

The Use of Teaching Aids in the Teaching and Learning of Tamil Language

Sutha Kunsuraman, Dr. Kaaminy Kanapathy

Department of Tamil Language, Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Malaysia

Email: suthakunsuraman000@gmail.com, kaaminy@fbk.upsi.edu.my

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of teaching aids in the teaching and learning process of the Tamil language among trainee teachers at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). The research aimed to identify and categorize the types of teaching aids used in the daily lesson plans prepared by Tamil language trainee teachers and to analyze their effectiveness and application in the teaching and learning process. This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected from 50 lesson plans written by 50 Tamil language trainee teachers in their sixth semester. Each lesson plan was analyzed based on the use of teaching aids in relation to the language skills, including listening, speaking, reading and grammar. Through this study, the researcher aimed to categorize and systematically analyze the teaching aids used in the daily lesson plans of trainee teachers from the Department of Tamil language at Sultan Idris Education University.

Keywords: Teaching Aids, Tamil Language Education, Trainee Teachers, Lesson Plan Analysis

Introduction

Teaching aids play a crucial role in supporting effective teaching and learning processes, particularly in language education. They function as instructional tools that help teachers deliver content clearly, promote comprehension, and sustain student's interest throughout the lesson. In modern classrooms teaching aids bridge the gap between abstract language concepts and concrete understanding, thereby contributing to improved learning outcomes. A well-structured lesson plan, therefore, integrates appropriate teaching aids to ensure that instructional objectives are met efficiently.

In the 21st century, the integration of teaching aids has become an essential element of effective pedagogy. For Tamil language teaching, such aids support the development of key language skills, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar, while creating an interactive and student-centred learning environment. The use of teaching aids is supported by Cognitive Load Theory and Dual Coding Theory, both of which emphasize that combining

verbal explanations with visual or auditory stimuli enhances memory retention and understanding. These theoretical perspectives highlight the importance of selecting teaching aids that align with learning objectives and cognitive processes.

Previous scholars such as Brown (1983) and Ataan Long (1982) have classified teaching aids according to their functions, including visual, audio, and audio-visual categories. More recent studies (Noorazman Abdul Samad et al., 2018) emphasize the increasing role of information and communication technology (ICT) in making language learning more engaging. However, these studies have primarily focused on general educational contexts rather than Tamil language pedagogy specifically.

At Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), trainee teachers receive training through the course KPD3016 “Pengajaran, Teknologi dan Penaksiran,” which emphasizes the integration of teaching aids into lesson planning. Despite this structured exposure some trainee teachers still face challenges in selecting teaching aids that align with lesson objectives and specific language skills. Some depend heavily on textbooks while others employ digital materials without clear pedagogical justification. These issues limit the effectiveness of teaching and reduce student engagement.

Although past studies have examined the functions and types of teaching aids, there is limited research focusing on how Tamil language trainee teachers select and apply teaching aids during lesson planning especially in relation to specific language skills. This gap indicates the need for a focused examination of teaching aid utilization within Tamil language education. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the use of teaching aids among Tamil language trainee teachers at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). Specifically, it seeks to identify the types of teaching aids used in their lesson plans and evaluate how effectively these aids support the teaching and learning of the Tamil language.

Theoretical Grounding

This study is grounded in three major learning theories that support the effective use of teaching aids in language education. Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986) emphasizes that learning is enhanced when verbal information is paired with visual or auditory representations. Teaching aids such as images, videos, charts, and graphic organizers help learners develop stronger mental associations, improving comprehension and memory. Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) further explains that well-designed teaching aids reduce unnecessary mental load, allowing students to focus on essential language concepts. When teaching aids align with learning objectives, they help simplify complex information and support deeper processing. Additionally, Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners construct knowledge actively through experiences and interactions. In Tamil language classrooms, teaching aids facilitate these interactions by providing concrete, meaningful learning resources. Collectively, these theories provide the conceptual basis for analyzing how trainee teachers design and utilize teaching aids to support language learning

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the interaction between teaching aids, instructional planning, and student learning outcomes. Teaching aids (visual, audio, and audio-visual resources) serve as independent variables that influence students' engagement

comprehension, and skill development in listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. The process of lesson planning by trainee teachers acts as the mediating variable, determining how effectively teaching aids are selected and integrated into instruction. The outcomes of this interaction are reflected in the effectiveness of Tamil language teaching and learning. This framework guides the analysis of how trainee teachers categorize, select, and apply teaching aids in their lesson plans.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Tamil language trainee teachers use teaching aids in their lesson plans. The mixed methods approach was chosen to ensure that the study not only captures numerical data but also explores descriptive patterns and interpretations of teaching practices.

