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**Hemant Lata Sharma**  
Prof. Maharshi Dayanand  
University, Rohtak, Haryana,  
India.

**Pooja**  
Junior Research Fellow,  
Department of Education,  
Maharshi Dayanand University,  
Rohtak, Haryana, India.

## Enhancing students interest in English language via multimedia presentation

**Hemant Lata Sharma, Pooja**

### Abstract

It is often said that interest is the best teacher. In learning English language, sometimes students have certain barriers of understanding and they often reject to learn. As a result, it is very hard for many students to improve their English language learning level. To make the students learn more autonomously and effectively, it is necessary to make them be interested in learning. With new technological tools continuing to emerge, multimedia plays very important role in English language teaching. The use of Multimedia presentation offers a potentially venue for improving student understanding about language. This paper discusses changing trends in English language teaching-learning, highlights the concept of multimedia, explains theoretical basis of multimedia English teaching and also states the significant role of multimedia in motivating learner's interest in English language learning.

**Keywords:** Multimedia, English Language, Teaching-Learning.

### Introduction

With the spread and development of English language around the world, it has been learned and used by more and more speakers. According to David Graddol "it is the language at the leading edge of scientific and technological development, new thinking in economics and management, new literatures and entertainment genre....". The number of English language learners is increasing day by day, but for some students learning English language is one of the most difficult subjects they have learnt. For Due to the difficulties in learning, English language can make students lose their interest easily. Therefore, it is very important for teachers to be able to teach and arouse students' interest in the lesson in the classroom. It is within the benefit of education that teachers should use instructional strategies that are interesting and stimulating that make the students learn more effectively. Newer technology-based instructional strategies, incorporating the computer based learning materials; especially multimedia is widely recognized to hold great potential for improving the way that people learn (Mayer, 1999, Sweller, 1999; van Merriënboer, 1997) [16, 29, 31]. As a result, educators are now introducing more and various forms of software and multimedia presentation driven media into their classroom activities. These creative presentation systems produce a great deal of excitement and attract students' attention during English-language learning (Acha, 2009) [1].

### Changing Trends in English Language Teaching-Learning

English Language Teaching has tremendously changed over the centuries. When English entered in the curriculum of the students as a compulsory subject, it was a challenge for the English language teachers to teach as they taught English as a 'Know-ledge' subject not as a 'Skill' subject. So they adopted 'Grammar-Translation Method' in which the teacher used to explain every word to students in the native language to make them understand and learn English. So many other methods were also used such as bilingual method, direct method, the structural approach and the situational teaching, communicative language teaching etc. but no method was said to be a perfect method. Later on, overhead projectors, acted as another medium for the teacher dominated class room where teachers believed in the dictum of drill and practice. Audio-lingual method was another popular method but in the later years of 1970's, audio lingual method fell into disregard.

**Correspondence**  
**Hemant Lata Sharma**  
Prof. Maharshi Dayanand  
University, Rohtak, Haryana,  
India.

During 1980's and 1990's, there was a sweeping change over the existing trends then, and more emphasis was laid on authentic and meaningful contextualized discourse. Since then English Language Teaching seems to be swinging like a pendulum between the extremes of method as language teachers have ever been in search of better and more effective method of teaching. Moreover, the English Language Teaching trends that were very popular in the past have vanished today and have been substituted by innovative methods due to the all-pervading technology into all spheres of life. In this era, the educational institutions cannot remain mere venues for the transmission of a prescribed set of information from teacher to student over a fixed period of time rather the educational institutions must promote "learning to learn" i.e. the acquisition of knowledge and skills that make possible continuous learning over the lifetime. So it becomes the responsibility of the teachers to shape up accordingly to meet the demands of the day. The need of the day is to develop students' interest in their English language learning and to equip them with proficiency in the English language and this is possible only with a proper blend of modern technologies. The emerging and developing of multimedia technology and its application to teaching, traditional teaching is unfit for contemporary English teaching and therefore multimedia presentation featuring audio, visual, graphics and animation comes into full play in English class teaching and sets a favorable platform for reform.

