

# LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF CALL FOR LISTENING ENHANCEMENT

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## Abstract

*In multimedia listening software, different digital elements (i.e. video, audio, visuals, text, animations, graphics, glossary and feedback) can be combined and delivered on the same computer screen. This enables more effectively presentation of language in different ways, which meets the needs of language learners who vary in their learning-style preferences. This study investigated 50 autonomous intermediate and upper intermediate NNSs learners' attitudes towards the use of CALL for enhancing listening-skills. The results indicate that the learners are overwhelmingly in favour of the use of CALL in self-study mode for enhancing their listening skills as a part of FLL. The learners believe that CALL can benefit them in different ways that can contribute to the enhancement of their listening.*

**Keywords:** interactive multimedia, listening software, CALL, attitudes

## 1. INTRODUCTION

From the standpoint of FLL, the outstanding differences between multimedia and conventional materials (CMs) - i.e. *radio-programmes, tape-cassettes, television-programmes videotapes and paper-based materials*- and positive aspects of multimedia are well known (e.g. Almekhlafi 2006: 121-142; Türel 2004; Ayres 2002: 241-49; Brett 1999). These differences are that **multimedia enables material writers to combine and deliver different digital elements on the same computer platform more effectively. Thus, it provides rich, effective, instant and meaningful input and feedback; user control; ease of use, and a navigational and tension-free environment, which can motivate and are likely to be appreciated by learners.**

In this study, language learners' attitudes to a specific piece of listening software that the author designed for self-access are investigated. Firstly, the power of multimedia is shortly examined and its limitations are emphasised. Later, the research and the software used in it are described. In course of this examination, technical and pedagogical assumptions are briefly discussed. Finally, the results and suggestions are presented.

## 2. THE POWER OF MULTIMEDIA

Multimedia has different combined elements which provide a multidimensional, multi-sensory environment in which language can be presented in different ways and effectively, an aspect which is praised by some scholars (e.g. Herron et al. 2002: 37) and considered 'very helpful' (e.g. Tschirner 2001: 312-3). For instance, it provides a **non-linear editing facility**. Thus, digitised audio/video can be cut and presented in any order and form. This brings advantages such as 'the option of instantly accessing sound in non-linear form; the facilities of stepping and isolating; instant record, replay and comparison and the ability to synchronise text and graphics. Such aspects meet the needs of learners who vary in their learning-style preferences (e.g. Dunn 1983: 496-506; Reid 1987: 92, Dunn and Dunn 1979: 238-44). They can also make input more comprehensible (e.g. Al-Seghayer 2001:224) and learning enjoyable, which can result in FLL. It is due to these features that learners see multimedia as the most popular choice and fun (Brett 1996: 204), which is encouraging, and consider it as the media type that helps understand the text best (Brett 1997: 46; Stevens 1995: 293-297). In short, learners show increasingly positive attitudes with increasing exposure to computers, and they prefer **multimedia to CMs** (e.g. Brett 1997: 39-53; Deville et al. 1996: 81; Crosby et al. 1994: 3-13). This is important, as there is a consistent association between positive attitudes and achievement (e.g. Masgoret and Gardner 2003: 123-63; Linebarger 2001: 288-298).

The combination and delivery of different elements on the same platform through hotspots, links and buttons provide greater opportunities for ease of use and learner-control (e.g. Teremetz and Wright 1997). This provides interactivity. Learners can access dictionaries, syntax, subtitles, feedback and the like or re-listen to texts without losing time, which can present optimum combinations in different forms that can contribute in terms of comprehension and retention of information (e.g. Moreno and Mayer 2002: 156-163; Herron et al. 1995: 387-95), although this is not always the case for multimedia designed for children (e.g. Acha 2009: 23-31)

These aspects can enable learners to find out the difficulties, the right-solutions, what the rules are; to analyse their mistakes and weaknesses; and to find out the underlying reasons by assessing their answers, recording and scoring them, identifying and explaining mistakes (e.g. Mangiafico 1996: 52; Ahmad et al. 1989: 4). This capability provides more real-world-learning contexts and more authentic and interactive tasks (Ashward 1996: 80).

During self-study, it is a private and flexible workplace where learners can take risks; work in their own place, in their own time, at the pace they need, and in the way they enjoy because it gives them control, different choices, tasks and feedback. For instance, a learner with high proficiency might prefer to listen to texts without subtitles, while those with low proficiency can listen with them. Different learners will benefit to different degrees (e.g. Mangiafico 1996: 98; Crosby 1994: 3-13; Brett 1996: 203). These can make them feel more comfortable and might result in developing self-confidence and hard work. It is for these reasons that learners do not complain about the fear of making mistakes (e.g. Deville et al. 1996: 83).