Research Design

A content analysis design was adopted to examine the lesson plans prepared by Tamil language trainee teachers. Through this design, the researcher analyzed the types, frequency and purpose of the teaching aids used in classroom activities. The qualitative component provided insight into the reasoning behind the selection of teaching aids, while the quantitative component summarized the frequency of their usage according to skill categories.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of Tamil language trainee teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Tamil language) course at Sultan Idris Education University. The sample comprised 50 sixth semester trainee teachers from the Tamil Language Department. The participants were selected using purposive sampling because they had completed the course named “KPD 3016 Pengajaran, Teknologi dan Pentaksiran” that is Teaching, Technology and Assessment, moreover they were preparing for their practicum placement.

Research Instruments

The main instrument used in this study was a content analysis checklist developed by the researcher. This checklist was designed to identify and classify the teaching aids used in the lesson plans according to language skills, that is, listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. The checklist also helped assess the appropriateness, relevance and alignment of the teaching aids with the lesson objectives.

Data Collection Procedure

A total of 50 daily lesson plans prepared by the trainee teachers were collected and analyzed. Each lesson plan was reviewed to determine the types of teaching aids used, their frequency and their intended purpose in supporting specific language skills. Qualitative observations were also made to describe how the teaching aids were integrated across different stages of lesson implementation such as the introduction, presentation, practice and closure.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis. The quantitative analysis involved the calculation of frequencies and percentages to summarize the types and distribution of teaching aids across language skills. The qualitative analysis involved thematic interpretation to identify patterns, strategies and challenges in the use of teaching aids. The triangulation of both data types enhanced the validity and reliability of the study.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to collect and analyze lesson plans was obtained from the Tamil Language Department at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). Participants were assured that their data would remain confidential and that their lesson plans would be used solely for research purposes. The research followed all ethical standards for academic integrity and data privacy.

Result and Discussion

The analysis of 50 lesson plans prepared by Tamil language trainee teachers showed that a variety of teaching aids were used in the teaching and learning of the Tamil Language. The teaching aids were categorized into three main types. There are visual, audio and digital aids according to the classifications proposed by Ataan Long (1982) and Brown (1983).

Types and Frequency of Teaching Aids Used

The results showed that visual aids were the most frequently used (56%), followed by digital aids (30%) and audio aids (14%). Visual aids included charts, flashcards, story pictures, posters, and real objects. These were primarily used in reading, writing, and grammar lessons to help students visualize concepts and vocabulary. Digital aids, such as PowerPoint slides, short videos, and online resources, were primarily used in reading and comprehension lessons. Audio aids including recorded dialogues and songs, were used less frequently, mostly in listening and pronunciation exercises.

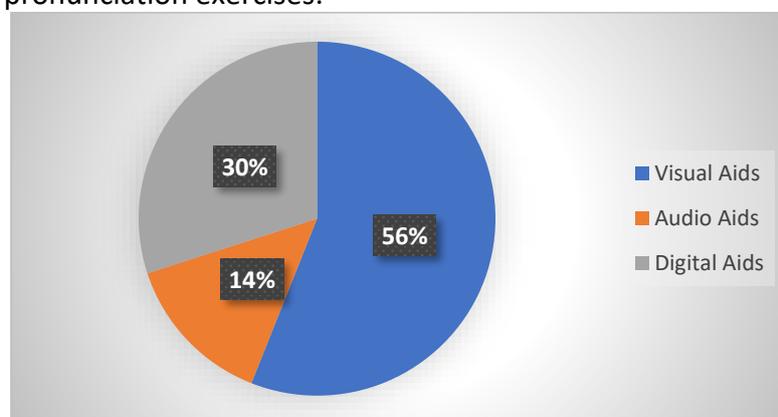


Figure 2 Distribution of Teaching Aids Used by Tamil Language Trainee Teachers

This finding indicates that Tamil language trainee teachers tend to favor visual materials over audio-based tools. While visual aids are effective for explaining and reinforcing concepts, the limited use of audio aids may reduce students' opportunities to practice real listening skills which are essential for learning a language effectively.

Use of Teaching Aids According to Language Skills

The teaching aids were also analyzed based on their use across the five main Tamil language skills. There are listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. It was found that teaching aids were most commonly applied in reading (32%), writing (28%), and grammar (20%) lessons, while speaking (12%) and listening (8%) activities showed the lowest usage.

