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CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY OF THE USE OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING/ MOBILE ASSISTED LEARNING (CALL/MALL) FOR ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN THREE BLOCKS OF LUCKNOW

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ABSTRACT:

The Research paper attempts to study the effectiveness of CALL/MALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning/ Mobile Assisted Language Learning) in learning of ESL (English as a Second Language). The study is conducted in 3 blocks of Lucknow District. Sample consisted of students from 9th to 12th in the age group of 14-18 years across the gender from 3 categories of schools - (1) The Government (2) Public Schools and (3) Convent Schools. The total duration of testing the hypothesis was 60 days including an extra class for 20 days in all three schools of 40 mins each after school hours. The result showed that CALL/MALL provides an interesting way to learn English as a second language and hence policy makers should take a call to introduce this in formal curriculum as it provides better learning and retention in students.

KEYWORDS: CALL/MALL, ESL, Lucknow, Students, texting.

INTRODUCTION :

Computer Mediated Composition (CMC) methods like chat are being used in the Western countries to develop ESL skills. While the academic community is largely divided on the effects of using messaging technology in the native English speaker classroom, some English as Second Language (ESL) instructors are using chat programs to great success in their classrooms. This is partially because many instructors in native English classrooms already believe texting to be harmful to "Standard English," but mostly it is because the technology needed for these programs to work, namely computers and cellphones are available to those who can afford, and not available to those without money. In India, this divide is simply huge yet a significant number of students are using these technologies even in the rural sector.

The present research is a cross- sectional study of the use of Computer Assisted Learning (CALL)/ Mobile Assisted Learning (MALL) for teaching and learning of English as a Second Language in Indian social context.



HYPOTHESIS-

To determine how the new forms of communication affect the language learning skills of the students when communicating in English and to test how CALL/MALL influence the learning of English as a second language in Indian context.

ELT, INTERNET AND LANGUAGE: REVIEW OF LITERATURE-

The past few decades have witnessed an overwhelming proliferation of technology in every aspect of life including the way we learn and use language. It is being used inside and outside language classrooms in forms of multimedia learning, web based and online learning. English language teaching professionals worldwide have used IT as a tool for language learning and practice. Pennington (1996), states that computer technology not only functions as a tool for writing, but also as a partner in creation and re-creation of knowledge. Arnold (2007) says, learners of ELT (studies of Beauvies, 1998) show active learning for English writing skills through increased Learner interaction and Sotillo's (2002) study shows the positive potential and access to the language learning programmes made available through wireless connectivity. Other studies focus on positive attitudes such as interactivity and feedback (Bikowski & Kessler 2012) and learner anatomy (Xiaoqing 2009).

CMC methods like chat are being used in the Western countries to develop ESL skills. Email was widely incorporated into language learning with domestic exchange of everyday topics. Researches pointed out to theories supporting stating- "Languages cannot be taught, they can only be learnt". CMC is being incorporated in Innovation of Language learning pedagogy. Twitter is also being used in learning of language where students discuss tweets written in French and English. This task based learning was favoured by H.U.W Jarvis in school of Humanities, Language and Social Science at Salford- "we know that people learn better when they struggle to communicate". According to David Crystal- "every text is engaging the learner with language and print and there is a positive co- relation between texting and literacy". Teachers can also use CMC to teach about the evolution of language from Chaucerian English and such stylistic comparisons help in understanding the language.

Texting gives additional experience of writing and in classrooms students are being taught to translate SMS texts, write glossaries of abbreviations. A study concludes that texting actually helps to develop communication skills such as ability to summarize and express oneself concisely.

The domains of education and communication are benefitting by the use of technology. Networked computers are a toolkit model for having word processors which facilitate the invention, revision and editing, allowing quick and easy reshaping of text. It helps the users to develop their own constructions of language. The adolescents, now have an opportunity to interact globally through TMC and CMC and it aids in improving the language skills of students significantly.

