether teachers as well as students and administrators perceive that an environment with high levels of integrity has been created (National Academy of Sciences, 2002).

Way to Uplift Integrity in Education and Preventing Academic Misconduct

As per, Cavico & Mujtaba (2009) most students will do their own work, as hiring others to complete their assignments goes against their personal and professional values. One should adopt following ways or find following cues prescribed by Harris (2004) to stop such academic misconduct amongst the students and ensure integrity in education (as cited in Cavico & Mujtaba, 2009):

- Mixed citation styles
- Lack of references or quotations
- Unusual formatting
- Off topic
- Signs of datedness
- Anachronisms (i.e. references to old events as current- "once the cold war is over")

- Anomalies of diction (mix of paragraphs with different levels of words and their usage)
- Anomalies of style – British and American English grammar or writing formats
- Smoking guns. This category might be called "blunders of the clueless," since it includes obvious indicators of copying.

In addition, Robert Harris (2004) proposes the following strategies and information for awareness, prevention, and detection of plagiarism (as cited in Cavico & Mujtaba, 2009):

- Understand why students cheat. By understanding some of the reasons students are tempted to cheat on papers or exams, you can take steps to prevent cheating by attacking the causes.
- Educate yourself about plagiarism. Plagiarism on research papers and online exams takes many forms.
- Educate students about plagiarism, its consequences and conditioning impact. What if everyone in the world cheated?
- Discuss the benefits of citing sources appropriately as per the school's requirements.
- Make the penalties clear to all students at the beginning of each class.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

A conceptual framework provides a total idea about the research at a glance. Based on the review of the literature, research objectives and research variables, a conceptual framework was developed to guide the conceptualisation of this study which derived from mapping the issues that impacted upon and influenced the conceptualisation of this research. It is mentioned below:
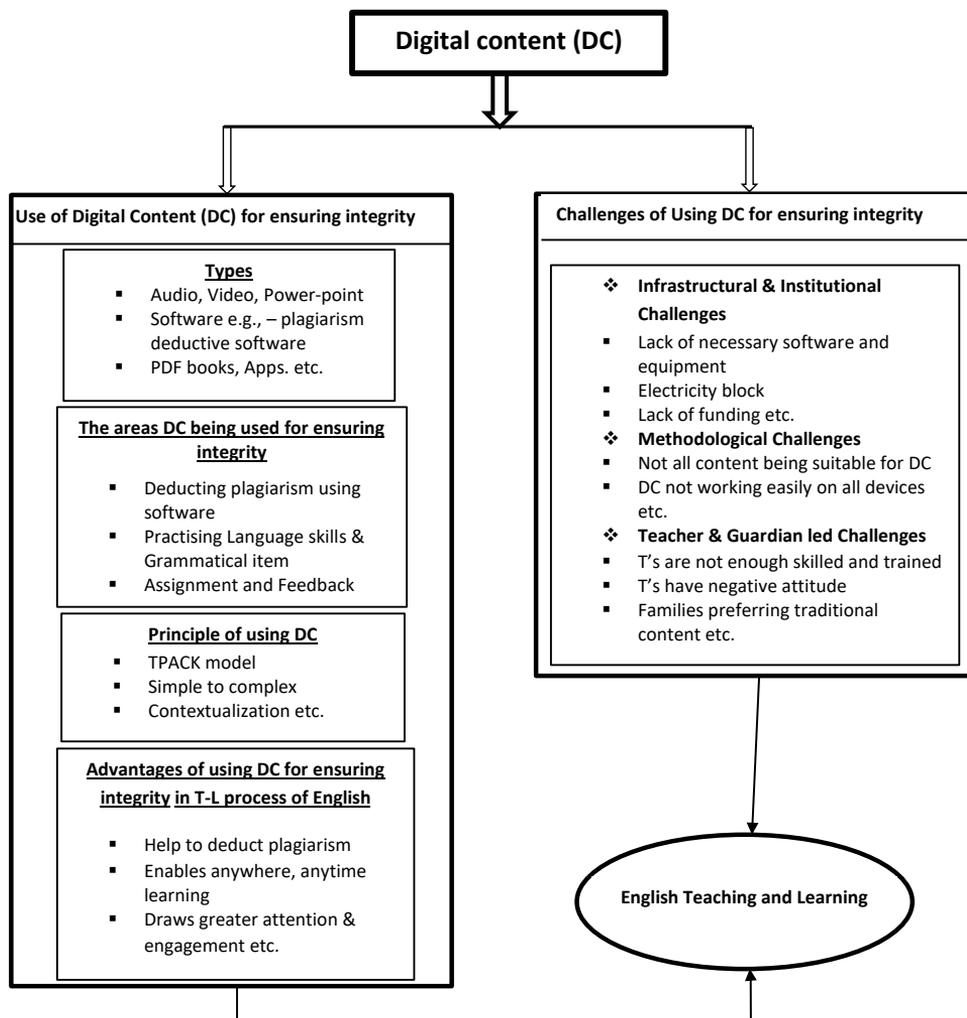
Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Methodology