### Concept of Multimedia

Multimedia can be described as "the combination of various digital media types, such as text, images, sound, and video, into an integrated multisensory interactive application or presentation to convey a message or information to an audience." It certainly has the potential to extend the amount and type of information available to learners. Well-designed multimedia helps learners build more accurate and effective mental models than they do from text alone. Recent surveys indicate that students enjoy attending classes that utilize multimedia presentations because they find these classes to be more interesting and exciting with multimedia. Multimedia offers remarkable opportunities for teaching English. Multimedia is made up of a number of elements; each having their own advantages. Velleman and Moore (1996) <sup>[30]</sup> report that in order for any multimedia system to be successful, these elements must be in balance; using each for what it does best and not letting one element dominate over the others.

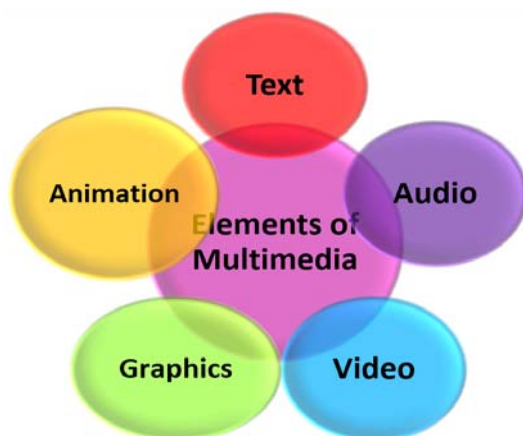


Fig 1: Elements of Multimedia

**Text** - Text is the most common element of multimedia presentation. It is used to communicate a concept or an idea. Text acts as the keystone tying all of the other media elements together. With multimedia technology, sound and pictures complement textual information to enhance the user's understanding and retention of the presented information. While dealing with text in multimedia it is very important to note that it is not the only means of communication but is most often used for titles, headlines, menus, navigation and content. The text in multimedia should be brief, to the point and attractive to get the attention of user.

**Audio**- Audio is one of the most appealing elements of any successful multimedia presentation. The impact of sound sets the mood and establishes the ambience of a presentation. It can be used in a number of ways in a multimedia application, for example, to reinforce a message or theme, or to catch the interest and alert the audience. As part of audio content in a multimedia system, we may use music, sound effects, or speech to accomplish the goals of our presentation. The audio that appears in a multimedia presentation can either be computer generated, or recorded and converted into a digital format.

**Video**- Video is defined as the display of recorded events on a television type screen. The embedding of video in multimedia applications is an immediate and powerful way to convey information (Philips, 1997) <sup>[23]</sup>. Video can stimulate interest if it is relevant to the rest of the information on the page. It motivates students in ways that are often superior to a teacher narrating them or a text describing them. Video can be used when introducing a new theme to motivate and contextualize learning; Video can also be used to give examples of phenomena or issues referred to in the text.

**Graphics** - Multimedia presentations are predominantly graphics based. Information communicated through pictures is easier to understand and retain. Graphic elements in a multimedia system could be still pictures (like photographs) converted to digital format with the help of scanners, or generated on the computer. They may be flat (or two dimensional), such as photographs and paintings, or they may appear solid (or three-dimensional), like sculptures and objects around us. They may be either static graphic elements or animated.

**Animation**- Animation is another element of multimedia. Animation can be defined as making objects on the screen change or move in real time. Research has shown that motion on the screen is important for holding viewer attention. Because of this, animation plays a major role in multimedia presentation. Animation can be used to illustrate points, teach facts or concepts, motivate students, demonstrate procedures and emphasize particular details or aspects of complex phenomena (Sponder & Hilgenfeld, 1994) <sup>[28]</sup> When the animation is congruent to the learning task, it can offer instructional benefits to the learners (Rieber, 1990) <sup>[24, 25]</sup>. Today Multimedia is increasingly accepted as a means of English language instruction since they affect more senses at a time. Furthermore, multimedia can serve as an important tool for students in their efforts to connect and apply classroom theory-based learning with the analysis of real-

world problems (Mbarha *et al.*, 2010) <sup>[20]</sup>. Moreover, teaching English with multimedia makes the English class more active than the teacher-centered model. Therefore, proper combination of multimedia and teaching methodology is appropriate to enhance students' interest during English language learning.