Offering learners many choices makes multimedia highly motivating. Even when learners make mistakes, this does not de-motivate them because they have the opportunity of receiving instant and meaningful feedback, which is liked by learners (e.g. Gillespie and McKee 1999: 42; Brett 1996: 204, 1997: 47; Herrington and Oliver 1997: 3, 10). Feedback is (1) immediate, (2) can consist of different elements (i.e. *audio, video, visuals, text and animation*) which meet the learners' both *visual* and *acoustic* needs, all well and good, and (3) it can be conditional. Such feedback can help learners to (1) find out what and why they could not understand and (2) overcome the difficulties. This can even guide and lead learners to develop new and effective strategies, which is one of the targets that material-writers need to fulfil. Such aspects can guide learners more effectively. If learners are instructed about which strategies they need to follow in which situations, then they can also be directed (e.g. Barnett 1993: 303).

As a result, multimedia enables material-writers to create effective and interactive applications directly suited to learners' needs, interests and learning styles (e.g. Hochart 1998: 24). It can prepare learners more effectively for texts at the pre-listening stage (e.g. Chung and Huang 1998: 553-65; Chun and Plass 1996: 512; Herron 1994: 190-98). It can equip learners to overcome difficulties such as unfamiliar-items, proper names, cultural difficulties, syntax, fast speech, and unfamiliar accents. Unfamiliar-items, for instance, can be explained through hypertext or other links such as dictionaries, e.g. De Ridder (2002: 123 - 146), Chun and Plass (1996: 503, 504, 513). Likely, cultural differences and unknown syntax can be explained and illustrated through simple interactive samples, pictures, audio or video clips in the form of annotations, feedback or advance organisers. Similarly, fast speech and unfamiliar accents can be overcome by (1) providing subtitles or (2) giving the control of speech-rate (e.g. Zhao 1997 - 68) or by providing slow versions.

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### 3. THE LIMITATIONS OF MULTIMEDIA

The limitations increase in particular when (1) multimedia courseware (MC) is not sophisticated and (2) learners do not know how to make efficient use of it. There are many MC on the market, which are not sophisticated. They are even called 'shovelware', e.g. Clifford (1998: 2-8). The problems fundamentally stem from materials-writers, as many materials-writers are not expert either technically or educationally. The courseware created only by technologists lack pedagogical and psychological value, while the ones created by language teachers are technically weak. Maybe the best solution is a working dialogue between *at least* a programmer and a language teacher (Sussex (1991: 16). It might be because of this that Stenton (1998: 12) says that 'professional publishing house productions are superior because they are more technically reliable, better designed and sometimes better researched. Only a team that consists of both educators and technologists can create both technically and pedagogically very sophisticated and ideal MC (e.g. *Critical Languages Series*). To be able to create in a real sense cost effective MC, the active participation of most of the experts - (*specialist*) teachers, programmers, graphic designers, audio engineers, photographers, artists, voice actors, film directors / specialists, musicians, animators, learners / students / ultimate users - is a must.

### 4. THE STUDY

#### 4.1. The aim of the study

The study represented an attempt to gather some empirical data to tease out how learners valued the use of interactive multimedia (IMM) listening software (during self-study) to enhance their listening skills as a part of FLL. The study did not aim to empirically measure whether an improvement in listening development had resulted from the use of the listening software. It targeted only the gathering of information about the learners' attitudes towards the use of the listening software for listening enhancement and how learners **rated** it in terms of different aspects such as *ease of use, flexibility, motivation, usefulness, self-study, learning new words, improving listening*. Not only did it enable the author to know what the learners think of the listening software for self-study in particular and CALL in general for FLL, but it also provided useful insights for integrating CALL into existing FLL programmes in the form of self-study centres.

#### 4.2. The participants

50 NNS students (54% male, 46% female) took part in the study. They were at intermediate and upper intermediate level (100%) in listening and attending an intermediate course of general English. They had been tested, grouped and placed by the ELP units of the institutions. They were a ready group (i.e., clustered sampling) for the study in that they had already been tested and placed. In terms of their background, they could be considered heterogeneous as they were of 18 different nationalities. In terms of their proficiency in *listening*, they were homogenous (i.e. intermediate) in that they had already been tested and grouped accordingly, as mentioned above, and also in their answers to the pre-exposure questionnaire they indicated that they were intermediate. In terms of their overall level in *English*, they were heterogeneous in that 14% of the learners in their answers to the pre-exposure questionnaire revealed that their level in English was advanced (see *Appendix 1*).

#### 4.3. The software

The IMM software (*NewMillennium*) was designed and created by the author. It aimed to develop and practise learners' listening-skills as well as to improve their listening-development as a part of FLL. To do this, a wide variety of activities were provided to help them in practising and developing their *acoustic* and *visual* channels, *receptive* and *productive* skills. Through the material learners were instructed (1) at what stage what kind of strategies they needed to follow and what they needed to do, (2) how they could improve and develop their listening and listening-skills, and (3) why they needed to study in the instructed ways.

While improving their listening skills and development, the software also aimed to help learners to become familiar with the target culture, different accents, authentic language and its features such as *intonation* and *stress, fillers, false starts, grammatical mistakes* and so on. It was also expected to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation, which are necessary and essential for listening development and improvement.

The programme contained five chapters and each chapter was composed of at least three subsections except *Directions* (see Table 1).

