**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# USING MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN ESL CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH

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**ABSTRACT**

Integrating technology into English language classroom is the most innovative endeavour of the English language teachers. The rapid growth of technology has brought new challenges and duties to the 21$^{st}$ century teacher. Modern teacher now needs to be more active, creative and innovative. With the help of technology language teacher can explore the world of new teaching methods. Integration of multimedia technology in English language classroom motivates learners, improves efficiency of class teaching and teaching mode. The aim of this paper is to statistically embrace the benefits of multimedia media technology in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) environment. For this purpose a questionnaire was administered to the undergraduate students of English discipline at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and the result of using multimedia in English language teaching (ELT) was positive. During the survey, some demerits of using this electronic device in teaching- learning environment also came into light. The paper also gives some recommendations to overcome such problems and will enthusiasts the educators to incorporate this modern technology to pocket better teaching effects.

**Keywords: -** ELT, ESL, Multimedia, CALL, holistic learning, motivation, autonomy communicative competence.

## INTRODUCTION

In this world of globalization and interconnectedness the importance of English can't be ignored. The spread and development of English round the world has given it a new height and position. It has gained the status of International Language. It has now become the language of communication, global trade and commerce, social context, education, media, library etc. It's a key subject of medium of instruction in educational institutions. The case is this that now there are more non-native speakers of English than the native speakers and if one needs to be in touch with the world then he has to learn English.

The tradition of English teaching has amazingly changed with the remarkable entry of technology. According to Campbell (2000) "technology is playing an important role by enabling educational content to be flexibly organized, linked and delivered to suit individual learning styles, contexts and time frames" (2000-351). Its use enhances language learning by increasing learner's autonomy and control thus providing more learners – centered classroom. It engages the learners actively into classroom activities than the traditional

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direct instruction methods. Grabe and Grabe (2001) are of view that integrating technology into language teaching promotes active learning and facilitates learner – centered pedagogy. This makes students to react positively towards the subject, understand the concepts better and brings advancement in their use of creative and higher order thinking skills.

Technology provides many options for making teaching interesting and productive. With the development of Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN) the internet and the World Wide Web to new mobile technologies, English language teachers have the availability of the vast amount of materials to share, produce and use from outside the classroom. They can even bring language experiences from outside the classroom into their own classroom to suit their language teaching purpose best. Shi, Corcos and Storey (2001) conducted a research where they videotaped a hospital discourse in order to bring authentic language items from outside the classroom to the language learning classroom.

The development of multimedia technology has brought a great change in the field of education. It has brought a revolution in the methods of teaching English. No doubt multimedia technology serves as an extraordinary tool to enhance teacher's productivity, helps teachers in finding new teaching strategies and motivates students towards learning.

Thus the aim of this paper is to identify the benefits of integrating multimedia technology in English language classroom and will also suggest some pedagogical implications for its fruitful result.

**Literature Review**

Multimedia technology refers to computer – based software or interactive application that provides information & ideas through text, graphics, color, animation, audio and video in a single application. We can define multimedia in multiple ways. Multimedia according to Schwartz & Bechner (1999:08) is the "use of multiple forms of media in a presentation". Brooks (1997:17) defines multimedia as the "combined use of several media, such as movies, slides, music and lighting, especially for the purpose of education or entertainment". Smith and Woody (2000:220) defined multimedia at the use of

both visual aids and verbal descriptions to illustrate concepts.

The common thing among all definitions is the integration of multiple media elements into one whole providing numerous benefits for its end users.

Several studies have been conducted in the area of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) to prove that integrating multimedia technology in language classroom is always beneficial. Jackson et al (2006) founds that with the use of internet students have tremendously improved in their scores and grades. It has been researched that internet changes the interaction between students and teacher (Kern 1995) it changes their roles (Peterson 1997) and this makes learning more learner- centered (Warschauer, Turbee and Robert 1996). Gilakjani (2012) has declared multimedia as a strongest factor in English language teaching as it changes the roles of both teachers and learners in class and leads to higher learning.

Two way coding system (i.e., visual plus auditory) of multimedia helps students to comprehend the material during class and also in the retention of the material later especially during testing times (Najjar 1996). Secondly by providing visual and auditory senses to the students, multimedia technology can provide greater opportunities for learning linguistic components (Linfors 1987) Pope and Golub (2000) laid emphasis on the use of technology for effective teaching practices. They believe that learner's cognitive, metacognitive and effective learning repertoire is getting broaden with the use of computer based tasks. Kajder (2003) also supported the integration of technology in the language learning. According to him hypermedia (e.g. World Wide Web) is a very powerful tool for language learning as it gives learners more authentic learning environment.