### Review of Related Literature

With this there has been a very significant proliferation of literature regarding the use of multimedia in teaching-learning of English language. Brinton (2001) <sup>[3]</sup>, supposes that multimedia tools serve as an important motivator in the language teaching process because "media materials can lend authenticity to the classroom situation, reinforcing for students the direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world". Additionally, integrating multimedia in the English classroom can increase creativity and communication among students. This provides more opportunity for students in accordance with their proficiency level, educational levels, and learning styles (Hollenbeck and Hollenbeck, 2004) <sup>[10]</sup>. Benjamin and Sivakumar (2008) <sup>[2]</sup>, ascertain the supremacy of the interactive Multimedia based learning courseware over the conventional method of instruction. Nwaocha (2010) <sup>[22]</sup>, suggests that multimedia presentations can improve students' understanding, enthusiasm, class attendance and satisfaction. For teachers, using multimedia in the instruction of English language creates learner-centeredness and helps students become active learners. This allows them to learn language according to their abilities, needs and preferences (Lu & Liu 2011) <sup>[14]</sup>. Gilakjani (2012) <sup>[7]</sup>. Also highlights the significant role of using multimedia in EFL classes, particularly in motivating learners' interest in English. Joshi (2012) <sup>[12]</sup>. Suggests that multimedia provides opportunity for interacting with various texts that give students a solid background in the tasks and content of the course. Kumar & Patil (2013) <sup>[13]</sup>. Studied the effectiveness of multimedia presentation for teaching English Grammar and indicated that the students exposed to Multimedia presentation, gained much higher scores in their particular topics taken for teaching English than students of the control group. Therefore Multimedia presentation being an innovative approach to teaching-learning process endless drill and practice without repetition, and provides immediate feedback to the learner on his/her progress. Sharma (2013) <sup>[27]</sup>, suggests that interactive multimedia is more suitable than conventional direct method of teaching English in relation to students' achievement and retention. Satyaprakasha & Sudhanshu (2014) <sup>[26]</sup>, finds that Multimedia significantly promotes achievement with respect to knowledge, understanding, application and total achievement. Mostly these writings unequivocally accept that multimedia technology plays a positive role in promoting activities and initiatives of student and teaching effect in English class.

### Theoretical Basis of Multimedia in English Language Instruction

The primary purpose of multimedia is to enhance learning. Hence, multimedia presentation needs to support contemporary approaches to learning and teaching where learners are viewed as active constructors of knowledge and teachers are facilitators of that learning process (Fenstermacher, 1986) <sup>[5]</sup>. Constructivism theory and cognitive psychology are two theoretical frameworks of multimedia in English language teaching.



Fig 2: Theoretical Basis of Multimedia English Instruction

#### Constructivism

Constructivism lays emphasis on the learner's active engagement during studying. Constructivist perspectives acknowledge that the learner builds understanding by evaluating new experiences in the light of prior knowledge. It is often discussed from two perspectives, cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. According to the cognitive constructivism, knowledge refers to restructuring and reorganizing the experience. Knowledge cannot be simply transmitted to the students but should be acquired through students' experience and discovery. Therefore, while studying, with the help of a teacher and other students, the learner obtains knowledge by construction of meaning. Fang (2006) <sup>[4]</sup>. Following the concept of (Fosnot, 1996) <sup>[6]</sup>. Explains that in social constructivism learning is the process of interacting and collaborating either among the students or between the students and the teachers. Constructivism encourages students to learn through personal experiences along with others' help and suitable learning material. The learning process based on constructivism focuses on learner-centeredness whereby the teacher acts as a facilitator. In constructivism, help establish a true student-centeredness and put English teaching and learning into a more enjoyable environment under the guide of constructivism theory. Therefore, implications for the use of multimedia resources in English language classroom need to promote active engagement in students and avoid being simply information repositories (Grabe & Grabe, 1998) <sup>[8]</sup>. Hence, educators should put new and effective modes, ways, and designing thoughts into multimedia teaching practice (Zhou, 2004) <sup>[32]</sup>.

#### Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology focuses on learners' learning process and characteristics. According to cognitive psychology cognition or mental activity involves the acquisition, storage, and use of knowledge and learning is not to acquire knowledge in a passive way but initiative procedure of information acquisition depending on learners' attitudes, demands, interests, habits, and their own backgrounds. An individual is regarded as being an active and constructive being rather than one who is a passive recipient of information, which is why multimedia language teaching and learning is effective. The rationale for using multimedia has been proposed by several studies, but the most distinctive one is by Mayer (2001, 2003) <sup>[19]</sup>. And Mayer and Moreno (2002) <sup>[21]</sup>. Mayer points out that multimedia learning promotes student understanding by mixing words. The technique depends on designing instructional message in

ways that are consistent with how human learns. Mayer's cognitive theory of multimedia learning (2001, 2003 and 2009) <sup>[17, 18]</sup>, is based on three assumptions: there are two separate channels (auditory and visual) for processing information, sometimes called dual coding theory; there is limited channel capacity; and learning is an active process of

filtering, selecting, organizing and integrating information based on prior knowledge. According to cognitive theory of multimedia learning, learners can receive information through senses by engaging themselves in five important cognitive processes:

