Research Paper | **Literature**

Time to Call C.A.L.L. (Computer Assisted Language Learning) for Teaching Language in Engineering Institutes

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ABSTRACT *Good communication skills are obligatory for the success of any professional. Language learning is not the same as learning any other subject. Learning a language means developing four basic skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. The more body senses the learning process involves, the more effectiveness it can obtain. The process of learning or improving a language needs to be practical and pragmatic. In today's techno-world, the teacher of linguistic skills must utiliize effective technologies available. One of the major and mostly used technologies for the language learning is the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). It may have many amenities and convolutions while using CALL by the teachers of English for developing linguistic skills of learners. Computers can be proved as a very efficient tool as it can play role of a teacher, a tutor, a stimulus, a facilitator, a guide, an assessor and many other roles. Language laboratories having computers as their major equipments are in demand due to their abilities of making learning interesting and interacting. Computers in the language laboratories with Internet connection can also help in developing various skills necessary for any language. CALL as a missed call needs to be received. It is a very crucial time for the teachers of English in Technical institutes to call CALL.*

KEYWORDS:

Language is "a system of arbitrary vocal symbol by means of which a social group cooperates", (Pathak 11) as per opinion given by Bloch and Trager. If the process of communication in which language has a major share commences efficiently, proceeds effectively and concludes enthusiastically, cooperation among a social group can be achieved and the goal/s of communication can be reached. For any professional in this highly specialized working scenario, it is obligatory to have effective, efficient, enthusiastic communication skills within the group and with other groups as well.

Language learning is not as similar as the learning of any other subject. It requires capabilities to assimilate four fundamental skills of language shortly called LSRW – listening, speaking, reading and writing. It has also been established by many research reports that by using more and more body senses, the 'gateways' of learning, at the same time for comprehending or acquiring resources, learning can be made easy. For linguistic improvement, one requires more and more practice, where one can have more senses in use, to increase the retention power.

In today's techno-world, it is emphasized that a teacher of language must be facilitator for learners' learning experiences. The recent National Seminar on Taxonomy of Educational Skills at and by Centre for Advanced Study of Education (CASE), Vadodara is also to highlight two of many educational skills for Y-generation (Young Generation) – info savvy skills and techno pedagogic skills. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is a call of today's techno-visionary pedagogy. Particularly in engineering institutes of Gujarat, where teaching technology is essential, technology has to be in use and in practice.

CALL uses computers to teach language. The language course materials are already fed into the computer and displayed according to the features available in the system. The first phase of CALL from 1950 to 1970 was based on the then-dominant behaviorist theories of learning which focuses on drilling and practice of a language with the notion that repeated exposure to the same material is advantageous and essential to learning. In early 80s, new dimension in CALL was added with the communicative approach which focuses more on using forms rather than on the forms themselves and teaches grammar implicitly rather than explicitly. Another form of CALL is Language Laboratories in which computers work as vehicles for instructing learners. Nowadays, there are also laboratories with computers with a connection to the Internet. These are called Web Assisted Language Laboratories (WALL).

The language laboratory is very useful for assessing learners' speech. It provides stimulation for the eyes and ears of the learner to acquire the language quickly and easily. The first skills which need to be developed when a learner intends to learn or learns a new language is listening skills. Better listening leads to better understanding and better understanding leads to better oral/written expression. The laboratory's collection is designed to assist learners in the acquisition and maintenance of aural comprehension, oral and written proficiency, and cultural awareness. The language laboratory helps for accessing

TV programmes, web-assisted materials and videotaped materials in the target language. Hence, the language laboratory has become the need of the hour in any language learning process for communication.

As a GenNext, we have newly developed inventions called multimedia and internet which allow and motivate us to step towards integrative CALL. Multimedia technology allows a variety of media (text, graphics, sound, animation, and video) to be accessed on a single machine with the help of CD-ROMs. Another remarkable feature of CALL is the access to Internet. Using the World Wide Web (WWW), learners can bring encyclopedias, dictionaries, maps, any information, and authentic research/language materials to their computers. With the help of a tip of a finger, the world becomes a global village where learners find all possible and genuine sources of leaning to enhance their linguistic skills. They can also use the Web to publish their texts or multimedia materials to share with other learners.

In general, computer can serve as a tutor to teach grammar including drill and practice on a single topic, or on a variety of topics, or to check grammatical content of the learners; to teach listening by including multi-skill drill and practice programmes; to teach pronunciation and allow learners to record and playback their own voice and compare it to a model; to teach reading by assisting learners using well-designed modules and allowing learners to comprehend and to test their comprehension skills; to teach text reconstruction when it allows learners to manipulate letters, words, sentences, or paragraphs in order to put texts together; to teach vocabulary including synonyms, antonyms, homophones etc with the help of drill and practice programs; to teach writing with inclusion of tutorials such as sentence combining, sentence maker etc; to teach comprehension and what not. The list will go on. Computer can serve as a stimulus in which stimulation situations are provided to the learners where learners have to act and/or react appropriately and accurately. Computer can prove to be a tool for word processing, grammar checker, collaborative writing, reference, authoring, editing, reviewing and many other roles.

CALL can be benefitted in many ways as it provides self-instructional tasks as per the psychological and pedagogical principle of 'individual differences'. The choice of selection is given to the learners and learning pace can be maintained as per their capabilities. Learning language through CALL consists of interesting, entertaining and attractive activities. Instant response to the activities makes learning faster. Using CALL, error analysis is also made rapid which motivates learners for accurate responses in future. Insight into grammar, vocabulary, punctuation can also be developed in the CALL laboratory.

On the other hand, there may be some complexities in using CALL like the element of comparison. Here learners may make comparison between the roles of a teacher with that of a computer and between conventional classes with CALL. Availability of such infrastructure, facilities, furniture, computers and peripherals, is also a big challenge not only for the government engineering institutes but also for the SFIs (Self-

Financed Institutes). Lack of awareness regarding the technicality of CALL among the teachers can be the great hindrance in the process. In this digital age, many teachers are just pedagogues, they are not techno pedagogues. That's a requisite to keep pace with the fast moving generation. To avail maximum advantages of new technologies, one should develop these skills.

By facing challenges and by minimizing obstacles lying in the way of CALL, the revolutionized technical world can maximize the scope and use of CALL. As well-thought people from the engineering and science world, we should welcome CALL as advancement in teaching-learning language domain in engineering institutes. Gujarat needs such reforms from the pedagogical perspective. In spite of an international language, English has already been a part of our culture. It has sprouted and blossomed fully. It is required to motivate communication skills in English in engineering arena through using technology in teaching learning process. That's why it is very crucial time for the teachers of English/Communication Skills in engineering and science institutes to call C.A.L.L. (Computer Assisted Language Learning).

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