Lesson (Chapter)	Parts	pages	Length (min.)	Media Type
British Weddings	Reading text	3	06.01	Reading text, audio
	The Entire Audio	3	06.01	audio
	Introduction	3	00:21	Video + visuals
	How she met her husband	4	00:26	Video + visuals
	About her husband	3	00:34	Video + visuals
	The Wedding day	4	00:64	Video + visuals
	Going to Church	3	00:43	Video + visuals
	Wedding Breakfast	3	00:74	Video + visuals
	Giving Speeches	3	00:90	Video + visuals
	The Entire Video	23	05:86	Video + visuals
Polar Bear	Reading Text	3	02.46	Reading text, audio
	The Entire Audio	3	02.46	audio
	Introduction	6	00:59	video
	Light returns	3	00:27	video
	Life begins	4	00:67	video
	Exercise and lack of food	3	00:18 + 00:25	video
	Cold weather and food	3	00:19 + 00:28	video
	Hunting	5	00:21	video
	Possible dangers	4	00:79	video
	A Great deal to learn	4	00:93	video
	The Entire Video	32	08:00	video
	Smoking: I	Introduction	3	-
Don't hurt me		3	00:45	video + visuals
I used to smoke		3	02:59	video + visuals
It should be abolished		4	02:58	video + visuals
The Entire Video		3	05:62	video + visuals
Smoking: II	Introduction	3	00:14 + 00:20	audio
	Do they smoke?	3	00:23 +	audio
	Smoking in public	3	00:58+00:51+00:35	audio
	The Entire audio	25	02:10	audio
Directions	Go straight	4	3.40 (roughly)	audio +animations
	The Entire audio	4	3.40 (roughly)	audio +animations

Table 1. The contents of the software

Each subsection (lesson) featured at least one *video* or *audio* clip, the length of which varied from 00:21 seconds to 2:58 minutes, and was made up of three gradual stages: the preparation, the while-listening and the post-listening stages (see Figure 1).

#### 4.4. The procedure

The learners accessed the software in separate classes, with a maximum of 12 in each class. There were 14 Pentium PCs with appropriate headphones. The learners were introduced to the software in the first 10 / 15 minutes of the first session. They were shown its major features using a computer projector, including how to run and control it, and how to make use of it fully. Then, the subjects were requested to complete the learners' profiles questionnaire (see *Appendix 1*), the main source of which came from Brett's data collecting procedures for the same purposes (1999: 465 - 9, 474; 1996: 211 - 12). Afterwards, they were then free to use it as they wished for *at least* two teaching sessions. Each session was between two and three hours. Most of the students attended all sessions fully. Those who could not attend the sessions used the software at the time that was convenient for them. The researcher was on-hand to deal with and overcome any potential technical or other type of problems.

#### 4.5. Methodology

*Questionnaires, interviews, observations and log-files* were used to gather data. The *questionnaires* were the *key* data collection means. They were *structured questionnaires* and mostly in the form of 6-point scale-questions (see *Appendix 2*). They also featured multiple measures of similar attitudes so that inaccuracy of answers could be guarded against. They were conducted after the learners had finished working with the software. Afterwards, 8 (out of 50) learners were interviewed, which was sometimes shortly after or within a one or two week - period of time. The selection was based on the principle of '*first accessed, first interviewed*'. They were used to crosscheck the main data (as a support data). The *observation* type preferred was *checklists*, as they enabled us to focus on what had already been determined (see *Appendix 3*). They were conducted while the learners were using the software. The *log-data* were used to track and register how much time each subject spent with the software at each session.

The correlation between the type of learners and attitudes was analysed by using SPSS. The *Spearman test in Bivariate* was used, as the variables were ordinal with the results further cross-tabulated.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. The IMM listening programme was the 'right' learning tool

Some of the statements in *Appendix 2* were used to elicit the learners' reactions to the software to find out what they thought of the software. They in general found the material very good and useful (Table 2).

	<i>very bad</i>	<i>bad</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>very good</i>		
How good the software in general			6	42	52		
	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>speaking</i>	<i>writing</i>	<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
The skills the software helped (you might tick more than one)	98 / 100	68.11 / 100	48.89 / 100	18 / 100	40 / 100	4 / 100	6 / 100
The skill the software helped most (tick one)	80	6	2	2	6	4	
	<i>Very difficult</i>	<i>difficult</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>easy</i>	<i>Very easy</i>		
Using the software		2	40	28	30		
		<i>Pre-intermediate</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Upper-Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>		
For which level-learners the software is suitable most (You might tick more than one)		32 / 100	84 / 100	42 / 100	14 / 100		

**Table 2.** Learners' attitudes to the software in terms of whether it was the 'right' software for the study *in percentage*

94% of the learners, for example, found the software good and very good (42 % good, 52 % very good).

The observations carried out by two non-participating observers also confirmed the results. The learners were attentive, engaged and interested and spent more time with the material than they were expected.

The interviews with the learners also supported the above results.

'Very really, I think very useful because I can improve my four skills listening and reading and I think it's very useful. That's it.' (Subject ID CODE 17 / Interview)

'I think it was very interesting programme for us because for me I first time used computer software learning English. So it was very interesting. I think it helped me to improve my English a lot.' (Subject ID CODE 38 / Interview)

Log data also enabled us to see how interesting and motivating they found the software in that it showed how much time each learner spent with the software at each session.

