EFFICACY OF MASS MEDIA IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract:
In today's world where technology permeates in every nook and corner, it is indispensable for the language teachers to forgo the use of mass media in the classroom. Effective usage of mass media can foster learner's learning experience. Moreover, it also enhances the collaborative learning among learners. Researches have proved that the use of mass media either an auditory form or visual form acts as a stimulus in enhancing the four basic skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a much more exciting and effective manner. Therefore, the present paper attempts to study the efficacy of mass media in teaching English to undergraduate Engineering students in the university. Moreover, the study discusses the possibilities and limitations in exploiting the mass media in the English classroom.

Key words: Mass Media, stimulus, audio visual, technology, collaborative learning

INTRODUCTION
In this digital world the use of technology is ubiquitous and students' engagement with mass media is tremendous. Besides, technology has entered into our classroom, thereby pushing learning beyond the four walls of the classroom and the textbooks. Hence, it is indispensable for the language teachers to forgo the use of mass media in the classroom. Effective usage of mass media can foster learner's learning experience. Mass media plays a significant role in all walks of life and its intrusion in the English classroom can create wonders in the performance of the students. The use of the mass media resources can facilitate deeper learning such as problem solving skills and creative skills needless to mention cooperative learning. Furthermore, the amalgamation of sounds and visuals makes the learners understand the concept faster and their retention becomes stronger. Teaching with technology can deepen student's learning by supporting instructional objectives [1].Therefore, the present paper attempts to study the efficacy of mass media in teaching English to undergraduate Engineering students in the university. Moreover, the study discusses the possibilities and limitations in exploiting the mass media in the English classroom.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Kress [2] has affirmed that "the medium of books and mode of writing is giving way and in many domains has already given way to the constellation of medium of the screen and mode of image" (9). In addition, Gurzynski-Weiss [3] quotes Salomon who asserts that novel ideas and concepts can be easily comprehended when it is presented both in verbal and visual form. Further, "learner's attention and cognitive engagement are essential for language learning as it allows learners to focus on new information and to solidify form-meaning connections" (62). Tafani [4] in her research article on "Teaching English through Mass Media" states that the use of mass media for teaching English "provide students with lots of inside and outside classroom activities, promoting extensive reading by giving the students, the confidence and the ability to continue their reading outside the classroom and above all they enhance motivation"(83). In addition, Sad [5] is of the opinion that utilization of media technology breaks the monotony of traditional class teaching and makes learning enjoyable and stimulating" (35). Further, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson [6] supported the view that technology provides teaching resources and brings learning experience in the learners' world. Through using technology, many authentic materials can be provided to learners and they can be motivated in learning language (116). Hence, it becomes imperative for the teachers to use mass media in the classroom for an effective and meaningful learning experience.

METHODOLOGY
Firstly, in order to find the impact of mass media on the learners, a preliminary test was conducted which was then followed by a survey and finally the results were validated using an experiment. The preliminary test was conducted in an informal and interesting way wherein the learners were exposed to a selective number of audio files. The selected audio files had only the background music or BGM besides it was restricted to only ten to fifteen seconds. For this purpose the background music of the regional advertisement and the sounds of theme music like Warner Bros, BBC, and Twentieth Century Fox were played in the class.

Subsequently, oft quoted lines from Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and quotes of other renowned poets and writers were read in the class. The objective was to understand, analyse and evaluate the impact of mass media on the students' retention and their ability to recall. The outcome of the experiment was affirmative and ascertains that the learners were able to remember and identify the theme music and advertisements within a fraction of a second by just listening to its background music (BGM) whereas it took a lot of time and by giving prompts that the students were able to identify the famous lines of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Frost. Students identified the audio files of advertisements and music as quick as a flash, whereas they took time and clues to guess the familiar quotes like "To be or not to be", "All the world's a stage", "They also serve who only stand and wait", "I wandered lonely as a cloud" and "Miles to go before I sleep". It is an undeniable fact and true to the statement of Willingham [7] "visual media helps students retain concepts and ideas".

