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UPGRADING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING VIA MASS MEDIA ; VIDEOGAMES

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Abstract

Language is a dynamic process, necessarily participates truly in upgrading students' mental and cognitive ability. English as an international language developed as a second language and foreign language mostly all over the world. The matter which makes it possible to review the master pieces in literature in the original, listen to music compositions which are widely known all over the world and realize their meaning. Internet pages mostly spread in English, computer programs and applications are all in English as well, household devices and up-to-the-minute technologies are all named in English in everyday life and even feelings and emotions are best expressed in English. Movies ,songs, video games all share English as an addressing language. This term-paper is intended to shed light on the role entailed by mass media in general and videogames in particular in upholding English learning, to achieve the aim of the study a sample of (30) undergraduate students from English department at the college of Education/ Ibn-Rushd/University of Baghdad for the academic year 2021-2022 been chosen to respond to the items of the questionnaire on the contribution of media in general and videogames in particular in enhancing English classroom. Having the data been analyzed ,the results positively prove the role entailed by mass media in upholding English learning.

Keywords: upgrading, mass media, videogames.

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1.1 Introduction: Media supply teachers and students with innovative and useful ideas. The matter which enables teachers to satisfy students' various interests and needs.

They also supply students with much language practice through handling activities by using newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, movies, books, Internet, and tasks which promote language skills ;reading, writing, speaking and listening. As a matter of fact, media amuse students and inspire developing English inside and outside the classroom, endorsing extensive reading by promoting the students' confidence and motivation .Media "inform, amuse, startle, anger, entertain, thrill, but very seldom leave anyone untouched". (Shirley Biagy, 1996).

1.2 Literature Review

Mass media denotes to media technologies used to publicize information to a widespread audience. The strategic role of mass media is to communicate various messages through television, movies, advertising, radio, the internet, magazines, and newspapers. Preferred movies on streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video, news on TV and radio, and articles in newspapers and magazines make mass media an essential part of daily life routine due to infinite influence on people the world over, marques use numerous platforms to appeal to leads and customers and pitch their goods. In modern world. Companies run a ceaseless marathon to achieve success with the aid of mass media. Brands utilize either digital or traditional media to associate with target audience and shape brand awareness. Businesspersons consider numerous platforms to express a company's image and create a good reputation. With mass media, brands can successfully endorse their goods and services, reach broader audiences, boost brand engagement, and escalate sales volume. Along years, the influence of mass communication has amplified significantly because of the progresses made. Thus, the main features of mass media could be summarized as;

- 1.They charm widespread audience,
- 2.They communicate a communal message,
- 3.They communicate along distance,
- 4.They are live-streamed through various channels, such as TV, the internet, radio, and newspapers;
- 5.They have heterogeneous public. <https://sendpulse.com/support/glossary/mass-media>

1.2.1 Types of Mass Media

Mass media can be classified into four main types;

Print media. They range from ads to tokens and considered as the simplest and oldest ways to contact the masses. Basically, print media refer to newspapers, which are the principal sources of information. Later, they have been expanded to journals, books, and magazines.

Outdoor media. Ambient marketing is a best example of modern outdoor media. Marques use unfamiliar locations and items to sponsor their products. Folgers, for instance. This brand of coffee uses manhole covers to endorse coffee in a distinctive and striking way. Thus, places like public transport, bus stops and shops can serve innovative companies as places for advertising .

Broadcasting media. By the aid of an electronic broadcasting medium, audio and video content is circulated to a disseminated audience . Television, radio, video, and games appeal to heterogeneous audiences, people who differ in age, background, views, goals, and interests.