"You are ... You entered the application at 9:08:46 AM ... left the application at 11:57:16 AM... spent 02:48:30 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 17 / Log data)

"You are ... You entered the application at 12:39:20 PM ... left the application at 2:39:41 PM... spent 02:00:21 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 17 / Log data)

"You are ... You entered the application at 10:20:45 ... left the application at 15:25:17... spent 05:04:32 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 17 / Log data)

"You are ... You entered the application at 11:10:22 AM ... left the application at 12:37:04 PM... spent 01:26:42 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 17 / Log data)

"You are ... You entered the application at 09:36:31 ... left the application at 11:52:09... spent 02:15:38 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 38 / Log data)

"You are... You entered the application at 1:42:15 PM ... left the application at 3:27:03 PM... spent 01:44:48 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 2 / Log data)

'You are ... You entered the application at 3:49:36 PM on ... left the application at 6:15:23 PM... spent 02:25:47 seconds.' (Subject ID CODE 2 / Log data)

"You are ... You entered the application at 13:01:52 ... left the application at 13:49:06... spent 00:47:14 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 4 / Log data)

"You are .... You entered the application at 9:08:31 AM ... left the application at 11:24:41 AM... spent 02:16:10 seconds." (Subject ID CODE 4 / Log data)

5.2. The learners are in favour of the use of multimedia

The results of Table 3 reveal that the learners' responses to items about general attitudes towards the use of multimedia are overwhelmingly in favour. They think that multimedia is fun, simple, useful and easy. They also found it motivating, interesting and not boring.

What they think of the <i>NewMillennium</i> software. Please tick one choice.							
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Dis-agree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>No-answer</i>
(The software) is fun	16	60	18	2	2	2	
is simple	22	44	22	8	2		2
is useful	44	48	6	2			
is easy	20	40	30	10			
is motivating	26	50	22	2			
is interesting	38	48	12		2		
is boring		2	10	54	30	4	
is difficult			10	52	32	4	2
is not useful				46	46	8	
is a waste of time			2	36	54	8	
is not interesting			4	42	50	4	

**Table 3.** The learners' general attitudes to the use of multimedia in percentages

The interviews also supported the above results.

"The program is very good to learn English. And also it is very easy to use because I think it is the best program to understand this programme. I used a lot of programs before, but this one is very easy and very flexible and give me a good information and also to learn English language, grammar, listening and speaking. I think it is very good." (Subject ID CODE: 64 / Log data)

"Really programme is very very good. I think at first time, I thought it is difficult, but when I used it I ... find ... found (it) very very easy." (Subject ID CODE: 28 / Log data)

"Emm ... I think the program was very good, but unfortunately it was not for my level. I think it is for elementary or intermediate, not for upper-intermediate. Emm ... I found it a bit easy, emm... not improve ... em not improving my my listening or my vocabulary. That's why, just ... because it was very easy." (Subject ID CODE: 44 / Log data)

5.3. The learners consider multimedia as an efficient learning tool

Table 4 shows that multimedia is good or very good for practising and improving listening as well as knowledge of English. In like manner, the great majority think that multimedia can help them to learn new language (i.e. vocabulary).

	<i>very bad</i>	<i>bad</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>very good</i>		
How good the software for practising listening			6	22	72		
How good the software in improving their listening skills		2	8	40	50		
How good the material in improving their knowledge of English			10	50	40		
What they think of the <i>NewMillennium</i> software. Please tick one choice.							
	<i>SA</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>No-answer</i>
improves my English	44	42	10		2	2	
improves my listening	52	40	6		2		
helps me learn new language	28	60	6	2	2		2
doesn't improve my English		2		38	50	8	2
doesn't improve my listening		2		32	60	6	

**Table 4.** The learners' attitudes to multimedia as a FLL tool in percentage

This is also supported by the interviews.

"I think it's good programme because it contains many details about the conversation, about listening, about grammar, emm... about the meaning of new words. That's alright." (Subject ID CODE: 53/ Log data)

I think it's a good programme. And this software is useful. If you have like this programme now, it is very good because this make many media a lot of media in one software by a handle touch. So it's good, it's very good. It's good for English language student,..." (Subject ID CODE: 11/ Log data)

The use of different parts of the software and the amount of the time spent each session by the learners in the log data also proves this.