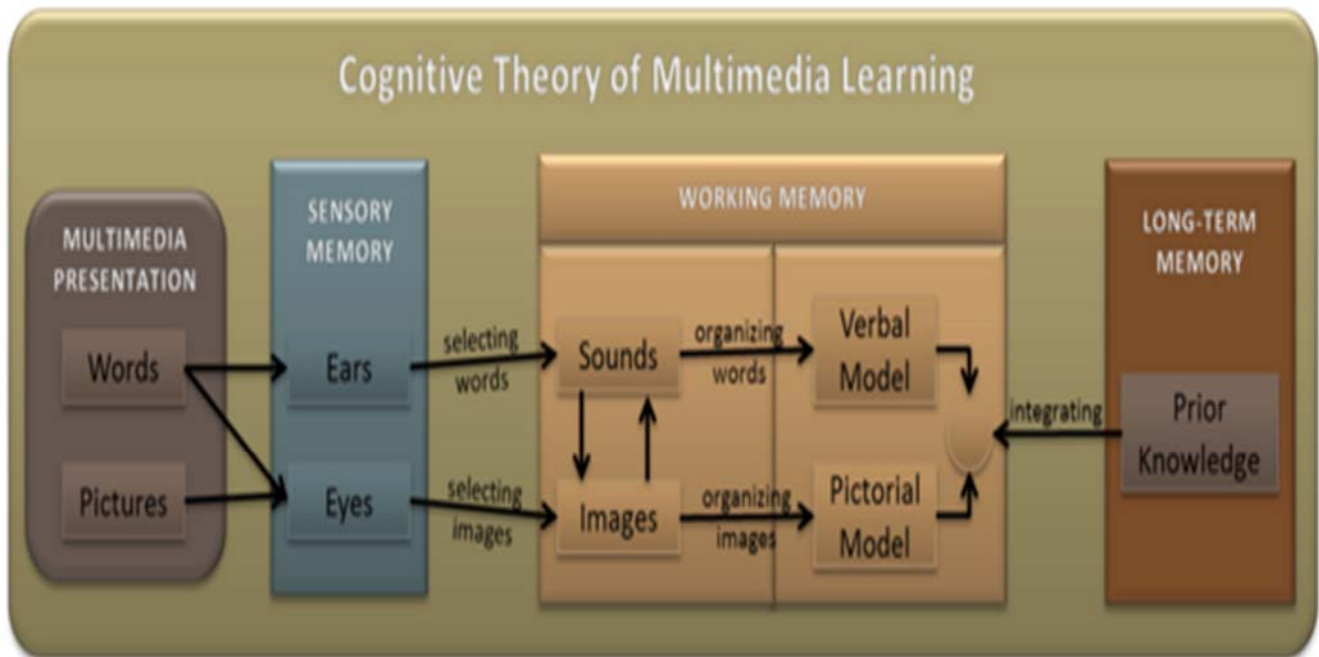


Fig 3: Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

The first cognitive process, selecting words, is applied to incoming verbal information to yield a text base. The second process selecting images is applied to incoming visual information to yield an image base. The third cognitive process, organizing words, is applied to the word base to create a verbally-based model of the to-be explained system and forth process, organizing images, is applied to the image base to create a visually-based model of the to be explained system. Finally, the fifth process, integrating, occurs when the learner builds connections between corresponding events (or states or parts) in the verbally-based model and the visually-based model. (Richard Mayer 2001). Multimedia applied in the language class can offer the authentic English materials conveniently and accurately. It can sustain learners' participation by using the multimedia's integration of text, sound, animation, graphics and images to present the learning content in a multi-dimensional way (Matlin, 1989). Therefore, a teacher's responsibility is not to fill in the students' brain with a large amount of knowledge but to arouse students' interests and desires to learn.