**Use of Multimedia Technology in English Language Teaching: A Brief History**

Integration of media technology goes back to 1950's when some small language schools began to use the phonograph, broadcasts, movies and tape recorders in English language teaching. Then video projectors, slide shows and video cassette players in 70's & 80's have brought a kind of revolution in language teaching methodologies. Then by the late

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80's and early 90's language labs also became the part of every foreign language teaching & learning programme. However, by the mid 90's many multimedia language programs became available for teachers on the internet. Then in the early 2000's media technology has narrowed distance and has brought the whole world into one single community. This all has became possible with the use of video, pictures, animation, interactive games, CD's & DVD's internet, chat rooms, video conferencing etc. Digital learning provides us with needed information anywhere – anytime. And this concept of "anywhere – anytime" at present is catering uncountable learners. Warschauer & Healey (1998) divided the history of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), into three stages: Behaviourist CALL, Communicative CALL & Integrative CALL. Behaviourist CALL, which was implemented in 1960's & 70's follows the behaviourist theory of language learning. Language drill, stimulus – response, reinforcement, reward were its main features. This era marks a remarkable development of number of CALL tutoring System e.g. PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automotive Teaching Operations) in which students can practice extensively over vocabulary, grammar and translation at their own. Learning at their own pace is one of the significant contributions of behaviorist CALL.

In the late 1970'S & early 1980'S rejecting the behaviorist theories of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) innatist theories ( Krashen 1982) such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) started making its ways in the SLA classrooms. Instead of practicing over prefabricated language items, students in CLT produce & experience original language material through the process of discovery and negotiation. Students make use of the computer in language learning (Ahmad et al. 1985:478).They answer the instructor's questions thorough computers in which needed language software was already installed. Word processor and spelling & grammar checkers were then popular CALL

softwares (Taylor & Peraz, 1989).In this era of communicative CALL, students practice target language grammar items, vocabulary and meaning in meaningful situations. Instead of practicing on artificial situations made by the teachers they practice target language items explicitly through authentic situations & communication contexts.

The development of multimedia technology then moved to integrative CALL. Here all the language skills were integrated through computers in all the stages of second language teaching-learning process .With the help of computer & internet students were able to see & listen to the native speakers, encountering the authentic situations and were able to practice language in all its aspects of spoken & written form (Taylos & Perez 1989) in task – based context.

**Methodology**

Integration of multimedia technology in English language teaching has numerous benefits. It improves all the language skills tremendously. Teachers & learners usually have a positive attitude towards computers. The author is of believe that integration of multimedia technology raises learner's enthusiasm and motivates them to participate actively in the classroom activities, which makes the whole teaching learning process more learner- centered. To prove this, the author has conducted a survey at women's college, English Section, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India. The survey is based on a questionnaire that was prepared for this specific purpose and was administered on 100 students of undergraduate programme. The students are of same discipline of English studies. The questionnaire was composed of 10 statements on the integration & use of multimedia technology in ESL classrooms. The students were asked to check agree, I can't say & disagree against the statements. The students are well acquainted with the different aspects of technological devices as their teachers are making use of smart classroom and language lab to teach them.

The sample of questionnaire is as follows:

| S.No. | Statements | Agree | I can't say | Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | Multimedia technology in ESL classrooms is motivating & enjoyable. | | | |

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| 2. | Authentic material downloaded from internet makes the classroom more real & active. | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 3. | Training as well as entertainment both goes hand in hand. | | | |
| 4. | It brings learning for students at his/her own pace. | | | |
| 5. | Computer based communication gives an opportunity to the learners to interact with other students freely. | | | |
| 6. | It connects classroom to the world. | | | |
| 7. | It helps in improving all four language skills (LSRW). | | | |
| 8. | It gives an opportunity of self-assessment to the students. | | | |
| 9. | It's a waste of time if the teacher is not technologically literate. | | | |
| 10. | Traditional methods are better. | | | |

**Findings**

The below given Bar Graph 1 displays the result of the survey .conducted on bachelor 1st years students for the statements on integration of media technology in ESL classrooms.

**GRAPH**
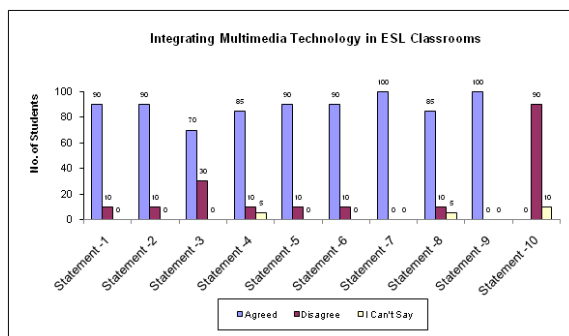


**Discussion of the Results**

Discussion of the results based on the above given finding in graph 1is as follows. The result for each statement is discussed under separate head.

**Statement 1:-** According to the finding 90% of the students agreed that using multimedia technology in ESL classrooms is highly motivating. Students believes that multimedia technology with the help of audio – visual & animation effects, offers a sense of reality and effectively attracts students attention, enhance their perception control & encourages them to participate in classroom activities hence increases their motivation level. 10% of the students do not have any idea regarding this and nobody is found disagreed with its use.

**Statement 2:-** Finding shows that 90% of the students agreed with the use of authentic material (e.g. real models of spoken English, Digital text, e-Books, oral modeling via text to speech synthesis etc.) downloaded from the internet. It provides them rich authentic situations with authentic English to be practiced upon hence makes learning more lively & active. Whereas 10% of the students didn't agree with the use of authentic material unless it is adapted by the teacher to suit the teaching needs best. Moreover teaching material is more effective when presented by teacher.