Using computers while ESL aid the language acquisition significantly. Computer can be used to deliver language skill practice or as an electronic workbook. Use of multimedia modes can improve language learning significantly since it calls for a collaborative and inquiry based learning. Since electronic media can store and access knowledge, memorising becomes less important and learning is refined to training and understanding.

Computer mediated communications between a teacher and a learner provides students greater flexibility in terms of time and delivery of course- material along with the technical skills. Inter- active video conferencing effectively cuts across the geographical and economic boundaries in learning and teaching.

According to Mark Wars Chauer (1998) students using internet for reading need to acquire sophisticated skills for searching for material and then evaluate it in mid- stream, to decide whether to continue or to back- track. They create their texts from their own selection of materials from a variety of sources.

CMC having its own synchronic features, hence provides opportunities of improving their productive and receptive skills to adolescents.

The perpetual use of phones in CMC in chatting has fuelled the culture of text- messaging, with abbreviations and shortcuts, thus raising the question of adapting to altered sense of written grammar among adolescents. In a study by J.E.L Coe, J.V Oakhill which was to explore a relationship between students reading ability and text messaging behaviour found that poor readers spent more time on phones and despite less frequent use of phones, the good readers use more textisms in their written text message and were faster reading all the messages. Another study by Beverly Pester, Clare Wood and Victoria Bell

suggested that students' knowledge of textisms is not associated with poor-written language outcomes for them. Vosloo (2009) sees texting as an emerging language register in its own right – 'the written lingua franca of many youth today'. He asserts that texting gives adolescents a medium that encourages them to explore and play about with the language of their use.

Canas&Novak's (2004) research states that language development is also affected by texting. Adolescent's developmental skills are affected by text messaging, specifically their ability to understand abstract meanings of words and concepts and to modify their communication to fit the listener's viewpoint. In a re-search by Conti-Ramsden et al. (2001) texting is found to be potentially intimidating to some students who are specifically language impaired. Parks & Pierce (2009) stated that texting enables users to avoid face-to-face communication. The role of social anxiety and not feeling comfortable was the reason for texting by the teenagers. Riordan & Kreuz, 2010 found out the more emoticons a message contained, the stronger the recipient's interpreted the sender's emotions. However, when texts were sent without emoticons, recipients could not determine the sender's intentions. Grinter et al., 2009, Hoe & McLeod 2008 researched that texting impacts social skills in a variety of ways. It asserted that adolescents engaged in text messaging avoided feeling uncomfortable and asserted conflict situations. Selkie et al., states that technology based communication can be a way for adolescents to obtain reliable information about sensitive issues. J.B Graham quoted Ho and McLeod (2008) who examined adolescent's reluctance to express face to face opinions and found out that texting affected family and peer relationships both positively and negatively.

THE NEED FOR THE RESEARCH-

This research attempts to assess the role of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) within the ESL (English as a Second Language). ESL learning and teaching is becoming popular in South Asian Countries with the acceptance of English as an International language. Since English acquires an important position as a second language in Uttar Pradesh, the paper attempted to ascertain whether it can help the policy makers in using it in classrooms for the ESL Learners. With the changed perceptions of language for language teaching (use of Textspeak in ESL classrooms in the West with great success), the research attempted to review the following implications -

- Every text is engaging the learner with language and print and there is a positive co- relation between texting and literacy.
- Texting promotes W and R (writing/ Reading) from LSWR in ESL.
- It facilitates phonological awareness and word recognition by helping them to understand how words are built and improves spelling.
- It can be used to generate discussions of formal and informal language.
- Texting promotes creativity with 160 -character limit in students.
- It gives a practice in writing for different tasks, audiences and purposes.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-

The research methodology used in this paper confined itself on the district of Lucknow as the field. The city can represent Indian diaspora since it is evolving as a metropolis over the last few years and also witnesses migration of students from peripheral towns in large numbers. Respondents were selected with the help of stratified random sampling. The respondents were chosen keeping in mind the age factor. Sample consisted of students from 9th to 12th. The age group of students was 14-18 years across the gender from 3 categories of schools in Lucknow District. The three categories of schools were- (1) The Government (2) Public Schools and (3) Convent Schools.