Digital media. There are more than 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide in 2021, that means that the world is reliant on on digital media. Nowadays, brands sponsor their goods and services through sites, YouTube, Facebook, and more. Besides, companies often implement Instagram marketing and Facebook advertising to pitch their products.
<https://sendpulse.com/support/glossary/mass-media>

1.2.2 Mass media and Education

Learning a foreign language is impossible apart from the realities of life and culture of the target language. Modern textbooks do not normally offer an adequate amount of authentic texts and exercises that contribute effectively in language instruction. Magazines and newspapers, as the media, besides the movies, songs, videogames are an essential part of this culture. By reviewing these media texts , language learners can understand and master the features of language and everyday life. When learning a foreign language, students logically anticipate the opportunity to communicate in that language (Farmer: 2008) .

Education should recruit students for real life communication. Nowadays, many people live in the world where the media are omnipresent and as Tiffani(2014)according to www.elt.oup.com/student/headway/?cc=cz&sellLanguage=cs points out, “media are important because we get to know the world through using them”. They act as means which inspire students with the information and experiences about the world. That’s why media is considered to be a useful instrument, which can help students with their learning. Clark & Morrison(2014)point out that “educators have examined the impact of media on learning since at least 1912, when the American psychologist Edward L. Thorndike recommended pictures as a labor saving device for instruction”.

Moreover, English teachers have utilized various types of media for conveying instruction and supporting learning since 1912. Mass media such as newspapers, movies, radio and television have been used alongside with the traditional educational media such as textbooks or chalkboards. Nowadays media available today is so wide. English teachers can work interactively with whiteboards, notebooks and tablets . Media nurture, promote and sustain ancient healthier values and help students be more responsible for their own learning. Media can promote a lot the ethical and civic values in students’ minds due to the fact that Today’s students are tomorrow’s leaders. Teachers need to instill the values in them because “Raw minds can blossom better as they retain and walk the better values”. Actually, media is responsible for not only replicating values of a society but also upgrading values to a high level. Internet, videogames, books, movies, music

TV, radio, magazines, newspaper, pamphlets are the most eminent forms of mass media that each affects deeply the student's conduct patterns in a different manner. Values constitute the core of the society. They truly impact upon society culturally and socially. (https://mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=45940).

1.2.3 Mass media and English Teaching

Language instruction necessitates the update of material, development of methods, administrative forms and means of teaching activity directed on students' intellectual development, training of skills of independent learning with information and tacit knowledge for practical tasks fulfillment which can be applied to real-life situation. Lack of such skills frustrates the student and limits the opportunity to succeed, adapt and raise a competitive sense among students. Directions on innovative students' development, the necessity of consideration of their educational, social, economic, cultural and communicative needs necessitate Mass Media usage in educational process. Recently, the techniques of Mass Media usage in the foreign languages instruction process are highly developed the way that education has become more exciting, interesting and emotionally-saturated for them. Speech influence in the field of mass communication, Nauka, (1990)

Whatever media is utilized in the EFL classroom; online dictionary, a simple videogame, a magazine extract, a short video or a tablet application, it is frequently used for the sake of simulating the real world inside the classroom. As Chan (2011:132) indicates, "media are essentially realia to be brought into a classroom from the outside world in an attempt to make language activities appear more realistic, more interactive, and therefore, more meaningful". Moreover, Erbaggio et al (2014): state that the authentic materials "are regarded as motivators and as means to overcome the cultural barrier to language learning". And that "using authentic materials allows students to connect with the target culture in a more personal way than if the culture is presented uniquely through someone else's narrative" (e.g. the authors of the English textbook). That means utilizing media in EFL classrooms is indispensable for a fruitful second language acquisition.