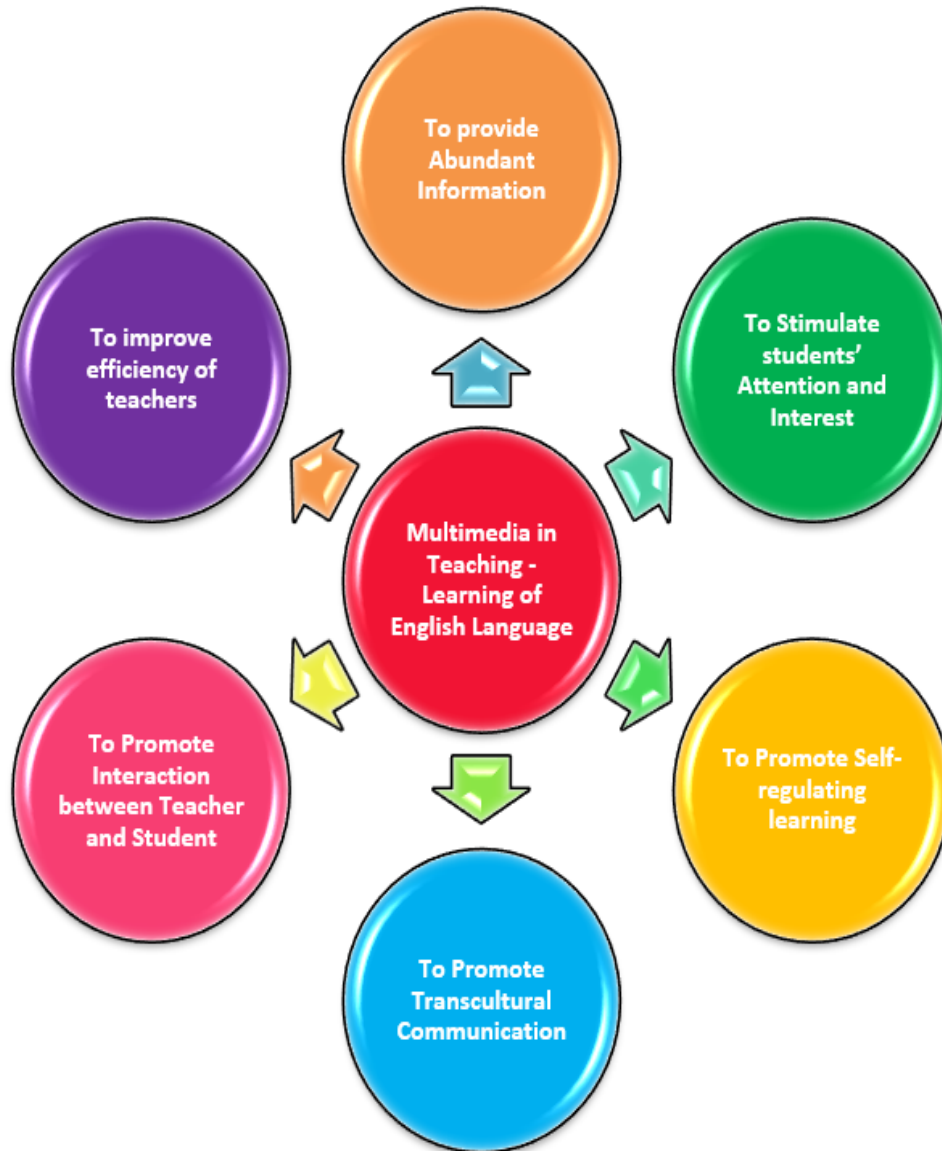
### Multimedia in Motivating Learner's Interest in English Language Learning

There is no denying that the success of teaching depends on the interest of students to the subject, and their desire to learn it but technological development can critically affect our behavior and expectations. Regarding multimedia in teaching language, the advantages of authenticity, interactivity, various accessible resources, and combinations of pictures, sound and text are obvious. In conventional teaching, students are focused on listening to the live demonstration by teacher or fellow students or oneself. But the high motivation to study English is observed by using multimedia which

gives a variety of forms of teaching from listening to audio records and watching video and working on computer programs. Teachers with multimedia presentation can be well equipped with more information at a click. Pronunciation, accent, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening and speaking skills can be taught using multimedia presentation. Students' creative, analytical and productive skills can be honed by showing colorful pictures, inspiring speeches by great people. Multimedia is a universal means, as it can be used for teaching and also aids to make the studying process effective, interesting and accessible in the following manner:

### To provide Abundant Information

Multimedia provides all kinds of information, creates abundant learning scenario, and combines existing technology, making language learning to have more assisted resources. In addition, multimedia also helps the learners to cooperate with and learn from each other. Multimedia learning environment could maintain learners' high motivation, increase interaction, promote schoolwork achievements, create virtual scenario, integrate various kinds of media contents and technology into a single interface, and help learners to learn language (Jones, Squires, Hicks, 2008) <sup>[11]</sup>.