Blocks of Gosainganj, Mal and Lucknow city were taken up to selected sampling of 30 students each from one of the 3 categories of schools, Government, Public and Convent respectively for testing the hypothesis of success by using CALL/MALL in ESL learning in Indian social context.

The total duration of testing the hypothesis was 60 days including an extra class for 20 days in all three schools of 40 mins each after school hours. This was done for the during class activities and for the moderator to interact with the students. The following methods were used for CALL/MALL in ELT-

ASYNCHONOUS-

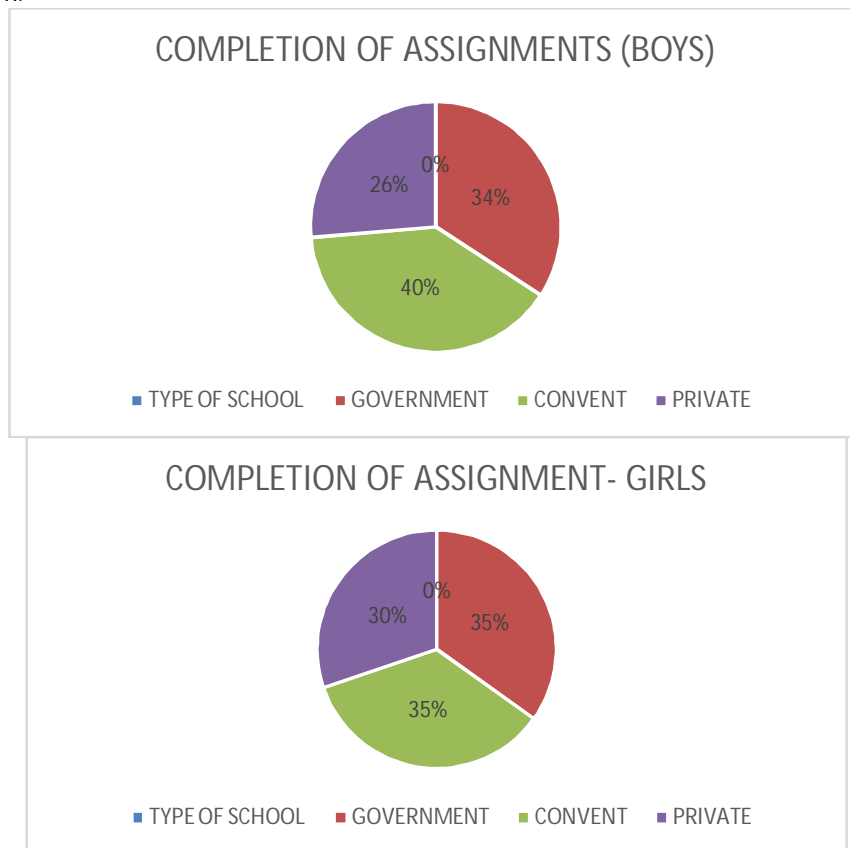
- Exchange of e-mails from moderator to students and among students within classes. Issues were assigned to be discussed in e-mails.
- Topics given to write bogs and posts on Facebook
- They were motivated to leave voice messages and video- messages using Watsapp and Skype.

SYNCHRONOUS-

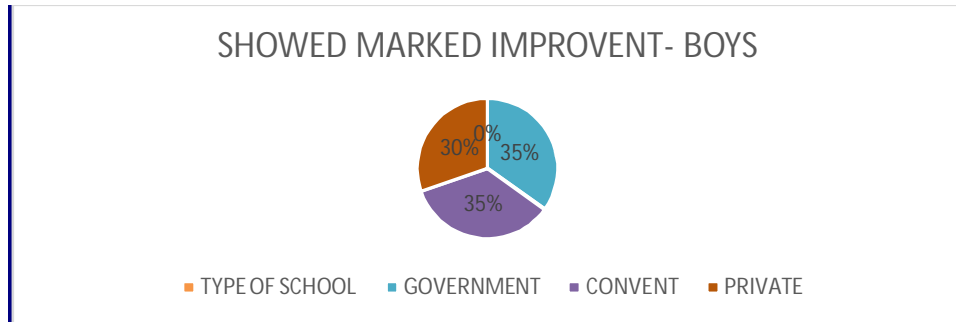
- Students were asked to exchange messages in real time
- Students were assigned to prepare a 3-min video as if to be uploaded on You- tube on any subject of their interest and later on share their recording with their group.
- During the course of their preparation they were motivated to watch a lot of uploaded videos for body language, facial gestures, pronunciation and diction.
- The in -class activity also provided them an opportunity to make up a story in real time and share it with their class on a pic that was displayed to them on computer screen.

