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# The Effectiveness of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in the EFL Classroom on Teaching Learning Process in India

**Abstract**

It is very interesting to see how Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has attracted many Indian students in learning English as a foreign language in the institutions of higher learning. It has great impact on their academic lives especially in teaching-learning process inside the classrooms. As a response to the students' attraction in CALL, computer technologies have been brought into classrooms where they are considered to be effective in enhancing students learning and addressing certain education problems. This paper attempts to trace the history of CALL, discusses its current status and the effectiveness of CALL in the EFL teaching and learning process in India.

**Introduction:**

Computer assisted language learning (CALL) is both exciting and frustrating as a field of research and practice. It is exciting because it is complex, dynamic and quickly changing – and it is frustrating for the same reasons (Hubbard, 2009). Computer Assisted Language Learning is succinctly defined in a seminal work by Levy (1997) as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" . Chapelle (2001) suggests that "This term is widely used to refer to the area of technology and second language teaching and learning despite the fact that revisions for the term are suggested regularly". Beatty (2003) offers the following characterization: "a definition of CALL that accommodates its

changing nature is any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language". CALL programs/materials include:

1. CALL-specific software: applications designed to develop and facilitate language learning, such as CDROMs, web-based interactive language learning exercises/quizzes.
2. Generic software: applications designed for general purposes, such as word-processors (Word), presentation software (PowerPoint), and spreadsheet (Excel), that can be used to support language learning.
3. Web-based learning programs: online dictionaries, online encyclopedias, news/magazine sites, e-texts, web-quests, web publishing, blog, wiki, etc.
4. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) programs: synchronous - online chat; asynchronous - email, discussion forum, message board.

**History of CALL:**

Using computers in language learning dates back to the early 1960s when prestigious universities used mainframe computers for language learning (Motteram, 2013b, p.5; Levy, 1997; Davies et al., 2012). Since then, CALL has developed into "a symbiotic relationship between the development of technology and pedagogy" (Gorjian, Hayati, and Pourkhoni, 2013, p.35; Stock well, 2007, p.118). By the early 1980s, using computers in language learning has become a widespread practice throughout America and Europe. It was at this moment that CALL emerged as a distinct field as CALL themed conferences and professional organisations accompanied the advent of the personal computer in the 1980s. Many researchers have hitherto attempted to trace out the evolution of CALL and have proposed different typologies of CALL (Levy, 1997, pp.13–46; Sanders, 1995, pp.6–14; Graham, 1997, pp.27–48; Davies, 2012; Butler Pascoe, 2011, pp.17–27; Delcloque, 2000; Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer and Healey, 1998, pp.57–58; Kern, Ware, and Warschauer, 2008, pp.281–282; Bax, 2003, pp.14–19; Warschauer, 2004, pp.20–21).

Of all typologies proposed by researchers, two stand unique: One by Warschauer (1996, 2000, and 2004) and the other by Bax (2003). Both typologies divide the history of CALL based on phases rather than approaches. Warschauer's typology is based on the three phases in the history of CALL, such as Structural CALL, Communicative CALL and Integrative CALL.

- The first phase of CALL, conceived in the 1950s and implemented in the 1960s and '70s, was based on the then-dominant behaviorist theories of learning. Programs of

this phase entailed repetitive language drills and can be referred to as "drill and practice" (or, more pejoratively, as "drill and kill").

- The second phase of CALL was based on the communicative approach to teaching which became prominent in the 1970s and 80s. Proponents of this approach felt that the drill and practice programs of the previous decade did not allow enough authentic communication to be of much value.
- Integrative approaches to CALL are based on two important technological developments of the last decade: Multimedia and Internet.

**Current Status of CALL:**

According to Warschauer (1996, 2000, and 2004), the three phases of CALL do not fall into a linear timeline. As each new phase emerges, the previous phases too continue to coexist. The commencement of a new phase “does not necessarily entail rejecting the programs and methods of a previous phase; rather the old is subsumed within the new. In addition, the phases do not gain prominence in one fell swoop, but like all innovations, gain acceptance slowly and unevenly” (Warschauer, 1996). The following table summarises the three phases of CALL based on Warschauer’s typology (Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer, 2000, p.64; Warschauer, 2004, p.11; Taylor and Gitsaki, 2004, p.134).

Multimedia technology exemplified today by the CD-ROM, allows a variety of media (text, graphics, sound, animation, and video) to be accessed on a single machine. What makes multimedia even more powerful is that it also entails hypermedia, which means that the multimedia resources are all linked together and that learners can navigate their own path simply by pointing and clicking a mouse. Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), which has existed in primitive form since the 1960s but has only become wide-spread in the last years, is probably the single computer application to date with the greatest impact on language teaching. The emergence of the World Wide Web now known simply as "the Web."In the early 1990s it marked a significant change in the use of communication technology for all computer users. E-mail, a form of asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication, has been called “the mother of all Internet applications” (Warschauer, Shetzer,&Meloni, 2000, p.3).

**CALL programs:**

- **CALL-specific software**: applications designed to develop and facilitate language learning, such as CD-ROMs, web-based interactive language learning exercises/quizzes.