"You are ... You entered the application at 9:26:22 AM ... left the application at 11:36:25 AM ... spent 02:10:03 seconds. You entered page BW: RT, and clicked 'play' and listened to audio-over clip. You entered 'BW: Introduction' part, and dragged and dropped the word 'bride' onto the bride-picture and the answer was correct. You clicked on 'Sub-titles' button and watched with sub-titles. You accessed 'Textual-Global Help' about 'general issues' in listening." (Subject ID CODE: 53 / Log data)

"You are ... You entered the application at 14:36:57 ... left the application at 15:29:42 ... spent 00:52:45 seconds. You entered page BW: RT, and clicked 'play' and listened to audio-over clip. You entered 'BW: Introduction' part, and dragged and dropped the word 'bride' onto the bride-picture and the answer was correct." (Subject ID CODE: 53 / Log data)

"You are ... You entered the application at 14:03:04... left the application at 17:26:07 ... spent 03:23:03 seconds. You entered page BW: RT, and clicked 'play' and listened to audio-over clip. You entered 'BW: Introduction' part, and dragged and dropped the word 'bride' onto the bride-picture and the answer was correct. . . You clicked on 'Sub-titles' button and watched with sub-titles. You entered page 'Global Help'. You accessed 'S: II-Introduction' and listened audio clips with 'supplementary visuals'. You accessed 'S: II-Introduction, page 4 of 4, and watched 'video version' of 'audio clips'. You listened to only 'audio clips'. You accessed 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'how to go to University' of 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'Where the petrol station is' of 'Animation + audio' part." (Subject ID CODE: 53 / Log data)

“You are ... You entered the application at 1:31:40 PM ... left the application at 4:20:52 PM ... spent 02:49:12 seconds. You entered page BW: RT, and clicked 'play' and listened to audio-over clip. You clicked on 'Sub-titles' button and watched with sub-titles. You entered page 'Global Help. You accessed 'S:II-Introduction' and listened audio clips with 'supplementary visuals'. You accessed 'S: II-Introduction, page 4 of 4, and watched 'video version' of 'audio clips'. You listened to only 'audio clips'. You accessed 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'how to go to University' of 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'Where the petrol station is' of 'Animation + audio' part.” (Subject ID CODE: 11 / Log data)

You are ... You entered the application at 9:02:14 AM ... left the application at 11:41:36 AM ... spent 02:39:22 seconds. You entered page BW: RT, and clicked 'play' and listened to audio-over clip. You entered 'BW: Introduction' part, and dragged and dropped the word 'bride' onto the bride-picture and the answer was correct. You clicked on 'Sub-titles' button and watched with sub-titles. You entered page 'Global Help'. You accessed 'Textual-Global Help' about 'general issues' in listening. You accessed 'Audio-visual-Global Help' about 'general issues' in listening. (Subject ID CODE: 11 / Log data)

“... You entered page BW: RT, and clicked 'play' and listened to audio-over clip. You accessed 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'how to go to University' of 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'Where the petrol station is' of 'Animation + audio' part. (Subject ID CODE: 4 / Log data)

“... You entered page 'Global Help'. You accessed 'Textual-Global Help' about 'general issues' in listening. You accessed 'Audio-visual-Global Help' about 'general issues' in listening. You accessed 'Animation + audio' part...” (Subject ID CODE: 4 / Log data)

#### 5.4. Multimedia is effective for self-study

Table 5 shows that the learners consider multimedia as a self-study FLL tool. Most of them seem to think that it is good or very good for self-study. It gives flexibility, allows them to work at their own pace, encourages them to work alone more and gives them control of learning.

		<i>very bad</i>	<i>bad</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>very good</i>	
	How good the software for self-study			8	36	56	
What do you think of the <i>NewMillennium</i> software? Please tick one choice	<i>SA</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>S/D</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>No-answer</i>
gives me flexibility	14	54	26	4		2	
allows me to work at my pace	32	52	14	2			
encourages me to study alone more	38	38	14	10			
gives me control of learning	22	54	20		2		2
doesn't allow me to work at my time			2	46	44	6	2
gives me no control over my-learning		2	4	48	40	6	
doesn't encourage me to work alone more			8	46	36	6	2

**Table 5.** The learners' attitudes to the *features of multimedia which are effective self-study material characteristics in percentage*

The findings are supported by the interviews, as well.

“Very really, I think very useful because I can improve my four skills listening and reading and I think it's very useful. That's it.” (Subject ID CODE: 17/ Log data)

“I think it was very interesting programme for us because for me I first time used computer software learning English. So it was very interesting. I think it helped me to improve my English a lot.” (Subject ID CODE: 38/ Log data)

“I think it's very useful for me to improve my listening because ... most listening..., I cannot say, material is not so good for me because there are no visuals. So, I think it's very useful.” (Subject ID CODE: 56/ Log data)

The amount of time spent and the use of different parts of the software by the learners each session also reveals how the learners were keen to use IMM software for self-study.

“You are ... You entered the application at 9:22:26 AM ... left the application at 11:35:34 AM ... spent 02:13:08 seconds. You entered page BW: RT, and clicked 'play' and listened to audio-over clip. You clicked on 'Sub-titles' button and watched with sub-titles. You entered page 'Global Help'.” (Subject ID CODE: 56/ Log data)

“You are ... You entered the application at 9:23:59 AM ... left the application at 11:45:04 AM ... spent 02:21:05 seconds.” (Subject ID CODE: 56/ Log data)