PI- CHARTS SHOWING THE RESPONSE OF STUDENTS-

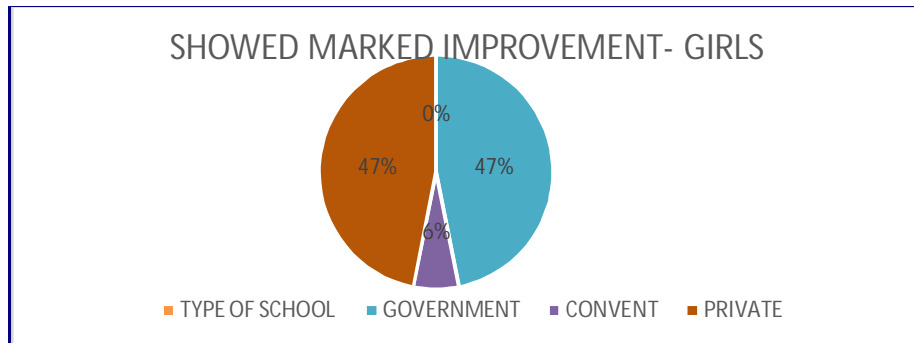
The boys studying in convent schools did better than boys of Government schools in completing the assignments. However, the boys of the Public schools seemed least motivated to complete all the tasks assigned to them.



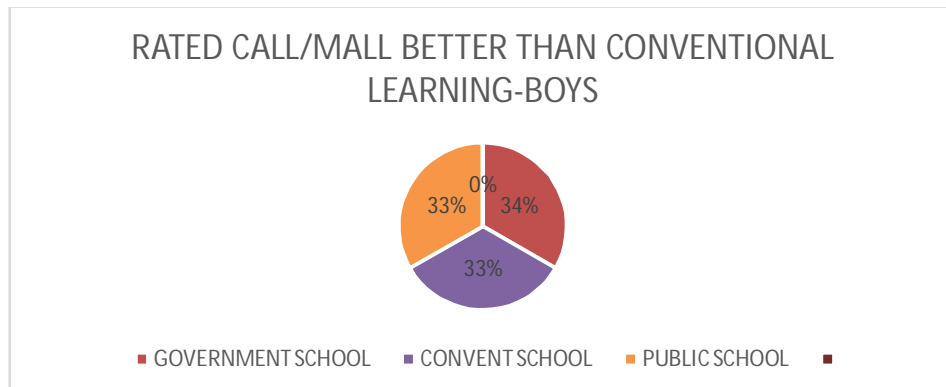
Among the girls also Public school fared the lowest though the margin was not as vast as in case of boys. All the girls from Convent school completed all the tasks.