1.2.4 The Advantages of Media in English Classes

Media can simply embellish English class in many ways. Their great benefit is that most of them are a multimodal level, i.e. they are a mixture of, sounds, words and images or they even work through the tangible channels. They enhance and push up students with learning English because of the fact that the more senses are involved in the process of learning, the better will be the understanding of the subject. ([/elt.oup.com/student/headway/?cc=cz&selLanguage=cs](http://elt.oup.com/student/headway/?cc=cz&selLanguage=cs)) Furthermore, media can supply teachers with skills to carry out various novel techniques in EFL classrooms, which necessarily results in encouraging learning outcomes. For instance, students can review a magazine article or an online story and elicit context and the meaning of the words within the text through the associated photos. Simply, the reasons behind developing media in language classes can be concluded as indicated by (Knill:2007);

- reconsider the subject
- elucidate real life applications
- clarify things better
- handle real life problems
- augment a discovery component
- enhance color to the subject
- halt the monotonicity of a lesson
- custom audio-visual channels
- share teaching tools with other teachers
- shape a lesson in a better way
- get students more involved
- navigate students' interests

1.2.4 Videogames and English Learning

For effective language there are five broadly well-defined requisites ; meaningful context, authenticity, motivation, freedom to make mistakes, and learner autonomy. In fact, the power of meaningful context combined by authenticity in presenting new language material would definitely create a genuine need to interact and communicate. And, as all teachers would confirm learners would perform successfully when they are motivated, free to learn, not to worry about their mistakes, and take the responsibility of their own learning .One of the most attractive media for students are videogames; videogames enhance each of the building blocks of effective learning by providing,(<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/blog/how-do-video-games-provide-effective-learning>)

- a strong and engaging narrative (context)
- purposeful interactions (authenticity)
- emotional engagement (motivation)
- freedom to fail (mistakes)
- opportunities for independent decision making (learner autonomy).

1.2.4.1 Context – A strong narrative

Context is the superglue that helps us connect the new information to what we already learn about the world. The fact is that when we learn a language, we handle a variety of topics like family, music or sports ,i.e a learner can acquire words through certain context and it is going to be an easy task to recall these vocabularies through a context.

Video games constitute an excellent context by giving a robust and attractive narrative. i.e. a story. Humans are reinforced to associate with stories. A strong narrative is captivating because it evokes an emotional reaction, which in turn makes it unforgettable. Accordingly, storytelling is such an influential means in marketing, , business, media and politics. Storytelling is influential especially with young learners because children unlike adults rely on episodic memory much more. i.e. recalling actual facts and events they experienced that are associated together in learning.

Video games in general, and Adventures in particular, offer a resilient and appealing tale in which the student is intrinsically motivated to contribute.

1.2.4.2 Authenticity – Purposeful interactions

As a matter of fact to be able to use the second language (L2) is more better than realizing facts about it. To make an order in a café in a foreign is more important than to know parts of speech in English .i.e what matters is communication and meaning. Simply, ‘I’d like a cup of coffee, please,’ This is because in real life, we usually do things when we have a need or a reason behind .i.e. ‘intrinsic motivation’.

Video games offer similar intrinsic motivation to interact in a purposeful context. In a game, there’s simulation to real daily life; therefore, the player(the student) would perform the actions and tasks just in real life, that’s why learning the words which could meet the situation is going to be a lovely task ,the matter which results in better learning experience.

1.2.4.3 Motivation – Emotional engagement

Learner motivation and learning outcomes are correlated language classroom. Engaged learners are attentive and inquisitive and mostly do better than those who are disinterested or distracted. Video games are very good at grasping the story, the challenges and the rewards within the game to activate emotional reaction which is directly linked to motivation.

Learners are encouraged to solve the language puzzles because it ensures their progress within the game. The students are encouraged to proceed in their learning, through the environment and the characters they encounter. The language is built into the communications within the game. To progress, players have no choice but to interact in English.

1.2.4.4 Mistakes help you learn – Freedom to fail

When learning a language, mistakes can be occasionally advantageous when learners are provided with the chance to detect and reproduce on them in a calm atmosphere. Video games are an outstanding provider of lots of no risky opportunities to exercise .