**Statement 3:-** Survey shows that 70% of the students agreed that media technology has potentials to train as well as entertain. But 30% of the students were of view that technology can't replace teachers. Teachers can train the students by understanding their abilities & intelligence level which a machine can't do. This finding is crucial & can't be overlooked.

**Statement 4:-** Finding shows that 85% of students agreed with this aspect of multimedia technology. They are of view that it provides a kind of autonomy to them. They can choose the language skill which they want to practice upon and practicing/learning material according to their level, learning skills & strategies, hence makes the classroom more learner-centered. But 10% of the students believe that the practicing/learning material should be thoroughly read, selected and crafted by the teacher before making it available for the students. And 5% of the students didn't have any idea about it.

**Statement 5:-** Finding shows that 90% of the students agreed with this statement. With the help of Language Lab, Chatting Room, Instant Messenger & other chat tools more passive and shy students can interact with other students even in faraway places, can take listening and speaking practice lessons and can practice their communicative ability without any interruption, fear & social anxiety. 10% didn't agree with this aspect. They are of view that it

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lacks face to face interaction and eye contact among students & between teacher & student, which is soul of any successful communication.

**Statement 6: -** According to the findings 90% of the students believe that multimedia technology connects to the world. When connected to the target culture, helps them in widens their knowledge about target culture. It helps students to achieve more updated information and educational resources than text books. But 10% are of view that internet can also be a reason of distraction.

**Statement 7:-** Finding shows that 100% of the students are of view that multimedia technology gives a good opportunity not only in practicing reading & writing but also in listening & speaking hence gives training in overall language skills. They can practice listening activities like listening to dialogue, story or comprehension passage, lectures etc. and then can answer questions based on the listened text. Likewise they can practice speaking skill after listening to the native speakers or through the lessons already fed by the teacher, through computers assisted programs. Thus making a blend of overall language skills is an indispensable teaching technique of multimedia technology.

**Statement 8:-** 85% of the students agreed to this statement. They can take general language test covering all language skills or a test measuring single language skill and then by answering short answer type questions, true false statements, multiple choice questions etc can assess themselves. But 10% of the students disagreed, as their ability to answer long questions or descriptive questions can't be judged by computers. 5% of the students didn't say anything about it.

**Statement 9:-** 100% of the students agreed with the aspect of teacher's computer competency. If teachers as well as students do not have enough training in the use of multimedia technology then teaching – learning process will be frustrating & time consuming.

**Statement 10:-** 90% of the students disagreed with this statement. They believe that teaching language through multimedia technology in far better than traditional methods. Traditional methods did not allow students to understand the structure, meaning & function of the language and hence make them passive recipients of knowledge. Whereas with multimedia technology they can explore upon all the language elements and can grasp the language more actively. For example power point templates, audio & visual aids (like computers, videos, projectors etc.) presented in a suitable & more real context facilitate their thinking, comprehension & interpretation ability & hence make them the active recipient of the language. These aids simulate the learners & motivate them to learn English language. Multimedia technology has shifted teacher-centered classrooms to the learner-centered classrooms.10% of the students didn't have any idea about this aspect.

**Conclusion & Recommendations**

The survey resulted in favour of integration of multimedia technology in teaching. Almost all the students agreed upon the use of multimedia in English language classrooms. It has many benefits for language teaching learning process as it brings language teaching in a holistic way. It highly motivates them towards learning English language actively. It provides learners knowledge of the language as well as the knowledge about how to use the language appropriately hence develops their communicative competence. It creates more authentic & real learning environment with audio – visual aids. It makes learners more autonomous and gives them an opportunity of self assessment & brings learning at their own pace and makes the teaching learning process more students centered & less time taken. It provides an easy integration of overall language skills & presents language in a holistic way. On the basis of the results of the study the following recommendations are drawn for the incorporation of Multimedia Technology in ESL Classrooms.

1. Multimedia Technology should be incorporated as a tool or an aid for teaching in the English language classrooms.
2. English Language teaching & learning material downloaded from the internet should be adapted by the teacher according to the teaching & learning needs.
3. Teacher's central and leading role as a facilitator should not be ignored in the application of multimedia technology.

4. Teacher should act as a facilitator, and an observer when students are on internet (without making them conscious) to save them from any distraction.

5. Students should be made free to select task & activities, already designed by the teachers, related to the topic on their own to practice thus providing them learning autonomy.

6. English language institutions should be equipped with updated hardware & software resources (e.g. computer, multimedia projectors, printers, visualizer, sound system) for the effective teaching learning results.

7. Adequate budget should be passed for the installation of updated and appropriate language software and hardware.

8. Language teachers as well as students should be given sufficient training in the use of technology for successful technological teaching & learning.

9. In every language institute there should be an easy availability of technical support & maintenance to avoid risk of technical breakdown or immediate troubleshooting when system problem occurs.

10. Curriculum & syllabus should be designed in a way giving provision to the technological incorporation.

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