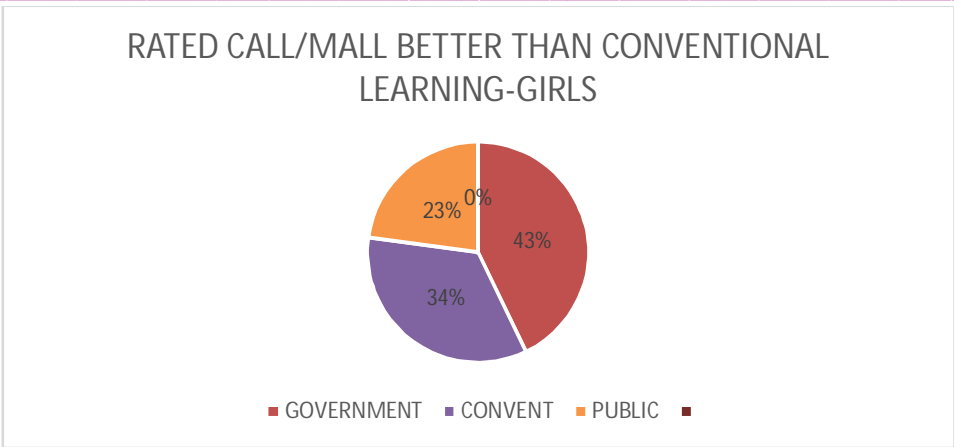
The boys of the Government school showed the best improvement and Public -School students red next. The least improvement was seen in the boys from the Convent, probably because they had better hold on the language and were comfortable using it.



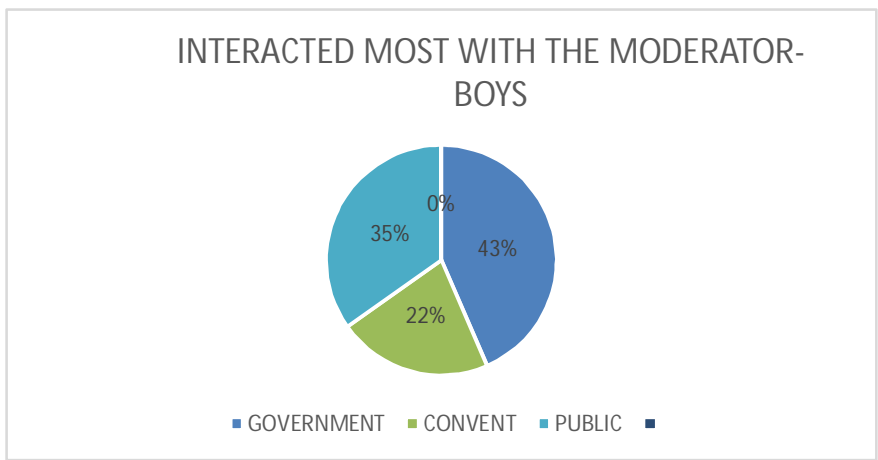
Similar to boys, the girls in Convent School showed the least improvement probably of the same reasons.



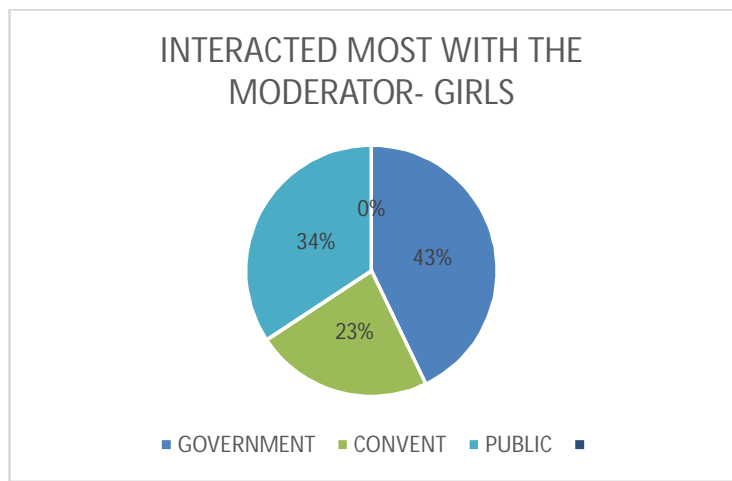
Boys studying in all three types of schools unanimously said that this is better than conventional way of language learning.