“You are ... You entered the application at 12:50:44 PM ... left the application at 2:38:52 PM ... spent 01:48:08 seconds. You clicked on 'Sub-titles' button and watched with sub-titles. You entered page 'Global Help'. You accessed 'Textual-Global Help' about 'general issues' in listening. You accessed 'S:II-Introduction' and listened audio clips with 'supplementary visuals'. You accessed 'S: II-Introduction, page 4 of 4, and watched 'video version' of 'audio clips'. You listened to only 'audio clips'. You accessed 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'how to go to University' of 'Animation + audio' part. You listened to 'Where the petrol station is' of 'Animation + audio' part.” (Subject ID CODE: 56/ Log data)

The *observations* of the 26 learners also confirmed the above results. The learners were attentive, engaged and interested (96%, - the 4% could not be observed-). They spent more time than anticipated. Although the teaching session's time had elapsed, most still wanted to continue, which amazed the non-participant observers. They could concentrate intensely at the beginning (89%) and their concentration increased while they were working. However, the concentration of some learners began to wane a little towards the end, which is understandable. Some learners even asked if there were similar applications that they could work with. Some wanted to purchase a copy of the *NewMillennium*. There were, however, a few learners who were not keen to use the software. They indicated that they did not want to learn English via the medium of computers. This was a factor that had been apparent in the responses to the profiles questionnaire (*Appendix I*). This is the general case with some learners.

#### 5.4. There are correlations between the types of learners and attitudes

There are significant associations between different learners' characteristics and their attitudes towards the use of *NewMillennium* in terms of contributing to FLL. For example, those who are *less* confident and relaxed at understanding English tend to think that *NewMillennium* is good for improving their listening skills (Table 6). Similarly, the less confident ones are more likely to think that *NewMillennium* improves their English (Table 6).

Table 6. Significant P. values of Spearman's non-parametric correlation table between the subject variables and the attitudes to the software. The non-significant p values haven't been given		does not improve my listening (L)	good for practising listening	good in improving listening skills (LS)	good for improving knowledge of English	Level of difficulty	improves my English	improves my listening	helps learn new language (i.e. voc.)
confident at understanding English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N			.289 .051 46			-.386** .009 45		-.259 .086 45
relaxed at understanding English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N			.298* .045 46					
Good at understanding English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		-.298* .047 45						
Computer literacy	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N					.336* .018 49			
Confident at learning English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N						-.255 .094 44		
How often practise listening alone	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.320* .028 47	-.236 .099 50			-.287* .044 50			
How often study English alone	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N						.250 .084 49	.254 .075 50	
How often want to learn English with computers	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.261 .080 46					.277 .054 49		
How often want to practise listening with computers	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.345* .020 45		-.284 .051 48	-.270 .063 48		.374 .009 48	.259 .075 48	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). \* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

There are significant associations between different learners' characteristics and their attitudes towards the use of *NewMillennium*. Those with less computing skills (i.e. basic) tend to view *NewMillennium* as more interesting (Table 7). Similarly, while those who are confident at understanding English are less likely to think that *NewMillennium* is useful. The assumption underlying this is that they are more confident because they are more advanced in overall English, as indicated before (see Appendix 1), and probably the confident learners simply found the *NewMillennium* software too easy. The interviews also support this.

"Emm ... I think the programme was very good, but unfortunately it was not for my level. I think it is for elementary or intermediate, not for upper-intermediate. Emm ... I found it a bit easy, emm... not improve ... em not improving my my listening or my vocabulary. That's why, just ... because it was very easy." (Subject ID CODE: 44/ Log data)

This matches the results of the questionnaires, as well, (see Table 1) in that some learners found the *NewMillennium* easy.

The less confident ones tend to believe that *NewMillennium* is useful (Table 7).

Table 7. Significant P. values of Spearman's non-parametric correlation table between the subject variables and the attitudes to the software.		(The software is) fun	useful	easy	Interest ing	simple	difficult
Computer literacy	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N				.342* .016 49		
Good at learning English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N				.330* .027 45		
Confident at understanding English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		-.366* .012 46				
Relaxed at understanding English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N						-.299 .051 43
Relaxed at improving listening	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		-.314* .032 47				
Good at improving listening	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		-.349* .020 44				
How often practise listening alone	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		.346* .014 50			.324* .023 49	
How often want to practise listening with computers	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	.334 .020 48	.288* .047 48	.300* .038 48	.243 .096 48	.329* .024 47	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). \* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

There are significant associations between different learners' characteristics and their attitudes towards the use of multimedia in terms of effective self-study characteristics. Those who want to practise listening with computers a lot tend to think that multimedia encourages them to study alone more and gives them control of learning. (Table 8). In the same way, they think that multimedia encourages them to study alone more and gives them control of learning (Table 8).