Nature of the Study

Gay and Airasian (1996) noted that the nature of the question or problem to be investigated determines whether the study is qualitative or quantitative. If we look back the specific research objectives, we understand that the first research objective which seeks to explore the actual use of DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English demands both quantitative and qualitative data to depict a holistic picture.

The final research objective aims to find out the challenges of using DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English which needs qualitative data as well as quantitative data. So, ultimately all the research objectives deal with both quantitative and qualitative data. As the research needs mixed type of data, so the whole research had followed a mixed method approach. To be more specific, this study employed a mixed method research design.

Sample Design of the Study

For this study, the schools were chosen conveniently: total 4 schools, 2 from Dhaka city and 2 from Chandpur district of Bangladesh. Teachers, content specialists and classes were selected purposively. And from each school 20 students were selected through random sampling. The whole sample design of the study is depicted below:
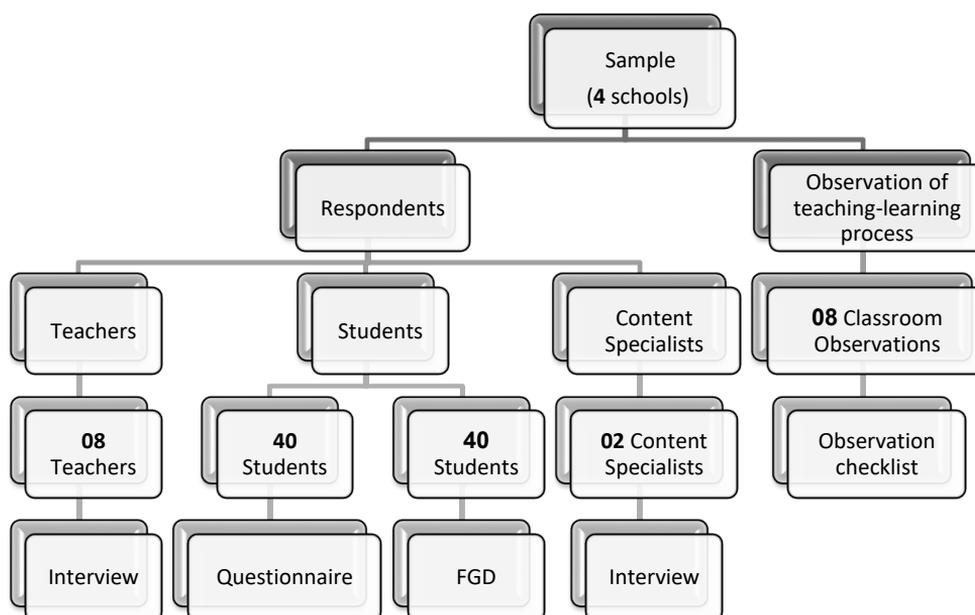

Figure 2. Sample design of the study

Data Processing and Analysis Technique

Two types of analyses were conducted in this study – the Quantitative data was analysed using Quantitative approaches of analysis and qualitative data in qualitative approach.

Table 1

Tools, Data sources and Research objectives

Research Objectives	Tools	Data Source
to explore the actual use of digital content in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at grade IX–X	Semi-structured Questionnaire; *FGD;* Classroom observation Checklist; Semi-structured interview schedule.	Students; Teachers; Content specialist
to find out the challenges of using digital content in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at grade IX–X.	Semi-structured Questionnaire; *FGD;* Classroom observation Checklist; Semi-structured interview schedule.	Students; Teacher; Content specialist

Source: (Authors')

Scaffolding of the Study

Results and Discussion

Major findings Related to the Specific Research Objective One

The major findings about the actual use of DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at grade IX–X comprise of the following (organized as to significance):

- Maximum Students (63.50%) and teachers (7 out of 8) are acquainted with DC and integrity in education.

- In most of the schools maximum teachers (6 out of 8) and students (55%) have said in favour of this DC is used for teaching and learning English, at a time, teachers consented that DC have used for purpose of ensuring integrity in English. But teaching-learning activities in English classroom using DC are not so good and it is not fully implemented, although the used DC and its scenario have fulfilled the technical parameters.