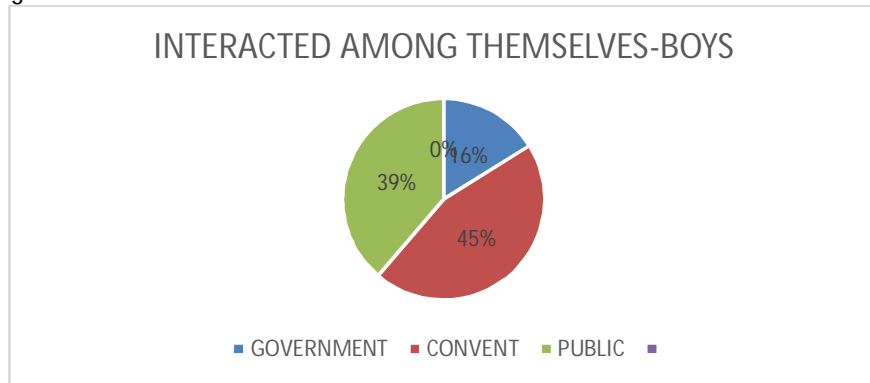
Girls studying in Government and Convent School rated it better than the conventional learning but a smaller number of girls from Public schools felt so.



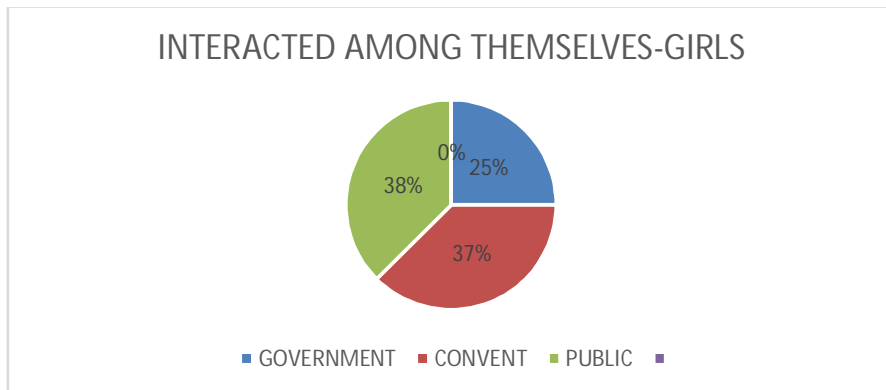
Boys in general interacted less with the moderator as compared to girls. Among boys, the Government school boys did a maximum interaction followed by boys from Public school and Convent School.



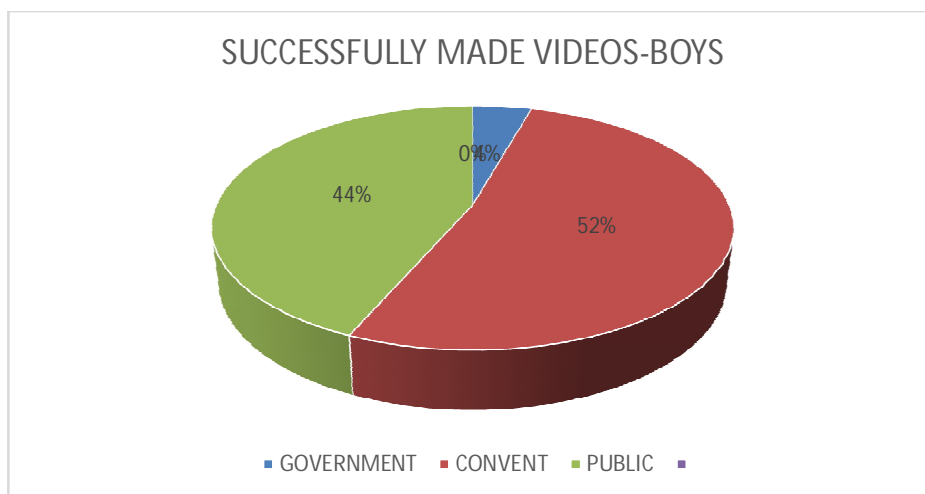
Government school girls interacted most with the moderator, followed by Private school girls and Convent school girls.