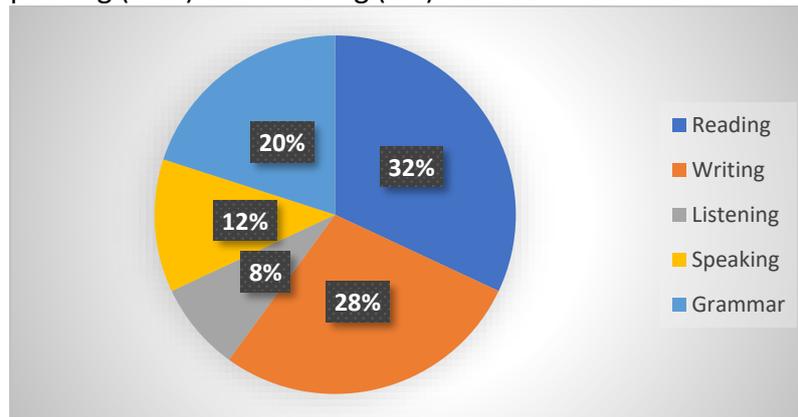


Figure 3 Percentage of Teaching Aids Used Across Tamil Language Skills

This distribution suggests that trainee teachers are more confident in using teaching aids to teach reading and writing skills, possibly due to the easy availability of visual materials such as flashcards and story charts. However, the limited use of aids in listening and speaking activities indicates a need for greater exposure to communicative and interactive learning materials. This finding is consistent with Noorazam Abdul Samad (2018), who highlighted that the integration of ICT tools can enhance communication skills and promote student engagement in the classroom.

Effectiveness of Teaching Aids in Lesson Planning

The qualitative analysis of the lesson plans revealed that most trainee teachers selected teaching aids that corresponded with the lesson topics and learning objectives. These aids were typically used to introduce new concepts, reinforce learning, and support assessment activities. However, inconsistencies were observed in how the aids were applied across different stages of the lesson. In several cases, teaching aids were used merely as visual displays rather than as tools for active student participation. For example, PowerPoint slides were occasionally employed to present information without incorporating interactive discussion or learner engagement.

This observation supports Brown's (1983) assertion that teaching aids are effective only when they are purposefully integrated into the learning process. Merely displaying teaching materials does not necessarily enhance comprehension or motivation. To achieve maximum impact, trainee teachers should design classroom activities that require students to interact actively with the teaching aids, transforming them into dynamic learning resources rather than passive visual elements.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research conducted by Kariya Ahmad (1980) and Anabiya Sudeen (1979), who found that visual aids help clarify lesson content and stimulate learners' interest. The present study further emphasizes that visual aids continue to play a dominant role in Tamil language classrooms, particularly in developing students' reading and writing skills. However, the overreliance on static materials such as charts and flashcards may limit opportunities for interactive and student-centred learning.

The integration of digital aids, though increasing, remains underutilized among Tamil language trainee teachers. This may be attributed to limited exposure to technology-based instructional tools and insufficient confidence in applying digital materials effectively. As Noorazman Abdul Samad (2018) highlighted, the use of ICT tools in teaching not only enhances content delivery but also encourages collaboration and communication among learners. Therefore, teacher education programs must strengthen practical training components that equip trainee teachers with the skills and creativity needed to integrate multimedia and technology in the classroom.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Tamil language trainee teachers at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) possess a foundational understanding of the role of teaching aids in pedagogy. Nevertheless, there remains a need for continuous professional development to ensure that teaching aids are selected and applied purposefully according to specific learning objectives and language skills. By adopting a more balanced and technology-supported approach, trainee teachers can create engaging, meaningful and interactive Tamil language learning experiences.

Conclusion

This study examined the use of teaching aids in the teaching and learning of the Tamil language among trainee teachers at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). The findings revealed that trainee teachers commonly used visual, digital and audio aids in their lesson plans, with visual materials being the most frequently applied. Although teaching aids were used across different language skills, their application was often concentrated in reading and writing activities rather than in listening and speaking.

The results highlight that teaching aids play a significant role in supporting effective Tamil language instruction. However, some trainee teachers tend to use these aids for visual presentation only, rather than for active student engagement. This suggests the need for more focused training on how to design and implement interactive student-centred learning materials. Therefore, it is recommended that teacher education programs include specific modules on the integration of ICT-based and multimedia teaching aids in language instruction. Such training would help future Tamil language teachers develop creative and effective strategies for enhancing students' communication and literacy skills. Future research could also explore the classroom implementation of these teaching aids and their direct impact on students' achievement and motivation.

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