Table 8. Significant P. values of Spearman's non-parametric correlation table between the subject variables and the attitudes to multimedia.		allows me to work at my pace	encourages me to study alone more	gives me control of learning	doesn't allow me to work at my time	gives me no control over my L	does not encourage me to work alone more
confident at understanding English	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N			-.253 .094 45			.292 .058 43z
Confident at improving listening	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.265 .078 45					
good at improving listening	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.297 .050 44			-.263 .097 41		
How often practice listening alone	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N					-.359* .016 45	-.282 .057 46
Computer literacy	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		.274 .057 49	.380** .008 48			
How often want to practise listening with computers	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		.362* .011 48	.257 .077 48	-.260 .088 44	-.317* .034 45	-.462** .002 44
How often want to learn English with computers	C. Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N		.289* .044 49	.257 .077 48	-.261* .080 46	-.294* .048 46	-.395** .007 45

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). \* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

#### 6. Limitations of the study

Although the results match the findings of the similar studies (e.g. Ayres 2002: 241 - 49; Brett 1999; Herrington and Oliver 1997: 3, 10; Teremetz and Wright 1997; Brett 1996: 191: 212; Stevens 1995: 289-99), the limitations need to be indicated. The sample size was not necessarily large, only 50 learners. The study was not longitudinal in that the learners accessed the software for around six hours in total. The study was also based on *one* programme that created by the author. The learners might be considered to be more sophisticated and motivated in that they had travelled a long way to come to Britain to study / work.

#### 7. Discussions

The results of the study that aimed to establish the learners' attitudes to IMM software revealed that the learners consider the use of IMM for FLL (during self-study) useful and beneficial in terms of diverse aspects (Table 9).

Table 9. Positive aspects of IMM software	
IMM software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is useful</li> <li>• can help learners learn different language skills</li> <li>• is fun, simple, useful, easy to use, motivating, interesting</li> <li>• improves English</li> <li>• improves listening</li> <li>• helps learners to learn new language</li> <li>• is good for self-study</li> <li>• gives learners flexibility and control over their learning</li> <li>• allows learners work at their pace</li> <li>• encourages learners to study alone more</li> </ul>
The contents of IMM should	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not be too easy</li> <li>• not be too difficult</li> <li>• be slightly ahead of the learners' current level</li> </ul>

The results match with the findings of similar studies (e.g. Almekhlafi 2006: 121-142; Ayres 2002: 241-49; Brett 1999; Herrington and Oliver 1997: 3, 10; Teremetz and Wright 1997; Brett 1996: 191:212; Stevens 1995: 289-99). The results contribute to the existing body of knowledge about attitudes towards CALL in general and IMM listening software in particular. The implications are, therefore, that not only should material writers need to further develop professional IMM software, but such materials should also be integrated into FLL programmes for (class and) self-study use alongside CMs.

The use of IMM is becoming more popular although it is still mainly used for self-study (e.g. Thieman 2008: 342-366). Not only is IMM still uncommon in teaching/learning, but it is also not integrated into most classroom/language teaching/learning institutions/centres around the world (e.g. Bax 2003:20-23).

In comparison to some years ago, currently superior applications are available on the market. This is partly due to new developments in the field of educational technology and mainly resulting from recent investigations and experiences gained in the field of MC design and FLL. Future investigations will further empower materials writers to design each element of IMM applications more precisely, which will eventually result as a whole in providing LLs with ideal conditions intended to facilitate FLL. This is crucial because if IMM software is interesting and prepared in ways learners like and need, much can be done towards the awakening of positive attitudes regardless of whether learners' initial stances are positive or negative. This can lead to motivation, which is seen 'as important in determining how actively the individual works to acquire language material' (Gardner 1985: 147). Such software, as tools, can better and more effectively result in contributing to FLL. This is likely to help and encourage learners to be language users, which is the objective of FLL. To achieve this, skills and effort in full and real sense are required. IMM software and traditional tools ought not to be regarded as rivals. Instead, they should complement each other to improve FLL.

The implications are that not only should materials-writers further develop interactive professional MLS for autonomous intermediate learners as well as other level-learners, but also such materials should be integrated into FLL programmes both for class- and self-study use alongside conventional materials.



Further research with a larger group of learners over a longer period of time on more than one multimedia programme is, however, necessary. Investigations are also needed as to whether and to what extent such positive aspects of multimedia can be transferred to the real-world.

Future investigations need to tease out how to design each element of IMM applications more precisely, which will eventually result as a whole in providing learners with *ideal conditions* intended to facilitate FLL. Further studies of the author to this end will follow.

*Acknowledgement:* The author wishes to thank the three anonymous referees for their extremely helpful comments, and the students for participating in the study.

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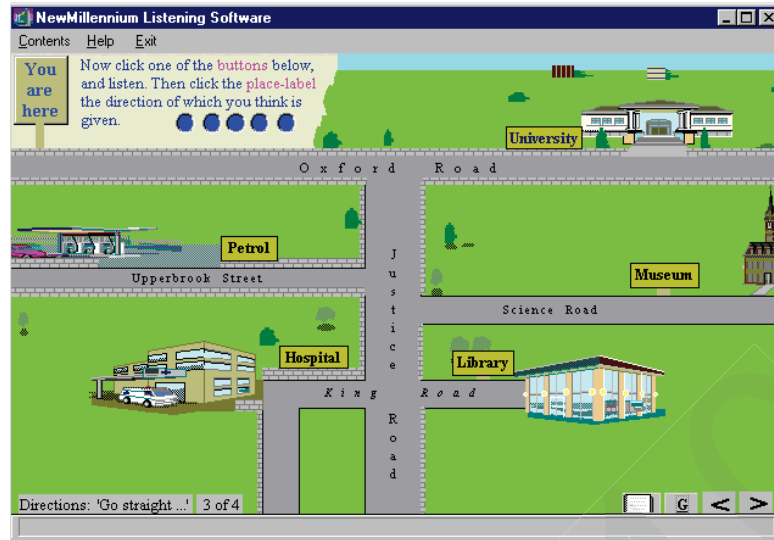