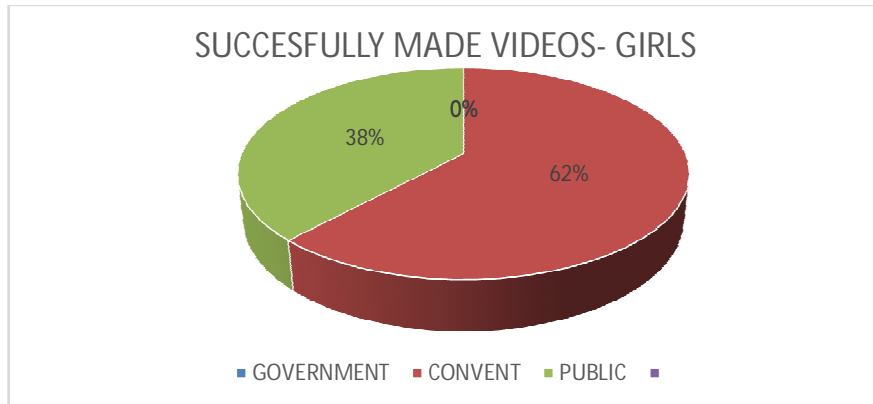
Convent school boys interacted the maximum among themselves closely followed by Private school boys. Only 16% of the boys in Government college interacted among themselves



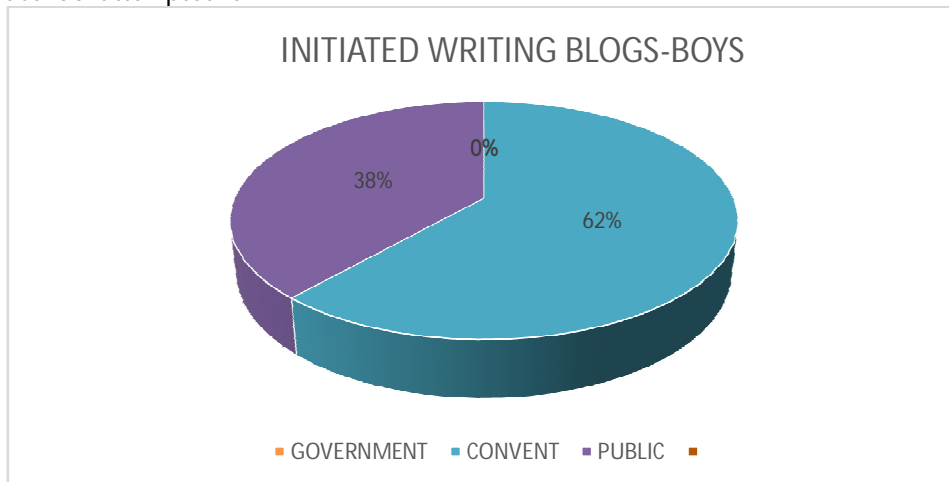
Convent and Public -school girls interacted equally among themselves during the in- class assignments but comparatively fewer number of Government school girls did so.



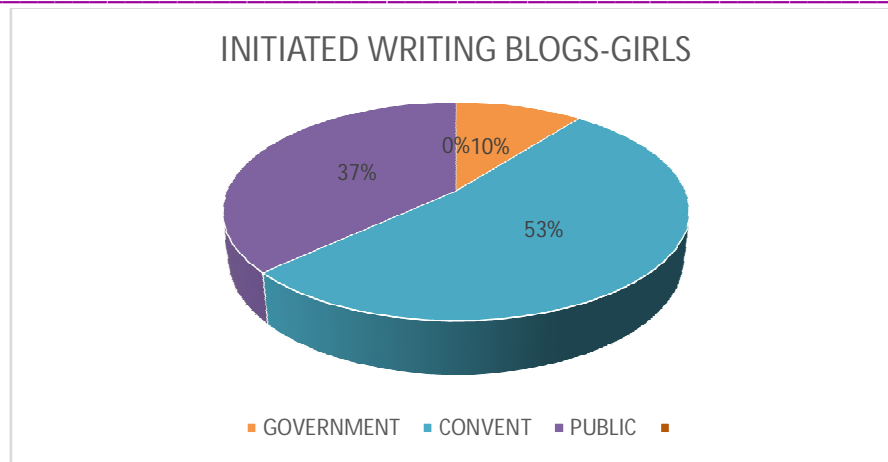
In making videos to be uploaded, Convent school boys seemed most enthusiastic, followed by Public school students but only one boy from Government school completed the assignment.



