



An Investigation On Computer Assisted Language Learning

KEYWORDS

CALL; language learning; EFL; language teaching

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ABSTRACT Computer assisted language learning or CALL is related to the use of computers in language learning and teaching and nowadays it is increasingly being used in the process of teaching. One of the main goals of CALL is to provide a context which facilitates the acquisition of second language especially acquisition of communicative competence. CALL is helpful in the linguistic development of learners by providing more effective language learning opportunities than merely human teaching methods. In the present study the advantages and disadvantage of CALL will be discussed. It also presents the technical capabilities and devices which are essential for the use of CALL in language learning and teaching.

1. Introduction

0.1 Integration of CALL

English language teachers and instructors should consider different factors before using CALL in the process of teaching and learning. First, it is substantial to evaluate the learners' computer skills. Learners who do not have sufficient knowledge of computers will first need to engage in an introduction to basic computer skills such as e-mail usage, word processing, the operations of various introductory software and applications.

The second significant factor is related to the language level and proficiency and as well web navigation of the language learners. If language teachers want their students to engage in ESL websites, they need to consider the fact that only advanced and intermediate level students will assure successful and effective web navigation; because most of the ESL/EFL websites require a satisfactory level of English language.

Third, there are some technical issues which should be considered. It is clear that the first thing which language teachers need is the availability and existence of a lab or commuter room which is essential and required for the CALL to be implemented in teaching. Based on the previous research it was found out that the maximum for teaching experience with the help of CALL is three students per computer. Another important facet is that language teachers should have efficient and useful software which particularly designed for English language teaching.

Moreover, web navigation implies some other particular requirements namely: a) satisfactory access to a reliable network and internet facilities b) making use of the newest software, applications and browser software. It is very significant to use up-to-date and modern equipments and applications, since the usage of outdated equipments may lead to an unacceptable and unsatisfactory experience for both teachers and as well as learners which finally leads to the discouraging of both teachers and learners to use computers in teaching-learning procedure. It is very essential to use the fastest modems at least 28800bps. Moreover, teachers should keep in mind that several recent web-

sites are designed to be used just with the latest versions of applications and browser software, include: Communicator Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator c) Language teachers should keep themselves up-to-date in regards to new technologies and ESL/EFL applications in order to use them effectively in the teaching and learning process and to be able to prognosticate the potential problems. They should keep in mind that always they can contact the support staff or online help resources in case of technical problems happen.

1.2. Some advantages and disadvantages of CALL

It is obvious that computer assisted language learning (CALL) offers many useful facilities to language teachers to have a successful teaching and learning procedure. It is very vital to consider and highlights the advantages which teachers can obtain from integration of CALL in order to make their teaching process more active and effective. One of The most significant advantages of CALL is that it presents a substantial self-access facility; i.e. it is very helpful to create autonomous learners who can experience freedom of choice.

The applications and tools that students can find in the computers will let them to presume mastery and control of their own learning experience. Learners can make use of the computers' programs whenever they want. In addition, computers are responsive and sensitive to the level of proficiency of the students. The mentioned advantage can also be regarded as a disadvantage, since many teachers may also regard computers as undertaking functions that should be accomplished by professional and trained teachers. The present study will depict that this cannot be a real disadvantage, since the teachers themselves can also use computers to make their teaching more effective and to take advantages of using computers as complimentary tools for successful teaching.

Another significant advantage of CALL is that it offers a new way to teach materials. Out of the CALL contexts the materials of teaching are mostly passive. In CALL, materials adjust themselves to the needs of individual learners; i.e. they become interactive.

The mentioned advantages and disadvantages notify clearly that considering CALL, we have to be persistently analysing that whether the activities to which CALL is employed are just reinforcing current and present practices or if, on the other hand, they are promoting and encouraging curriculum renewal. In order to get the maximum advantages of CALL in language learning, teachers should promote a complementary relationship with new technologies and computers.

The modern technology and computers should be implemented and integrated into language learning processes and pedagogic programs which guarantee a successful and effective teaching procedure and methodology. Teachers hinder their informative roles to undertake a more active role in teaching process and this is permitted to them to appreciate to the computer cooperation, due to the fact that computer is now going to be regarded as a new source of information. This results in an innovative and advanced teaching methodology in which the dichotomy teacher/transmitter-student-receiver is terminated.

Teachers are going to boost, improve and promote interaction with students in order to reach this purpose they encourage learners to take risks, and ignoring mistakes during the process of learning activities and teaching process. In addition, the teachers' analysis of teaching-learning process and their planning for the improving of teaching methodology will make it possible for them to manipulate and correct possible errors in this process. The students should be encouraged to participate actively in the process of learning. With considering and practicing of these kinds of activities, curriculum improvement is guaranteed, so that definitely a useful and effective improvement in teaching methodology will occur.

Another important facet which should be considered and analyzed regarding the integration of CALL in English teaching is to know what kind of environment is going to be created by the computers. Creating autonomous learn-

ers should not be perceived as the concept of human isolation. The CALL classroom should not be considered or perceived as a room in which students are studying in isolation in front of their computers. Teachers should consider and manage activities that enable collaborative activities and learning; group work, human-computer interactions should be regarded to be compatible and complementary to each other.

Conclusion

There are many significant factors which language teachers should keep in mind before the application of CALL in the process of teaching. First, the teachers should consider and evaluate the learners' computer skills. The second, important factor which should be taken into account is the language level of the learners and their knowledge of navigation on the web. Third, teachers should evaluate and consider the technical issues and availability of computer facilities and their usefulness in advanced before integration and implementation them into the process of teaching. Since this will result in a good understanding of the technology and computer facilities and about how to adopt and use them in teaching process to create effective and successful teaching with the help of computers and new technologies.

There are numerous modern applications, technologies and software for learning English language which can easily be used by teachers to improve and boost the language skills of learners and to provide an effective EFL/ESL environment and context for the learners. In order to get the maximum advantages of CALL in language learning, teachers should promote a complementary relationship with new technologies and computers.

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