**Fig 4:** Multimedia in Teaching - Learning of English Language

**To stimulate students’ Attention and Interest**

In traditional spoon-feeding teaching method, teachers are seen as the providers of knowledge and the students dutifully but passively assimilate the teachers’ words of wisdom, working their way boringly through the textbook, reading the text word by word and too much focusing on detail information and structural analysis. Many students are tired of this type of traditional English classes and no longer have enthusiasm or interest for study. Compared with the traditional English teaching, multimedia is good for arousing students’ interest and motivating students to study English. Multimedia assists the teacher to integrate the pictures, music and video into the courseware and make the Content more colorful with direct positive results for their achievement.

**To Promote Self-regulating learning**

In traditional classroom students tend to consider their teachers the main source of their knowledge and they seldom use their initiative to solve the problems. But the ever-increasing necessity for self-regulating learning has brought new perspectives to the teaching profession and traditional ideas about teacher’s roles. With the use of multimedia technology self-study mode can be adopted and students can be asked to do lots of activities of their own. Subsequently,

the learners can actively put their previous experience into the new information working together with their partners by searching, reasoning and analyzing according to their own strategies so that they deal with the problems successfully. In the multimedia environment, learners do not confine themselves to the textbooks and relevant reference books; instead, they explore the abundance of online information.

**To Promote Transcultural Communication**

The multimedia courseware can not only enhance students’ interest and enlarge their knowledge but also it can offer the students to get display of vivid cultural background, rich content and true-to-life language materials, which are much natural and closer to life. Using multimedia can rapidly demonstrate background knowledge on the topic prior to reading, through appropriate pre-reading activities and help the students construct relevant schema. Grasping information through various channels the teacher can ask students to pay attention to the different cultures. These will forcefully make the students actively participate in class discussion and communication.

**To Promote Interaction between Teacher and Student**

According to the New Oxford Dictionary of English, “interaction” refers to the “mutual or reciprocal action or

influence". Teacher-student interaction is an integral part of language classroom teaching for it builds up rapport between the teacher and students. Using multimedia in context creation creates a good platform for group work and interaction between teachers and students, while at the same time providing a language environment that improves on the traditional classroom teaching model. For instance, while reading, the teacher can divide the students into several groups according to their interest or other factors, and then ask students to fulfill the blank of the crossword puzzle by clicking the keys to remember the new words, and ask them to match the broken map correctly by clicking and drawing with the mouse through group discussion. And at the same time, the computer can evaluate the result immediately. In this way, teachers in the classroom no longer blindly input information and force students to receive it in a passive way, rather they act as facilitators.

### To improve efficiency of teachers

In traditional English classrooms, emphasis is given on teachers' instruction. Teachers spend most of their time on writing the vital language points and important information on the chalkboard. The multimedia classrooms enrich teaching content and break the "teacher centered" teaching pattern and fundamentally improve class efficiency. With the help of multimedia teachers can make the best of class time as they do not need to write the same language points several times for the different classes. They can use the button and keyboard to show significant content in a few seconds, which not only save a lot of time in the class, but also release teachers from heavy labor (Wang, 2008) [32]. Besides, as the internet has been brought in the teaching English class, multimedia is connected with the network and goes beyond time and space, creates more vivid, visual, authentic environment for English learning.

### Conclusion

Gone are the days when teaching of English was restricted to all that the teacher had to say to the learners, a situation which made learners inactive in the teaching-learning situation. Today, the time has come for teachers to focus on technology for mobilizing the students' initiative, arousing the students' learning interest in English language. Multimedia instruction fulfills this target by utilizing modern education technology reasonably. Multimedia can be utilized by teachers to enhance teaching and learning situations. These are used to make learning more interesting, motivating, stimulating and meaningful to the students. Therefore, multimedia has become an indispensable tool in English language classrooms to find the best ways for both students to learn effectively and teachers to teach efficiently.

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