

A Study on Perceptions of EFL Teachers on Efficacy of CALL in Pakistan

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Abstract

In this study, efficacy of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) in Pakistan keeping in view the special role of teachers for CALL in their classrooms is investigated. A descriptive survey research was conducted with EFL teachers working at tertiary level in different colleges of Faisalabad. 30 English teachers both male and female were selected as the participants of this study. A questionnaire was given to know the perceptions of English teachers towards CALL as a tool for study and the problems they faced for CALL efficacy in their classrooms.

The results of this study revealed that teachers are having facilities of computer assisted learning at their homes and at a lesser scale in their respective institutions. They are interested in opting new methodologies in their classes and are interested in effective implementation of CALL in their classes if they are provided with the proper material for CALL.

Keywords : CALL ,EFL , Tertiary.

Introduction

CALL is an approach to language teaching and learning in which computer technology is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement, and assessment of material to be learned, usually interactive element. In houses, workplaces and also in schools, electronic technology has started to be used widely (Bishop, 2003). A decade ago, the use of computers in the language classroom was of concern only to a small number of specialists. However, with the advent of multimedia computing and the Internet, the role of computers in language instruction has now become an important issue confronting large numbers of language teachers throughout the world.

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In the last few years the number of teachers using computer assisted language learning (CALL) have increased markedly and numerous articles have been written about the role of technology in education in the 21st century. Although the potential of the Internet for educational use has not been fully explored yet and the average institutions still makes limited use of computers, it is obvious that we have entered a new information age in which the links between technology and TEFL have already been established (Lee, 2000).

It is up to the teachers' choice whether they become a CALL observer, designer, implementer, evaluator or manager. Depending on their teaching situations, teachers can simply utilize the computer as a supplement or tool to their work. As Warschauer notes, those who employ computer technology in the service of sound pedagogy would find ways to enrich their instructional programs (Warschauer M. , 1996) .

Literature Review

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) came of age in the early 1960s (Warschauer R. K., 2000). The use of computer technology in English Language Teaching (ELT) context has also been common since 1960s (Lee, 2000). Different terms have been used to define the integration of computers into ELT context, the most common one is Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Levy defines CALL as “the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning” and goes on to state that “it is used as the general term to cover all roles of the computer in language learning” (Levy, 1997). As obvious from this definition, CALL is a broad term that includes all aspects of computer implementations into language classes.

Warshauer (1996) categorized the development of CALL into three main phases—Behavioristic CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL—which were the result of advancements in computer technology and changes in outlook toward language teaching.

Behavioristic CALL

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Behaviorism was the dominant theory between 1950s and 1960s and it effected the education between 1960s and 1970s. Well known behaviorists were Watson, Pavlov and Skinner. According to these behaviorists, learning was “a response to an external stimulus”. (J.L Duffy, 2005)

Behaviouristic CALL was based on behaviouristic theory. The first example of behaviouristic CALL was “PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching) Project which was initiated at the University of Illinois in 1960” and the role of it was to provide “the more mechanical types of vocabulary grammar drill, thereby freeing class time for more expressive activities” (Levy, 1997 , p.15,16)

Behavioristic CALL, conceived in the 1950s and implemented in the 1960s and 1970s, could be considered a sub-component of the broader field of computer-assisted instruction. Though behavioristic CALL eventually gravitated to the personal computer, it was first designed and implemented in the era of the mainframe. The best-known tutorial system, PLATO, ran on its own special hardware consisting of a central computer and terminals and featured extensive drills, grammatical explanations, and translation tests at various intervals. (Healey, 1998)

Communicative CALL

The second stage of CALL was communicative CALL which was conceived in the 1970s and early 1980s (Healey, 1998). This period was the time that behaviouristic approach to language teaching was being rejected at both theoretical and pedagogical level, and also personal computers were creating greater possibilities for individual work. (Gündüz, October 2005). Since this approach emphasized the process of communication and highlighted the use of the target language in real settings, the programs that appeared in this period featured practice in a non-drill format. Software that had not been specifically designed for CALL was also employed for writing practice. This type of application in CALL is the so-called “computer as a tool” (Brieley, 1991).

