

Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

English language teachers of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh have the responsibility of teaching English language learners in the classroom according to the prescribed syllabus. But the irony is that the syllabus and text books do not cover all language components. So, English language teaching (ELT) in the classroom only emphasizes certain components of the language. There are some components of language not covered in the syllabus, such as correct pronunciation, vocabulary, paralinguistic features, and activity based teaching. And another related issue is that limited periods have been allocated for the language class. English language teachers mainly focus on reading and writing and listening and speaking skills are less emphasised in the classroom. These are the drawbacks of the situation for students to learn and practice the language in the classroom. Limited time of class, fear of making mistakes and limited classroom practice are the cause of lack of confidence among the students in using the target language. The language learner requires more learning experiences, student and teacher interaction and increased number of periods for developing English language proficiency in the classroom. In the context of Aligarh Muslim University large classrooms are also one of the major problems in teaching and learning the English language, because in such an environment healthy interaction is not possible between teachers and students.

However, these shortcomings can be compensated by the use of **multimedia** inside and outside the English language classroom. The facility of multimedia is provided by Aligarh Muslim University at present through multimedia language labs installed in various institutions and departments. Zakir Hussain Engineering College, Department of English and Department of Linguistics are some of these. Smart classrooms have also been established in these places for special lectures, presentations, for debates and discussions and to provide knowledge from across the globe, to enhance language, soft skills, personality development of students, and to encourage innovative research and teaching skills with the use of multimedia technology.

However researchers have observed that the traditional method of English language classroom teaching and learning can no longer effectively fulfil the communicative needs of the students for language teaching and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The term multimedia is basically taken from the Latin word “Multum” and “medium” which denotes the composite of different media contents (Syed, 2008). Vaughan remarks that “multimedia is any combination of text, sound, animation, and video delivered by computer or other electronic or digitally manipulated means. It is a woven



Fig. 1 Multimedia Materials

combination of digitally manipulated text, photographs, graphic art, sound, animation, and video elements” (Vaughan, 2008).

Simply speaking the meaning of multimedia is the device in which with the help of the computer, information can be presented by means of audio, video, and animation.

In other words, multimedia is an area which is managed by **computers with the “integration of text, audio, graphics, animation, still and moving images video”** and any other media which can store, transfer, present and processes all kind of information digitally (Steinmetz, 2012).

Multimedia materials consist of a computer programme that includes “text along with at least one of the following: audio or sophisticated sound, music, video, photographs, animation, 3-D graphics, or high-resolution graphics” (Kozma, 1991:181).

Multimedia materials (MMM) are all that sort of technical equipment which helps us to exchange information in a greater sense. It transforms information into knowledge which is a process of activating the cognitive schemas of students and increases the power of human senses. This transformation may gain numerous forms, right from digitalized images to virtual reconstructions, from simple text to hyper-texts which allow bringing changes in the tool according to the requirements of students.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- I. To assess practices of students and teachers with regard to the use of multimedia materials (MMM)

- II. To study students' and teachers' opinions regarding the use of multimedia materials
- III. To examine the current status of MMM in the departments and institutions of Aligarh Muslim University.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- I. What are the students' and teachers' practices regarding the use of Multimedia Materials (MMM) for learning the English language?
- II. What are students' and teachers' opinions towards the use of Multimedia Materials?
- III. What are the problems faced by students in the use of MMM and what are their recommendations for enhancing the facility?
- IV. What is the status of available MMM in different departments and institutions of the university?

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H01: There will be **no significant differences** between MMM user and Non-MMM user students with respect to their **practices** regarding the use of multimedia materials for learning English.

H02: There will be **no significant differences** between MMM user and Non-MMM user students with respect to their **opinions** regarding the use of multimedia materials for learning English.

H03: There will be **no significant differences** in the **practices** of MMM user and Non-MMM user teachers of English language regarding the use of MMM.