Secondly, to find out the efficacy of media usage in teaching English Language a survey was conducted among the first year undergraduate engineering students using a two point Likert Scale of agree/disagree type. One hundred students were chosen for the survey. Keeping in mind the aim of the study the following research statements were framed. The use of mass media in the English classroom:

1. Breaks the monotony and makes the class interesting
2. Leads to a better understanding of the concepts
3. Extends the learning time
4. Encourage Collaborative Learning
5. Enhances analytical skills
6. Fosters creative thinking
7. Promotes group discussion

8. Proliferates their word power

DISCUSSION
The number of students who participated in the survey is hundred. Their response for each of the above mentioned research statements were given in fig.1.

Fig.1
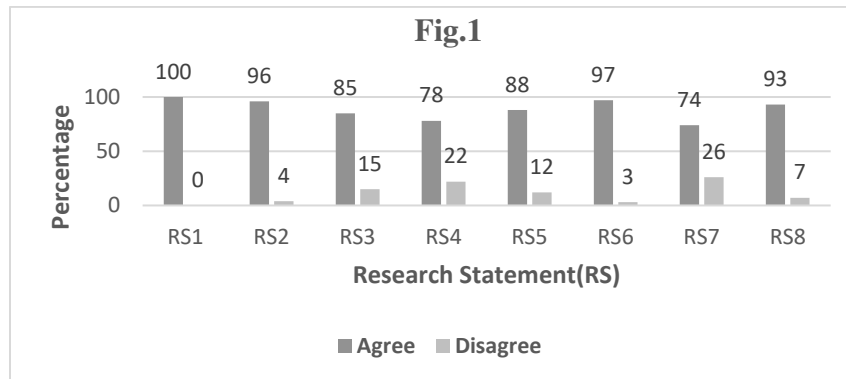
Traditional classrooms are slowly replaced by technological classrooms, catering to the needs of the Gen Z learners. Nicolaou [8] remarks that the Gen Z learners look forward for a learning environment that should "adapt to their existing skills, needs and prior knowledge to be effective" (2). Similarly, students who are reticent respond very well when visuals are used in the classroom [9]. True to the above perceptions, the survey results reveal that all the students agreed to the research statement that the use of mass media for English language teaching in the classroom breaks the monotony and makes the class more interesting. As stated by Amin (et.al) [10] the use of mass media in the classroom makes the students "concentrate on their lessons as it becomes more interesting and enjoyable" (73). Further, 96% of the students agreed to the second research statement that the use of mass media always leads them to a better understanding of the concepts and only a negligible 4% disagreed with the research statement. In his research article on students' perception of the use of electronic media in the English classroom, Adebayo[11] has stated that "62 out of 180 believed that employing electronic tools help improves student's understanding of the subject matter" (8-9). When compared to the findings of Adebayo the results of the present study is higher.

It was found that a sweeping 85% of the students accepted the fact that by using the mass media their study time is extended. As stated by Goldstein [12], learners reflect on ideas and concepts outside of class (11) wherein their study time is not limited to the class and it is extended. Only 15% of the students disagreed to the statement. When compared with the research statement three, the fourth research statement i.e. Use of mass media encourages collaborative learning is slightly varied wherein 78% of them agreed to this objective. Beach [13] comments that at present, K-12 media specialists are of the opinion that the mission of the media is centred on the concept of learning based on the idea of collaborative and inquiry –based learning activities remarks.

Likewise, 88% of the students agreed to the research statement that their analytical skill is enhanced because of mass media usage, whereas 12% did not agree to the statement feeling that analytical skills cannot be enhanced through the use of mass media in the English classroom.

Furthermore, 97% of the students agreed that mass media usage fosters creative thinking. As per Charlie's definition that "technology is a craft or skill to produce something or achieve a goal which provides a means for creativity" quotes Fitriah [1] in the article titled "The Role of Technology in Teachers' Creativity Development in English Teaching Practices" (178). Only 3% of the students felt that mass media does not foster their creative thinking.