Integrative CALL

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The third stage, integrative CALL, emerged with the developments of multimedia computers and the Internet (Warschauer M. , 1996). These two innovations allow the learners to access a more authentic learning environment. As we know, multimedia enables one to integrate four skills, and the Internet provides opportunities to interact in an English language environment 24 hours a day. So according to Warschauer and Healey “four language learning skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading) and also technology were integrated into language teaching with the help of integrative CALL (Healey, 1998).

In integrative approaches of CALL, students are enabled to use a variety of technological tools as an ongoing process of language learning and use rather than visiting the computer lab once a week basis for isolated exercises (Gündüz, October 2005). By the help of the new developments as multimedia and the Internet, the integration of computers into language teaching may reach high standards. As Stephen Bax indicated, if language students and teachers start to use computers everyday as an integral part of every lesson, like a pen or a book, CALL will be able to be integrated into language classes effectively (Bax, 2003). According to Duffy, McDonald and Mizell (2005) in this continuously developing technology age, teachers’ using computers effectively in their language classes has great importance. This importance of CALL can be emphasized by stating that “using a computer will become as essential as reading” and they additionally indicate that teachers will try to improve their computer competence level in order to use the new technology in a proper and effective way (J.L Duffy, 2005).

Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations in this study, which are as follows:

1. The results of this study were limited to just 30 EFL tertiary level teachers in Faisalabad region so the findings are not generalizable to all of the college or university teachers of Pakistan.
2. Perceptions of the participants might be based on the current knowledge of the teachers and working conditions which may differ from one teacher to another that’s why cannot be generalized.

3. Along with the questionnaire as data collection instrument, in addition personal observation is also used to give the final interpretation and results.

Methodology

For this study descriptive research design was selected as descriptive study is also defined as a survey research. So to conduct the survey and to determine perceptions of participants towards CALL, a questionnaire is used and the results of this questionnaire are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. 30 EFL teachers working at tertiary level in different government and semi-government institutions of Faisalabad region were selected as participants of the study. 15 of the participants were female and 15 of them were male and they are teaching at different tertiary levels as intermediate, Graduation and M.A classes. There were 18 questions in the questionnaire which included likert-scale and dichotomy scale having close ended options.

The first part of the questionnaire was generally set to know about the personal details of the respondent. Q.1 to Q.7 was close ended and were arranged to know about the competence level of the teachers and availability of the resources. Q.8 to Q.13 was designed to know about the classroom conditions and teachers perceptions towards CALL and likert scale was applied there. Q.14 was generally designed to know the effectiveness of using CALL in EFL classes and from Q.15 to Q.18 implementation of CALL and the role of relevant authorities to implement successful CALL in our language classrooms is being asked.

Data Analysis and Results

In this analysis part of the data gathered through the questionnaire a mixed approach is used as the percentages are given and the numeric show the respondents' perceptions and efficacy of Computer Assisted Language Learning in EFL classes, and descriptive analysis through qualitative study also lead us to give a specific conclusion to the topic. The results of these data are illustrated through tables.

Q.1) Have you ever attended any training course, workshop or seminar on using computers?

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GENDER	YES	NO	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
Male	53.4% (8)	46.6% (7)	100% (15)
Female	66.7% (10)	33.3% (5)	100% (15)

Q.2) Do you have computer at your home?

GENDER	YES	NO	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
Male	80% (12)	20% (3)	100% (15)
Female	100% (15)	0% (0)	100% (15)

Q.3) Do you have internet access at your computer?

GENDER	YES	NO	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
Male	80% (12)	20% (3)	100% (15)
Female	86.7% (13)	13.3% (2)	100% (15)

Q: 4). Do you teach your English class with the help of computer or any other technological device?

GENDER	YES	NO	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
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Male	26.7% (4)	73.3%(11)	100% (15)
Female	46.7% (7)	53.3% (8)	100% (15)

Q: 5) Are you familiar with the term (CALL) computer Assisted Language Learning?