1.2.4.5 Autonomy – Independent Decision Making

In teaching contexts, learner autonomy is an indicator of success. The more involved the learner is in learning process, the more abundant the results will be. In language classrooms, learners are motivated to improve study skills together with language skills viz. listening, writing,

speaking and reading – keeping vocabulary lists , drawing mind maps, developing strategies for exam taking, listening and prompt reading,

In video games to be an independent decision maker is obviously nurtured across the nature of the task handled : the player has to find out ways out of thorny status quo, commonly to come back to the starting point and start all over again so as to go further within the game. By doing this, the players not only progress their curiosity, but also determination, problem-solving skills and self-confidence, and that necessarily will be reflected on their performance in language class. www.cambridgeenglish.org/blog/how-do-video-games-provide-effective-learning.

1.2.6 Internet and English Learning

Internet is not only a foundation of trustworthy material in English but also a basis of data about all types of topics supposed to be raised to discuss in the classroom and all together a source of qualified knowledge for teachers presented as resources, articles, webinars, meetings and conferences. But to get what we need necessarily should have a kind of practice and knowledge that we spend long hours surfing online to find what we look for.

Nowadays, Internet is considered to be the greatest innovation in Information Technology. The advantages and uses of Internet for education are growing dramatically ,it can promote improved and new sorts of learning. (www.files.eric.ed.gov)

The Internet offers a variety of reading materials which can be tackled upon in reading instruction . The Internet is sometimes called the library of the poor as the information is simply reachable for all people.. The huge virtual library provides an infinite variety of topics to pick from. The information available is regularly updated. The number of Internet sites offering ELT materials has been mounting. Most of text books are provided for a certain audience. Consequently, many subjects may be inappropriate or tedious for the class. Therefore, teachers may need other texts or topics which can be available on the Internet. There are different sites where programs on how to teach and learn in EFL/ ESL classes. There is a variety of games which are innovative and interesting to aid student practice and develop their English and progress their critical thinking strategies and problem –solving skills. The mottos for these games are ' play-enjoy and learn'. Such kind of games provide an appropriate opportunity for students to release themselves from the atmosphere of classes that they may make a mistake and fail communication. Unlike classes ,the students feel free to express themselves through games that to develop their sense of autonomy indirectly .Obviously, if we get a chance to learn something while playing then that will be everlasting and we can develop ideas appropriately with no hesitation and difficulties.

Besides, there are different games and exercises ,there are similarly lots of stories, songs ,programs and movies. Such tasks used to be insightful and interesting at the same time that Students enjoy them and progress their language skills through www.neltachoutari.wordpress.com/2011/09/01/the-use-of-internet-in-language-classroom/.

1.3Methodology

The methodology of this research is based on a questionnaire as indicated by (Gay,1996:36) that the use of the questionnaire has some definite advantages over other methods of data collection that are not available through other sources i.e. a questionnaire is much more efficient that it requires less time, it is less expensive, and permits collection of data from much larger sample. :

In order to perceive the contribution entailed by media and videogames in English classroom. A questionnaire from a previous

Study (<https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/66433/>) has been adopted and has been validated by giving the initial version of the questionnaire to a number of Jurors . The Jurors are among the teaching staff in the field of English Language Teaching and Linguistics in the University of Baghdad.

The questionnaire has been given to the sample of study ;(30) 2nd year undergraduate students in English department in the College of Education /Ibn-Rushd /University of Baghdad for the academic year 2021-2022

To elicit a representative range of perspectives on the role played by media in English classroom, the subjects are surveyed on their perceptions of Media in language classroom using the questionnaire items [see App]. The questionnaire consists of (10) questions

With qualitatively valued responses accompanying each.

Thus, each question requires participants to tick the box which has its corresponding qualitative value on an inclining scale. For instance, the 1st item , 1. How often do you share content on the Internet? (e.g. information, commentaries, photos, videos)

O often O sometimes O rarely O never Oalways , the student is supposed to tick one of the five boxes given.

After a short oral demonstration, the subjects are requested to complete the questionnaire to the best of their ability..