Besides boosting creative thinking, the use of mass media promotes group discussion. A total of 74% students agreed to this research statement, moreover felt when activities through audio visual aids are used in the classroom urges them to discuss on the topic and enhances their argumentative skill. Gurzynski –Weiss [3] states that having students interact with their communication partners is also believed to facilitate learning (62). These kind of pair or group discussions harness student's argumentation skill and provides an opportunity to present their arguments orally.

Wang Shih Ping and Yih-Lan Chen [14] in their research article commented that videos and movies had fascinated students and had enhanced their word power. The survey result of the present study with reference to the research statement on the efficacy of mass media in the English classroom proliferates the vocabulary acquisition of the learners shows that 93% of the learners have agreed that they have learnt a lot of new words, phrases and to some extent pronunciation of certain words through their exposure to mass media in their classroom. Therefore, from the survey, it is clearly evident that on an average more than 88% of the students have felt and experienced the influence of media in their learning process.

Moreover, to validate the efficacy and the choice of appropriate media, an experiment was conducted in the first year undergraduate engineering classroom at the university. The task was to assess the speaking skills of the students through their ability to introduce themselves. Introducing oneself involves a SWOT analysis. On one hand, the professor gave a lecture on the topic "SWOT Analysis". On the other hand a video on "How to make a personal SWOT analysis" was shown in the class. The link of the YouTube video being (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dlLw7_v_Do). A snap shot of the video is given in fig.2.

Fig,2.

After listening to the lecture, the students were asked to write down the concepts they understood. Students were able to recall only a few points. The same activity was carried out by the students after watching the animated video. Students were able to jot down almost all the points with reference to the SWOT analysis. This experiment clearly states that the use of appropriate media indeed has a positive effect on the students and it is evident by their performance. Further, Lin [15] asserts that each learner is unique and has his own individual learning behaviours because of their learning abilities, attitudes, motivation, and so on (6). Moreover, mass media like television, films, internet, and social media like google, face book, YouTube etc. help transform teachers' creativity into reality and support their teaching. Such usage of media prompts even a taciturn and timid student to express himself or herself both in spoken and written form. Felton [16] opines that "seeing is not simply a process of passive reception of stimuli, but also involves active construction of meaning" (61).

LIMITATIONS
In spite of digital technology becoming ever more ubiquitous, Kelly [17] is of the opinion that many teachers find it difficult to integrate technology into their classrooms (40). She quotes the barriers as distinguished by Kocha. The barriers are of two types, namely external and internal. Hardware, software, infrastructure, training and support are considered as external barriers. The internal barriers include teacher's vision, beliefs, perceptions, values and their ability to handle technology in the classroom [17]. It should be clearly understood that the use of mass media is a supplementary tool for teaching the language. There are some limitations and challenges while using media in the classroom. They are as follows:

1. Facilities like Smart Board, LCD projector, internet connectivity, the sound system may not available in all the classrooms.
2. Teachers should be proficient in handling technology properly.
3. There is a possibility of students turning into passive observers than active participants in the classroom.
4. Planning and preparation is time taking.

In developing educators for the digital age, Breen [18] explains that teachers should have a sense of self-direction, not just in terms of their own learning, but in taking charge of the context (110). In addition, care should be taken in choosing the appropriate medium for teaching the concepts. As Young and Bush [19] suggest that teachers should "avoid the temptation to use technologies without understanding the pedagogical implications of using them" (8).

CONCLUSION
Rhoades [20] iterates the perception of Rubin and Graber that learners are attracted to a specific media source to receive gratification, and once they receive that needed gratification they probably learn more from that media. So, as academicians, it is the responsibility of everyone to provide the right type of media and gratify their student's need for information. (34). As Krashen[21] in his theory of Second Language Acquisition asserts that a classroom should create a congenial situation that encourages a low filter which includes motivation, self-confidence and low level of anxiety among the students. An effective usage of media in our classroom can definitely create such an ambience which not only increases the motivational level of the students but reduces their anxiety level. Proper planning and the choosing the right medium for teaching will mitigate all the perceived barriers and create a positive and valuable teaching learning experience. To conclude, appropriate and effective use of media in the language classroom can definitely enhance the language proficiency of the post millennial learners.

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