- Most of the students of secondary schools accused for academic dishonesty in terms of completing their assigned assignment, homework or something like that by using DC. (In favour of this statement respectively 5 out of 8 teachers and 54% of students have given opinion.).

- Power point (respectively said by Teachers & Students 36.37% & 40.91%), video (equally said by Teachers & Students 27%) and audio (respectively said by Teachers & Students 22.09% & 31.82%) are vastly used types of DC in teaching and learning English for grade IX–X.

- Most of the teachers (7 out of 8) use free plagiarism software for tracing out unethical writings in English for ensuring integrity in English subject.

- DC is used majorly in the areas of delivering lecture, deduct plagiarism (teachers & students respectively say that 51.41% & 52.53%), assigned (Group/pair) work (where teachers & students respectively say that 14.28% & 18.32%) and giving feedback (where teachers & students respectively said that 14.28% & 16.90%).

- Best advantages of using DC in teaching-learning process of English are that DC help to deduct plagiarism, DC draws greater attention and engagement, and DC allows to practice independently as well as to work collaboratively.

Major Findings Related to the Specific Research Objective Two

The major findings about the challenges of using digital content in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English at grade IX–X are summarized below (rank order of significance):

- Lack of necessary software and equipment (infrastructural problem) is the biggest challenge in using DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English.
- DC not working easily on all devices is the second leading challenge in using DC in teaching and learning English at grade IX–X.
- Teachers' attitude (negative) towards using DC and lack of appropriate knowledge and skills are another prevalent challenge in using digital content in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English.

Other challenges of using DC including leading challenges are presented in the graphical format by segmenting into the major and minor themes (based on first hand data from field work after thematic analysing).
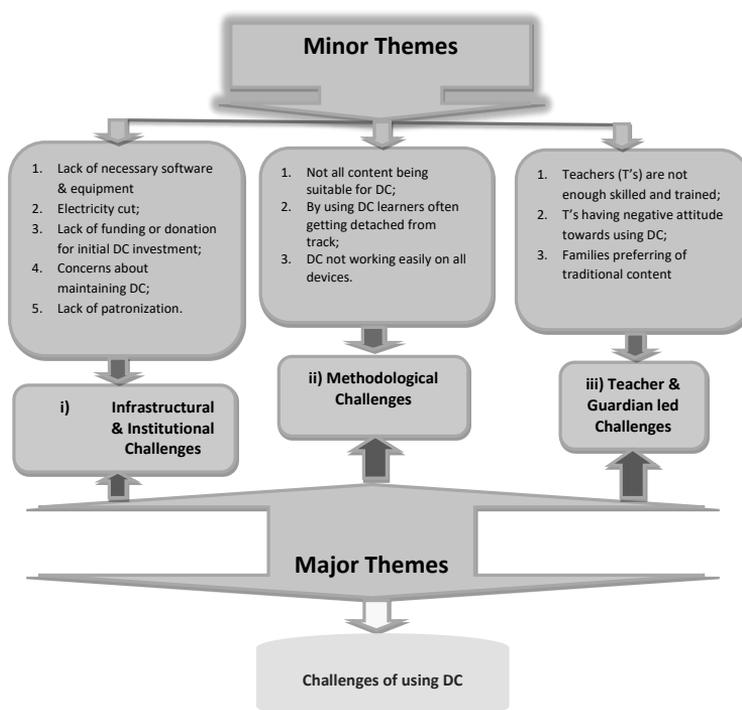

Figure 3. Challenges of using DC in Ensuring Integrity for English subject
Source: (Authors')

Discussion

Study reveals that maximum students (63.50%) and teachers (7 out of 8) are acquainted with DC and integrity in education. This finding is quite similar with the findings of Chowdhury, Yesmin & Obaydullah (2019) who voiced that most of the teacher and students perceived that moral and ethics mean good or bad, legal or illegal and good practice in our personal life like speaking the truth, showing respect to elders, helping others, showing good behaviour, attending school regularly, obeying parents and following rules and regulations. Both teachers and students mentioned that students learn moral and ethical values in schools, home and society.