GENDER	YES	NO	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
Male	40% (6)	60% (9)	100% (15)
Female	40% (6)	60% (9)	100% (15)

Q: 6) Being teacher are you interested in CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning)?

GENDER	YES	NO	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
Male	93.3% 9(14)	6.6%(1)	100% (15)
Female	93.3% (14)	6.6%(1)	100% (15)

Q: 7). Have you tried to develop your Computer competency level professionally?

GENDER	YES	NO	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
Male	53.3% (8)	46.7% (7)	100% (15)

Female	46.7% (7)	53.3% (8)	100% (15)
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Through these findings we can indicate that almost 90% of the respondents are having computer facility in their homes and 83% of them both male and female were having internet facility at their computers, 26.7% of the male participants and 46.7% of the female respondents were using computers or some other technological device like multimedia or projectors.40% of the participants both male and female were familiar with the term CALL and 60% of them were not aware of the productivity of CALL in the language classes.93% of the total respondents were interested in using CALL as a study tool in their classes and almost 50% of them have also tried to develop their CALL competency level professionally.

In the next part of the questionnaire from Q.8 to Q.13 where classroom conditions and the perceptions of EFL teachers towards CALL was being asked, the response can be shown through a table.

Sr#.	Strongly disagree 1		Disagree 2		Neither agree nor Disagree 3		Agree 4		Strongly agree 5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Q.8	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13.3%	66.7%	60%	33.3%	26.6%
Q.9	0%	0%	13.3%	13.3%	13.3%	20%	53.3%	46.7%	20%	20%
Q.10	0%	0%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	20%	60%	60%	26.7%	13.3%
Q.11	0%	0%	0%	0%	6.7%	0%	53.3%	73.3%	40%	26.7%
Q.12	13.3%	0%	0%	0%	20%	20%	53.3%	53.3%	13.3%	26.7%
Q.13	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	26.7%	60%	60%	20%	13.3%

According to the participants' response it can be concluded that 93.3% of the total respondents supported the view that using computers in a language class is more enjoyable. 70% of the participants were either strongly agree or agree that they need a computer always in their language class to teach the students. 16.7% of them were neither agree nor disagree and 13.3% disagreed this viewpoint. In the questionnaire a general type of question was asked from the participants to have an idea that which aspects of the language are appropriate for CALL and it was analyzed through data that almost every aspect of language are considered appropriate for the efficacy of CALL in the language classrooms.

Items	Male	Female
Grammar		
Comprehension		
Pronunciation		
Vocabulary teaching		
Presentation skills		
Four skills of language		
Teaching with games		

Participants were asked in the questionnaire from Q.15 to Q.18 about the specific role played by the relevant authorities to implement CALL in our language classes and the response is shown through this table.

Sr#.	Strongly disagree 1		Disagree 2		Neither agree nor Disagree 3		Agree 4		Strongly agree 5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Q.15	0%	0%	20%	13.3%	20%	6.7%	40%	73.3%	20%	6.7%
Q.16	13.3	20%	53.3%	46.7%	20%	13.3%	13.3%	13.3%	0%	6.7%

Q.17	46.7%	20%	46.7%	20%	33.3%	20%	13.3%	13.3%	0%	6.7%
Q.18	0%	0%	6.7%	0%	6.7%	0%	60%	26.7%	46.7%	73.3%

Conclusion

In this study, 30 EFL tertiary level teachers were administered a questionnaire in order to reveal their perceptions towards CALL, advantages and disadvantages of CALL as a study tool and the problems faced by these teachers while conducting activities in their language classes through CALL. This survey at a diminutive level exposed the fact that teachers are having facilities of computer assisted learning at their homes and at a lesser scale in their respective institutions. They are interested in opting new methodologies in their classes and are interested in effective implementation of CALL in their classes. In this way certain recommendations can be followed as:

- ❖ Availability of CALL materials through the relevant authorities.
- ❖ Teachers should be trained.
- ❖ Setting up language classes in the computer labs.
- ❖ There should be change in curriculum as a due place be given to CALL activities in the classes.
- ❖ Decreasing the size of crowded classes.
- ❖ Setting up a support center and the provision of more financial budget for CALL.

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