Figure 1. A sample page of the software

Appendixes:

**Appendix 1:** The learners' pre-exposure - characteristics-questionnaire results

		Male 54%				Female 46%					
Nationality		Libyan: 30 Japanese: 12 Spanish: 4 Kurdish: 2 French: 2 Saudi: 8 Tai: 12 Colombian : 2 Mongolian: 2 British: 2 Syrian: 4 Chinese: 8 Italian: 2 Vietnamese: 2 Estonian : 2 Portugal: 2 Bulgarian: 2 Israeli : 2									
Native language		Arabic: 44 Spanish: 6 Mongol: 2 French: 2 Portuguese: 2 Japanese: 12 Kurdish: 2 Russian: 2 Cantonese: 2 Mandarin: 2 Chinese: 18 Italian: 2 Vietnamese: 2 Bulgarian: 2									
Age group		11-15years	16- 20 years	21-25years	26-30 years	More than 30 years		No answer			
			6	24	38	30		2			
Any other languages (apart from English and their native language) they speak		No				Yes					
		75.5				24.5					
The period of learning English		1 - 2 years		3 - 5 years		6 - 10 years		More than 10 -years		No-Answer	
		38		24		22		8		8	
Their level in English		Pre-intermediate				intermediate		Advanced			
						86		14			
Their level in listening		Pre-intermediate				Intermediate		Advanced			
						100					
Their reasons for learning English		Post-stud : 42, Job : 22 , World language : 26, Communication : 4, No-answer: 6									
Computer literacy		Basic User					Proficient User				
		1 2 3 4 5									
		36					12 32 18				
							No-answer: 2				
Those who used software for learning a foreign language before							No		Yes		
							80		20		
How they feel about learning English	confident	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not confident		
		14.0	20.0	40.0	12.0	4.0	10.0				
	relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not relaxed		
		12.0	20.0	48.0	12.0	4.0	4.0				
How they feel about understanding when listening to English	good at it	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not good		
		8.0	24.0	44.0	14.0		10				
	confident	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		Not confident		
		8.0	14.0	38.0	24.0	8.0	8.0				
How they feel about improving their listening	relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not relaxed		
		6.0	14.0	40.0	24.0	8.0	8.0				
	good at it	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not good		
		6.0	10.0	48.0	20.0	6.0	10.0				
How often do they normally study English alone?	confident	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not confident		
		6.0	24.0	38.0	14.0	8.0	10.0				
	relaxed	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not relaxed		
		10.0	20.0	40.0	14.0	10.0	6.0				
How often do they normally practise listening alone?	good at it	1	2	3	4	5	No-answer		not good		
		6.0	26.0	36.0	16.0	4.0	12.0				
		a lot		often		Sometimes		Occasion-ally		never	
	10.0		36.0		50.0		4.0				
	6		28		52		10		4		

How often they normally want to learn English with computers	20.0	28.0	32.0	16.0	2.0	2.0
How often they normally want to practise listening with computers	30.0	30.0	24.0	10.0	2.0	4.0

**Appendix 2: The learners' attitudes to the software**

	<i>very bad</i>	<i>bad</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>good</i>	<i>very good</i>		
How good the software in general							
How good the software for practising listening							
How good the software in improving their listening skills							
How good the material in improving their knowledge of English							
How good the software for self-study							
	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>speaking</i>	<i>writing</i>	<i>Grammar</i>	<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
The skills the software helped							
The skill the software helped most (tick one)							
Using the software?	<i>Very difficult</i>		<i>difficult</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>easy</i>	<i>Very easy</i>	
For which level-learners the software is suitable most (You might tick more than one)	<i>Pre-intermediate</i>		<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Upper-Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>		
What they think of the <i>NewMillennium</i> software. Please tick one choice.							
	<i>SA</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>No-answer</i>
(The software) is fun							
is simple							
is useful							
is easy							
is motivating							
is interesting							
gives me flexibility							
allows me to work at my pace							
encourages me to study alone more							
improves my English							
improves my listening							
helps me learn new language							
gives me control of learning							
is boring							
is difficult							
is not useful							
is a waste of time							
is not interesting							
doesn't allow me to work at my time							
doesn't improve my English							
doesn't improve my listening							
gives me no control over my-learning							
doesn't encourage me to work alone more							

**Appendix 3: Observation of the learners' attitude to the material in general**

1	Subjects are	attentive	inattentive
2	Subjects are	engaged	disengaged
3	They are	interested	disinterested
4	They could concentrate on at the beginning		Yes No
5	They could concentrate on while they were working		
6	Their concentration began to wane towards the end		
7	They look enjoyed the material		

NP observer's name: ..... Signature & Date.....