Among girls, the average of making videos was comparatively lower than boys, Girls from Convent school completed the task in most numbers, followed by Public -school Girls. However, no girl from Government school attempted it.



As a part of the assignment students were motivated to start writing blogs and among boys it was followed most by convent school boys, followed by Public school boys. The Government school boys however did not show any interest in the activity



Among the girls, the convent school girls fared the best, followed by Public school girls. Two girls from government school as compared to null from Government boys school started writing blogs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION-

In the 60 -day learning English as a second language using CALL/MALL the following results were derived in the cross- sectional study of adolescent students-

Completing the tasks assigned-

The boys studying in convent schools did better than boys of Government schools in completing the assignments. However, the boys of the Public schools seemed least motivated to complete all the tasks assigned to them. Among the girls also Public school fared the lowest though the margin was not as vast as in case of boys. All the girls from Convent school completed all the tasks.

Language Learning Skills-

The boys of the Government school showed the best improvement and Public -School students fared next. The least improvement was seen in the boys from the Convent, probably because they had better hold on the language and were comfortable using it.

Similar to boys, the girls in Convent School showed the least improvement probably of the same reasons.

Effectiveness of the Programme-

Boys studying in all three types of schools unanimously said that this is better than conventional way of language learning.

Girls studying in Government and Convent School rated it better than the conventional learning but a smaller number of girls from Public schools felt so.

Interaction with the Moderator-

Boys in general interacted less with the moderator as compared to girls. Among boys, the Government school boys did a maximum interaction followed by boys from Public school and Convent School.

Government school girls interacted most with the moderator, followed by Private school girls and Convent school girls.

Interaction among Themselves-

Convent school boys interacted the maximum among themselves closely followed by Private school boys. Only 16% of the boys in Government college interacted among themselves. Convent and Public -school girls interacted equally among themselves during the in- class assignments but comparatively fewer number of Government school girls did so.

Assignment of preparing Videos to be uploaded-

In making videos to be uploaded, Convent school boys seemed most enthusiastic, followed by Public school students but only one boy from Government school completed the assignment. Among girls, the average of making videos was comparatively lower than boys, Girls from Convent school completed the task in most numbers, followed by Public -school Girls. However, no girl from Government school attempted it.

Assignment of Writing Blogs-

As a part of the assignment students were motivated to start writing blogs and among boys it was followed most by convent school boys, followed by Public school boys. The Government school boys however did not show any interest in the activity. Among the girls, the convent school girls fared the best, followed by Public school girls. Two girls from government school as compared to null from Government school started writing blogs.

Implications and their outcomes-

1. Every text is engaging the learner with language and print and there is a positive co- relation between texting and literacy/ Texting promotes W and R (writing/ Reading) from LSWR in ESL/ It facilitates phonological awareness and word recognition by helping them to understand how words are built and improves spelling/ Texting promotes creativity with 160 -character limit in students / It gives a practice in writing for different tasks, audiences and purposes

All the **Asynchronous and Synchronous** activities like exchange of e-mails, writing blogs and posts on Facebook, exchange of messages and writing stories engaged the students with language and print, promoted writing and reading and facilitated their phonological awareness and word recognition by constant use. Texting promoted their creativity with the character limit.

2. It can be used to generate discussions of formal and informal language-

Activities where the students were motivated to leave voice messages and video- messages using Whatsapp and Skype and were assigned to prepare a 3-min video as if to be uploaded on You- tube on any subject of their interest and later on share their recording with their group developed their ability to use formal and informal language

Thus, CALL/MALL provides an interesting way to learn English as a second language and hence policy makers should take a call to introduce this in formal curriculum as it provides better learning and retention in students.

ACKNOWLEDEMENT-

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