Having the responses been collected, the data have been analyzed statistically through the use of the weighted mean and weighted percentile of the subjects' responses and the results reveal positively the role entailed by media and videogames in English classroom and assert that media definitely contribute in enhancing language classroom with the affective factors that release students from the stress of committing mistakes because they used to provide classes with elements of fun and curiosity.

Conclusions: There are certain conclusions drawn out of this study shown as follows:

1. Media can help a lot in generating a cozy environment of peace and enjoyment, which can lead to faster and better language learning.
2. Media in all its forms ;TV., radio, videogames, the internet and others can ensure educational, empathetic and compassionate environment in the academic context.
3. Media can provide learners with the updated technologies as far as language teaching and learning are concerned.
4. Videogames can inspire students with the intellectual skills necessary to accomplish their games
5. Media and videogames can foster the intercultural sense for language students because interaction and communication with target cultures can definitely break the barriers among people all over the world.

6. Media and videogames provide the appropriate experience for language students to progress their language skills and upgrade their critical thinking strategies.

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Online Resources:

- www.elt.oup.com/student/headway/?cc=cz&selLanguage=cs)
- <https://sendpulse.com/support/glossary/mass-media>
<https://sendpulse.com/support/glossary/mass-media>
www.elt.oup.com/student/headway/?cc=cz&selLanguage=cs
- https://mextesol.net/journal/index.php?page=journal&id_article=45940
- www.cambridgeenglish.org/blog/how-do-video-games-provide-effective-learning)
www.cambridgeenglish.org/blog/how-do-video-games-provide-effective-learning.
- www.files.eric.ed.gov
- www.neltachoutari.wordpress.com/2011/09/01/the-use-of-internet-in-language-classroom/.
- <https://dspace.cuni.cz/bitstream/handle/20.500.11956/66433/>

Appendix

Questionnaire: The use of media in the English classroom

1. How often do you share content on the Internet? (e.g. information, commentaries, photos, videos)

often sometimes rarely never always

2. When you are out of school, how often do you do the following activities?

Never rarely sometimes often always

searching for information on the Internet

playing PC games

using social networking tools (Facebook, Twitter etc.)

watching films, series and videos

administering own webpages

administering own blog or video blog (i.e. vlog)

using e-mail

3. How often do you use the Internet for studying English?

always often sometimes rarely never

4. How often do you use English when doing the following activities?

never rarely sometimes often always

searching for information on the Internet

playing PC games

using social networking tools (Facebook, Twitter etc.)

watching films, series and videos

administering own webpages

administering own blog or video blog (i.e. vlog)

using e-mail

5. When you are out of school, how often do you use the following media?

never rarely sometimes often always

newspapers

magazines

books

radio

television

smartphone

personal computer

portable computer (e.g. notebook, netbook or tablet)

Internet

6. How often are the following media used in your English lessons?

never rarely sometimes often always

textbooks

newspapers and magazines

books

audio recordings

films and videos

mobile phones

computers with the Internet

interactive whiteboards

7. Which of the following media do you regard as effective tools for studying English?

You can tick more than one option.

textbooks newspapers and magazines books audio recordings films and videos mobile phones personal computers with the Internet (i.e. fixed computer with monitor, keyboard and computer case)

interactive whiteboards portable computers with the Internet (i.e. notebooks, netbooks or tablets)

8. Which of the media help you learn effectively the English vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling?

For each item you can tick more than one box.

vocabulary grammar pronunciation spelling textbooks newspapers and magazines books audio recordings films and videos mobile phones

personal computers with the Internet (i.e. fixed computers) interactive whiteboards

portable computers with the Internet (i.e. notebooks, netbooks or tablets)

9. Does your school have sufficient technical equipment?

yes and teachers use technologies often

yes but teachers use technologies insufficiently

no

10. Do you use a portable computer with the Internet access in your English lessons? (i.e. notebook, netbook or tablet)

yes and it mostly suits me

yes but it mostly doesn't suit me

no but I would like to

no and I am not tempted