H04: There will be **no significant differences** in the **opinions** of MMM user and Non-MMM user teachers of English language regarding the use of MMM.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to highlight the attitudes, practices and opinions of the students and teachers and the current status of the use of multimedia materials at Aligarh Muslim University. This area has not been studied comprehensively earlier

for English Language Teaching (ELT). The study also focuses on multimedia learning theory which derives supplementary support from Mayers' cognitive theory of multimedia learning (1997, 2001, and 2002). Multimedia materials especially computer-based technology such as audio, video, picture and animation are significant tools for developing effective communication skills among learners. This study will hopefully encourage and attract the attention of English language teachers and students towards the effective use of multimedia materials for developing English language skills. It is hoped that it will support the ESL teachers in implementing multimedia technology in such a way that will decrease the students' extraneous cognitive load.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Attitude: A tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, and situation which influences an individual's choice of action. (Online business dictionary).

Practice: To do something regularly or constantly as an ordinary part of life or to become better on it. (**Merriam Webster**)

Opinion: A belief, judgment or way of thinking about something and advice from someone with special knowledge. (**Merriam Webster**)

Multimedia materials user students are those undergraduate and post-graduate students of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh who are using multimedia technology for learning the English language in the English language lab and outside the language lab and are considered and labelled as **MMM user students** in the present study.

Non-Multimedia user students are those students who do not have an easy access to multimedia.

English language lab and they make inadequate use of technology for learning the English

Language. They are considered and labelled as **Non- MMM user students**.

Multimedia user teachers are those teachers who are frequent users of technology and take their students to multimedia language lab for effective teaching and learning in AMU, Aligarh, and are considered as **MMM user teachers** in this study.

Non-Multimedia user teachers are those English teachers who are neither making use of technology in their classroom nor taking their student to multimedia language lab for teaching the English language and they are considered as non-multimedia user teachers.

THESIS STRUCTURE

Introduction: This is the introductory part of the thesis which specifies the problems, basic understanding of the term multimedia materials, and objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses of the study, definition of the key terms and thesis structure.

Chapter 1. This chapter is entitled “Literature Review-I: Theoretical background” of the study. It deals with the basic concepts regarding multimedia materials such as, meaning, definitions, major components and types of multimedia materials. It also discusses historical background of multimedia materials, social software and free and open content for language learning such as web 2.0, social networking sites and mobile learning.

Chapter 2. This chapter titled “Literature Review-II: Application of Multimedia Materials in Teaching and Learning at Universities”. It deals with the National Policy on Education (1986) , its vision, mission and policy goal and steps taken by the government of India to use ICT. Moreover, it also gives a brief description of private institutes and companies which are providing ICT infrastructure for study. Further, this chapter highlights the application MMM for learning and teaching of different language skills and the justification for using multimedia technology in the educational set up.

Chapter 3. The title of this chapter is “Literature Review-III: Psycholinguistic and Sociocultural Perspectives on Multimedia Learning”. It discusses Mayer’s multimedia learning theory and principles of multimedia technology for second language acquisition. With the help of multimedia materials which use words, pictures and videos the learner is provided with meaningful “input” and facilities for interaction and collaboration which facilitate meaningful “output”. Moreover, the chapter has also explored different studies on second language acquisition with multimedia materials and advocated a model of cognitive processing in second language

acquisition which is centred on interaction model and cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML).

Chapter 4. This chapter mainly deals with the methodology of the empirical study. It describes the context of the study, participants, data collection instruments, data collection process, data analysis techniques and demographic analysis of participants. The methods used for the study is also justified.

Chapter 5. This chapter deals with the analysis of results from responses received from the MMM user and Non-MMM user students on the questionnaire on their practices and opinions regarding the use of MMM. In addition to this, comparison of mean scores of practices and opinions of MMM users and Non-MMM user students are also presented.

Chapter 6. Similarly, this chapter deals with the analysis of results from responses received from the MMM user and Non-MMM user teachers on the questionnaire on practices and opinions regarding use of MMM. In addition to this, comparison of mean scores of practices and opinions of MMM users and Non-MMM user teachers presented.

Chapter 7. This chapter gives a description of the current status of multimedia materials in the departments and institutions of AMU based on quantitative data received from teachers and students. It describes the context of study, participants, data collection instrument, procedure and results. The analysis of results is shown in tabular and bar graph form with proper explanation along in words with key findings.

Conclusion: This section presents the summary of key findings of students and teachers responses. Findings related to research questions and hypotheses are revisited. In addition to this, it highlights the general implications of the study for teaching language with MMM, provides some suggestions and acknowledges the limitations of the study.