- **Generic software**: applications designed for general purposes, such as word-processors (*Word*), presentation software (*PowerPoint*, see an e-book made by students "Many Moons"), and spreadsheet (*Excel*), that can be used to support language learning (see examples of using *Excel* for language learning & teaching) *Also see Microsoft Office Online Templates)

- **Web-based learning programs:** online dictionaries, online encyclopedias, online concordancers, news/magazine sites, e-texts, web-quests, web publishing, blog, wiki, etc.

- **Computer-mediated communication (CMC) programs:** synchronous - online chat; asynchronous - email, discussion forum, message board

**CALL Activities:**

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|---|---|
| - multiple-choice & true/false quizzes<br>- gap-filling exercise/cloze<br>- matching<br>- re-ordering/sequencing<br>- crossword puzzles<br>- games<br>- simulations | - writing & word-processing<br>- concordancing<br>- web quests/searching<br>- web publishing<br>- online communication (synchronous and asynchronous) |

**Bax's Analysis of CALL :**

**Restricted CALL** **Open CALL** **Integrated CALL**

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Type of task** | - Closed drills<br>- Quizzes | - Simulations<br>- Games<br>- CMC | - CMC<br>- Web-based programs |
| **Type of student activity** | - Text reconstruction<br>- Answering closed questions<br>- minimal interaction with other students | - Interacting with the computer<br>- Occasional interaction with other students | - Frequent interaction with other students<br>- Some interaction with computer through the lesson |
| **Type of feedback** | - Correct/incorrect | - Focus of linguistic skills development<br>- Open, flexible | - Interpreting, evaluating, commenting, stimulating thought |
| **Teacher role** | - Monitor | - Monitor / facilitator | - Facilitator / Manager |
| **Position in curriculum** | - Not integrated into syllabus - optional extra<br>- Technology precedes syllabus and learner needs | - Toy<br>- Not integrated into syllabus - optional extra<br>- Technology precedes syllabus and learner needs | - Tool for learning<br>- Normalized<br>- Integrated into syllabus, adapted to learners' needs<br>- Analysis of needs and context precedes decisions about technology |
| **Position in lesson** | - Whole CALL lesson | - Whole CALL lesson | - Smaller part of every lesson |
| **Physical position of computer** | - Separate computer lab | - Separate lab- perhaps devoted to language | - In every classroom |

**The Impact of CALL on effective teaching-learning process:**

Researcher cannot deny the increase of computer and internet use around us. The technology has given impacts not only to the industry and economy but also to other field, such as, education. Decision makers involved in education need to know the benefits of CALL and also be informed about its past and future prospects before they allow the investment of resources into CALL. Many researchers have studied the impact of CALL in learning a second or foreign language and have found CALL to be beneficial in learning the English language in a number of ways (Barson & Debski, 1996; Chapelle, 1997; 2003; Warschauer, 1996; 1997; 2002; 2004; Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Warschauer & Kern, 2005; Yang, 2008).

Computer aid learning in many different ways and is a great teaching tool for students. CALL gives students access to authentic input and is also useful in helping teacher. According to Garrett (1982) computers allow students to interact with an outside audience using one of the four core skills.

Computers provide students with access to a large amount of authentic input and language learning resources, this is very hard to achieve for teachers without additional help. As a result students actively participate in the learning process. According to Skinner & Austin (1999) this leads to an increase in student's motivation and gives them greater confidence.

Computer mediated communication according to Egbert (2004) gives learners the opportunity to receive the input, provides feedback, and produce comprehensible output. Because of their irrational behavior students often do not achieve their language learning goals. CALL can greatly help language learners by producing language output.

CALL can impact and improve language learners basic language skills and can positively affect students self concept. It allows for more engagement and student centered learning in the classroom and overall improves language learners thinking skills and confidence. CALL can provide individual support to learners based on their individual needs by providing the necessary information.

Computers unlike teachers are never tiring and can repeat the same thing over and over limitless times this is very useful for students who are a little slower when it comes to learning and students have 24 hour access to teaching materials that would otherwise be constrained by classroom times.

Teacher student communication can be enhanced by CALL. By the use of internet the students can have access to a worldwide library of information and can download programs and materials that are relevant to their language needs.

Lastly, by the use of networks between computers, teachers can quickly share content with their students and receive feedback.

**Conclusion:**

With the introduction and successful implementation of CALL, and with the changed scenario in the teaching-learning environment; students attitudes towards English is also changing, in a study by many researchers, most students showed a very positive view towards English and saw English as an important factor for the countries growth and trade and also for the best future. An ideal CALL courseware remains not an alternative but a complementary tool in reinforcing classroom activities. Apart from relying on the ability of educators to create suitable CALL courseware, the effectiveness of CALL depends on the teacher's readiness to adopt new attitudes and approaches toward language teaching. The teacher should avoid being skeptical about the use of computer in language teaching and begin to re-evaluate his methods in the light of computer's tremendous teaching potential and boldly address to the challenges offered. The computer can best assist teachers if it is seen not as a replacement for their work but as a supplement to it. Since the use of computers and consequently internet is expanding rapidly in India, EFL teachers can be encouraged to employ e-mail as an available supporting learning tool to facilitate language teaching. It can be happened because of increasing interest and motivation of students due to use of technology.

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