The present study disclosed that most of the students (54%) of secondary schools accused for academic dishonesty in terms of completing their assigned assignment, homework or something like that by using DC. In a similar fashion, in the 1990s, Davis (1993) quoted surveys indicating that between 40 and 70 per cent of all students have reported cheating at some point in their career, while Pavela (1997) quoted McCabe's survey of over 4,000 students of whom between 47 per cent and 60 per cent admitted dishonesty. In the perspective of Bangladesh, secondary school's students aged 11 to 11+ are very regular with DC and get access into the great horizon of internet world which persuade them to complete their assigned work by copy-pasting. One of the students of grade IX expressed that in the time of data collection –

> *"Our teacher gives us do critical analysis of some literary work or writes a job application. We usually surf internet and thus way manage our assignment."*

On the other hand, one of the teachers from teachers' interview opined that –

> *"When I get assignment from the students and give a glimpse eye on it, then maximum time I assume that the work isn't brainchild of the particular students."*

Another prevalent finding of the study is that most of the teachers (7 out of 8) use free plagiarism software for tracing out unethical writings in English for ensuring integrity in English subject. One of the teachers from interview asserted that –

> *"I use free online based plagiarism software for tracing out unethical writings in English for ensuring integrity in English subject. There is no way to detect plagiarism except it. Registering with plagiarism software and getting licensees of plagiarism software without support of school authority and government is totally impossible for me. It costs much in the context of Bangladesh. For this why, I am bind to use free online based plagiarism software which is not enable to trace out full plagiarism of works. Though I adopt such means but I assume that most of the teachers of Bangladesh neither go such way nor adopt any means to deduct plagiarism."*

DC is used majorly in the areas of delivering lecture, deduct plagiarism (teachers & students respectively say that 51.41% & 52.53%) the other important finding of this study. This study also refers that best advantages of using DC in teaching-learning process of English are that DC help to deduct plagiarism and ensure integrity in education. In line with this finding, one teacher said that –

> *"I usually command students to submit their assignment in the form of soft copy instead of hard copy via email so that I easily deduct plagiarism using plagiarism checker software and make student academic misconduct free."*

Cavico & Mujtaba (2009) mentioned that technology like DC certainly has made cheating more opportunistic for the students. Academic misconduct, cheating, and fraud never have been easier due to internet and advanced technology (such as email, cell phones, pagers, "paper mills" and term paper websites with papers, exams, and essays for sale – and usually with a "for research purposes only" disclaimer, "thanks" to the lawyers – online courses with chat rooms). Therefore, technology provides many, and perhaps too tempting, opportunities to cheat. It is very easy to abuse technology in the classroom and outside the classroom. In line with the Cavico & Mujtaba, present study also revealed almost the same finding wherein students are very much eager to use mentioned advanced technology to accomplish their assigned work and perform academic duty.

Last but not least, finding of this study is: lack of necessary software and equipment (infrastructural problem) is the biggest challenge in using DC in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English, and, teachers' attitude (negative) towards using DC and lack of appropriate knowledge and skills are another prevalent challenges in using digital content in ensuring integrity for teaching and learning English. Sakib (pseudonym) mentioned that (in the data collection stage from students) –

> *"Our teachers do not prefer digital content but the traditional content. If we use power point in our class they discourage us and sometimes they devalue us. I think they have lacked of positive attitude towards DC."*

In line with this finding, content specialist1 emphasized that –

> *"Every teacher of each secondary school should have access in the plagiarism software so that they easily deduct plagiarism and academic misconduct of the students. In this regard, government and school authority should immediately take appropriate steps."*

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the discussion on emerging factors resulting from the evidence of gathered data, the researchers have formulated recommendations for future actions to achieve greater impact on ensuring integrity for both the areas of teaching and learning English at grade IX–X.

- School should be provided with new (ICT and digital) equipment.
- Awareness based initiative e.g. campaign on DC etc. should be taken to change the attitude of teachers and guardians towards the digital content.
- Teachers should get training on how to use DC effectively in ensuring integrity.
- Training programmes on DC should be adapted to the particular needs of students and fit to subjects and institutional related needs.
- Alternative power supply system like generator should be introduced to recover electricity cuts.
- Government and education authorities should allocate resources e.g. plagiarism checking software strategically and equitably, and should monitor the use of digital content for ensuring integrity.

Conclusions

Use of digital content in teaching and learning English is very much important in this digital age especially for ensuring integrity. It encompasses a great horizon of facilities with its various dimensions. Those are crucially necessary for the teachers and students in the teaching-learning process of English. In Bangladesh present scenarios are not up-to-mark. This research is a small effort to bring it into focus. It will hope that further research study will explore more.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are described below:

- **Representativeness**: The representativeness of the participants was the first limitation. Only 90 respondents were involved in this study. It does not give the complete picture of Bangladesh.
- **Coverage:** It is not possible to interpret the findings in light of gender, age, or experience as these variables were clearly not set as selection criteria.
- **Time:** The major limitation of this study is the limited time for conducting this study. A long time research could give us a more effective and viable picture.
- **Level:** Another limitation of the study was that this study was conducted only for the grade IX–X. Further research would be needed to address other grades.
- **Diversity:** Lastly, the diversity of schools was not fully represented in this study. The study mainly focused on mainstream school of secondary level of education.

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