

# A Comparative Study on the Use of Teaching Aids in Iranian EFL Institutes and Schools

fereidoon vahdani<sup>1</sup>, Somayeh Shirani<sup>2</sup>, maryam khosheghbal<sup>3</sup>

1- Assistant Professor of Payame Noor University of Rasht

2- Student at Rasht University samane\_shirani@yahoo.com

3- Student at Rasht University maryam\_khosheghbal@yahoo.com

## Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the possible differences between the Iranian EFL institutes and public secondary schools in the extent and frequency of use of teaching aids and the way of use of them. To achieve the aim of the study, the mixed-methods approach was used to collect the required data. Therefore, 20 EFL teachers were randomly sampled from 5 purposefully selected EFL institutes and 20 from 8 purposefully selected public secondary schools to answer a checklist involving the prevalent teaching aids and the frequency of use of them. Then, 5 sessions of the EFL classes in each of the educational contexts were observed to verify the EFL teachers' answers to the checklists and to examine the way of use of teaching aids in the two contexts, as well. The analysis of the data using the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that, the EFL teachers in the EFL institutes used higher range of teaching aids with higher frequency of use than those in the public secondary schools, thus the research only null hypothesis was rejected. Moreover, using the rich descriptive data, it was also indicated that they used teaching aids more effectively, as well. However, the results also revealed that neither the EFL institute teachers nor the public secondary school teachers used a good range of teaching aids, especially the technological aids, with high rates of use in the most effective ways in line with the communicative goals of English language teaching and learning. Accordingly, it was recommended that all the EFL teachers should feel responsible and use various types of teaching aids as much as possible effectively.

**Key words:** Teaching aids; Audio Aids; Visual Aids; Audio-visual Aids; Educational Technology; Teaching; Learning; English Language Learners (ELLs)

## Introduction

English is the dominant international language of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The increasingly growing importance and use of English language in this modern world is indisputable. A latest research from the British Council predicts that the number of people actively learning English around the world is set to be two billion by 2020. The always increasing number of English Language Learners (ELLs) worldwide places a burden on the English as a Foreign Language (EFL)/English as a Second Language (ESL) researchers to pave the way for better language instruction. -By the advent- and advancement -of technology, different teaching methods, classroom techniques and instructional materials are entered the field of English language teaching (ELT) and the EFL/ESL teachers use different kinds of aids to make effective teaching. The use of teaching aids is a sine qua non for affecting behavior of learners in every field. It is not possible to deny the need and importance of using teaching aids in foreign language teaching processes (Seven & Engin, 2007). The EFL/ESL teachers, then, should borrow a leaf from them (Asokhia, 2009).

The concept of defining what constitutes teaching aids is by nature complex. Dash and Dash (2007) define teaching aids as "added devices or supplementary materials which help the teacher to make his presentation concrete, effective, interesting, meaningful and inspirational. These materials are those devices which help the learners in the assimilation and retention of ideas" (p. 123). To cope with the complexity, classifying teaching aids is of use. According to Dash and Dash (2007) teaching aids can be classified in five different ways: