

## **CALL- A Global Approach in Language Teaching**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Computer Assisted Language Learning –CALL is a new and rapidly evolving academic field that explores the role of information and communication technologies in language learning and teaching. It provides fertile ground for leading edge, innovative and highly creative thinking and scholarly work. Because of the multiplicities and changeability of the field which include the emergence of new theoretical, methodological and learning paradigms, special understanding and expertise is required to assess the quality and the depth of such scholarly activities. It is possible only through computers which is the only source for survival. It may be expected that in a decade the lecture method will be totally given up so that the computers can take this rightful place in teaching, and coaching; and learning and self – study. The e-text here produced and the theories here put forward anticipate this change.*

**Key words:** computer, communication, technology, language learning, software, internet, methodology, development

### **INTRODUCTION**

*“The complexity of teaching and learning – is a systematic research .The technical details of the mouse are simple but the teaching principles are complicated; for that reason we need to consider the effectiveness of learning through multimedia”*

*-D.Healy*

The field of CALL is inherently multi-disciplinary. It applies research from the fields of second language acquisition, sociology, linguistics, psychology, cognitive science, cultural studies and natural language processing to second language pedagogy and it merges these disciplines with technology –related fields such as Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence and Media /Communication Studies. Today, CALL activities exploit improved technology to produce highly interactive learning environments, providing effective support for the acquisition of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. High- speed networks allow access to authentic cultural materials and link learners to speakers around the world. When integrated into pedagogical plan, these new technologies enhance learning opportunities beyond anything previously possible. The article provides an overview of current teaching practices and research related to the uses of computers in the languages classroom.

Computers have been used for language teaching since 1960's. This 30+ year history can be roughly divided into three main stages; Behaviouristic CALL, communicative CALL and integrative CALL. Behaviouristic CALL conceived in the 1950's and implemented in 1960's, 1970's could be considered a sub-component of Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI). This mode of CALL featured repetitive language drills. The computer was viewed as a mechanical tutor, which never grew tired and allowed students to work at an individual pace. The next stage, communicative CALL, emerged in the late 1970's and early 1980's stressed that computer-based activities should focus more on using forms, teach grammar implicitly, allow and encourage the students to generate original utterances. Popular CALL software developed in this period included text reconstruction programs and simulations. Soon the communicative CALL came under criticism.

Many teachers were moving from communicative teaching to a socio-cognitive view. Task-based, project-based and content-based approaches sought to integrate learners in authentic environments. This led to a new perspective on Technology and language learning, which has been termed as Integrative CALL (1996). In this approach, students learn to use a variety of technological tools, rather than visiting the computer lab once in a week. If the main frame was the technology of behaviouristic CALL and PC, the technology of the communicative CALL, the multimedia networked computer is the technology of integrative CALL. The multimedia networked computer-with a range of informational, communicative and publishing tools now potentially at the finger tips of every student-provides not only the possibilities for much more integrated uses of technology, but also the imperative learning to read, write and communicate via computer.

### **CALL SOFTWARE**

One of the reasons for buying a software is that it provides an integrated teaching solution- something that will

1. provide realistic native-speaker models of the language in a variety of media
2. offer a language learning curriculum.
3. do a needful assessment.
4. determine the best next step for the learner and provide practice with that skill area.
5. record what the student has done, along with an evaluation
6. be available at any hour and require no additional pay or benefits.

Some of the major areas of software-related research in CALL have been the amount and the types of interaction at the computer; effects of skill-building software, particularly writing; responses to multimedia; and attitudes towards computers and CALL. Basena and Jamieson provide an excellent overview of recent research in 1996 and an annotated bibliography of ESL CALL research in 1997. John Higgins's "Overview of Literature" in 1997 is the most popular bibliography. Dudley in 1995 remarks, "the type of software and the tasks teachers set for students had a large effect on the type and quality of student interaction with each other when working in pairs or in small groups". Scarcella in 1991 found "students had positive attitudes toward writing with computers and less apprehension about writing".

The broad area of writing with computers is often referred to as “**Computer Mediated Communication**” and it has its own journals. Veraro (1989) found that “the more interactive video work, the more students retained”. Liu (1992) is of the view that “computer based hyper media enhanced vocabulary learning”

“Students tend to like using computers ,  
even when they may not make much progress”

Comments Stenson (1992).

No doubt, CALL systems have deep knowledge of their domain held in the “expertise module”. Effective evaluation systems draw on the current, organized and demonstrable knowledge of national and international experts in the field. Through this increased electronic access, students’ social awareness and confidence increases. Networking frees them from the limitations of traditional writing tools that often inhibit and restrict writing processes. Learning is then transformed from a traditional passive-listening exercise to an experience of discovery, exploration and excitement. Students can begin to realize their full potential when they are empowered to contribute and collaborate as a team to accomplish their writing tasks more effectively.

### **THE INTERNET**

The internet is very useful for teaching English .Teachers can use it for gathering information for their classes, including teaching plans and materials for class room use. They can subscribe to mailing lists related to TEFL/TESL, and exchange information with other teachers. They can subscribe to electronic journals or newsletters either by e-mail or using the World Wide Web and keep up with new trends of English teaching, finding new or interesting publications. They can consult publishers on teaching material. There are wide variety of ways that the internet can be used in the classroom. Teachers can organize “keypal” exchanges, and students can exchange letters with their keypals. Students can use a mailing list, IECC- Survey, to conduct surveys for class projects. They can subscribe to student lists to exchange ideas with other students around the world. Students can read news in English using either by email or on the World Wide Web. Students’ newspapers and newsletters can be posted on the World Wide Web. There are many resources on the Internet already, and teachers and students have tried to use them in various ways. At this point, it is revealed that students tend to enjoy using computers and the teachers need much more work, to identify the factors involved in using software efficiently, for language teaching. Teachers will continue to refine their techniques with CALL over time .

Computers should be used to make classes more effective. There are two ways to use them. One way is for the teacher to present pictures, videos and written text with or without sound. The presentation can be programmed in advance or handled manually. The other way to use computers is to have students use the computers themselves. The researchers find the second method of using computers which lead the students a better understanding of computers as well as language learning.

In this method, the students work individually on their own interest. The computer provides materials to study and students can interact with the computer as if they are doing with a tutor or a library. The students here are encouraged to do the work either in groups or in pairs, so that they can get a spirit of cooperation and confidence in finding the answers. Interaction among the students is as important as that with a computer in learning. Students work at a computer during the class, can do assignments drills, tutorials, games, simulations and even reviewing and preparing for the class. Using computers give way to their knowledge and promotes the nature of independence. So, computer education is a beneficial one for both the slow learners and the advanced students, as it encourages to work at their own pace. Slower workers can catch up, and advanced students can do extra assignments.

It is true that many students are tired of traditional English classes and are interested in a new style of learning. Kitao (1993) suggested that

“ Students think materials are new and fresh, if they are presented on computers, and they are often interested even in routine tasks such as learning to type. They seem to be willing to spend more hours and do more exercises on a computer than by hand”.

Learning can be individualized using computers. Students can study materials related to their individual goals and interests, with the appropriate difficulty level and at their own pace. “Computers can analyze the problems of each student and the teacher can help individual students with their problems based on the analysis”. In this methodology, students are presented with numerous questions including interpretation of non-verbal literature through computers. They enjoy the language session, while working out their answers from the questions on the monitor. They are given separate answer sheets to note down their answers. The teacher collects the sheets at the end and values them. Finally the result analysis is made. At last, feedback is obtained from the students about the methodology of language learning through computers.

Students are much involved in interpreting non-verbal literature like Bar Chart, Flow chart and Tabular Column, rather than Reading Comprehension. They find reading the long passage –a little boring, whereas the bar charts and flow charts are attractive and more appealing. Moreover, they could gather new ideas, methods, processes and descriptions in such pictorial representations, while in reading comprehension they read a passage in normal language. Regarding ‘Listening’ exercises, a few students have the capacity to recollect the ideas and are able to answer them. Majority of the students lack concentration, memory power and even they are unable to present the answers in a better way.

In this paper, the conventional method of English language teaching has been compared with the modern method of teaching through multimedia. A traditional test was administered to a set of 10 students through the printed exercises. As usual, the students were given the question papers and were asked to write answers in sheets within the allotted time.

Simultaneously an e-test was conducted to another set of 10 students with the same question paper displayed on the computer monitor. Finally, the papers/responses were valued and the scores have been displayed through bar diagrams.

RC- Reading Comprehension -48 Marks

BC- Bar Chart -16 marks

FC-Flow Chart -16 marks

TC-Tabular Column -16 marks

LC-Listening Comprehension-4 marks

**Analysis made from the answers using Traditional Method – Control Group CG**

| <b>Sl. No</b> | <b>Name</b>     | <b>RC (48)</b> | <b>B.C (16)</b> | <b>F.C. (16)</b> | <b>T.C (16)</b> | <b>L.C (4)</b> | <b>TOTAL (100)</b> |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1.            | T. Nanda Kumar  | 30             | 10              | 13               | 14              | 1              | 68                 |
| 2.            | R. Krishna Raja | 33             | 8               | 12               | 12              | 0              | 65                 |
| 3.            | K.Narayanan     | 28             | 12              | 10               | 13              | 1              | 64                 |
| 4.            | P.Senthil kumar | 40             | 9               | 10               | 10              | 0              | 69                 |
| 5.            | S.Shahul Hameed | 42             | 10              | 9                | 10              | 0              | 71                 |
| 6.            | P.Sudha Kiran   | 24             | 6               | 11               | 12              | 2              | 55                 |
| 7.            | R.Sowmya        | 28             | 8               | 13               | 11              | 2              | 62                 |
| 8.            | S.Vasanthi      | 36             | 10              | 12               | 13              | 3              | 74                 |
| 9.            | M.Fathima       | 23             | 11              | 10               | 14              | 1              | 59                 |
| 10.           | V.Anitha        | 40             | 12              | 11               | 10              | 2              | 75                 |
|               | Total marks     | 324            | 96              | 111              | 129             | 12             | 662                |

The CG group average marks obtained is : 66.2%

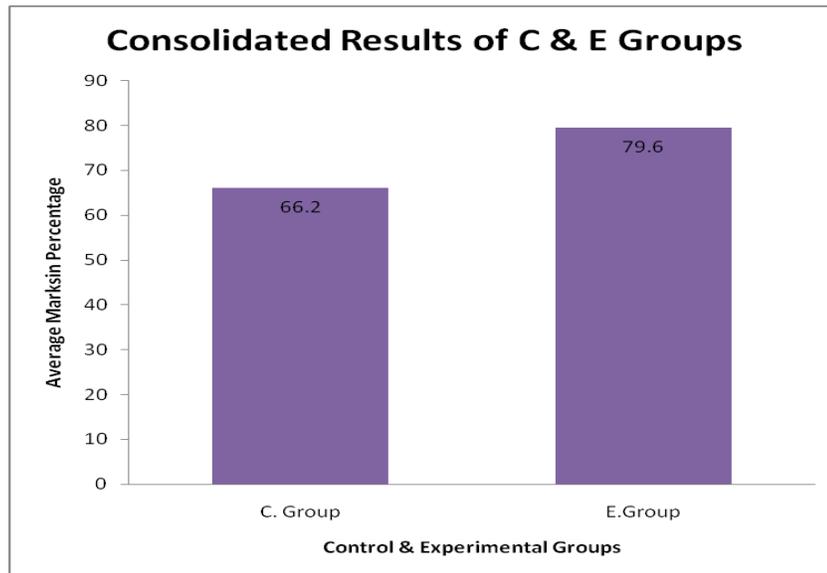
**Analysis made from the answers using Modern Method – Experimental Group EG**

| <b>Sl. No</b> | <b>Name</b>   | <b>RC (48)</b> | <b>BAR (16)</b> | <b>F.C. (16)</b> | <b>TAB (16)</b> | <b>L.C (4)</b> | <b>TOTAL (100)</b> |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1.            | K.J. Aarthy   | 32             | 12              | 4                | 13              | 3              | 74                 |
| 2.            | S. Menaka     | 36             | 13              | 13               | 14              | 4              | 80                 |
| 3.            | Navya Thomas  | 40             | 14              | 12               | 11              | 2              | 79                 |
| 4.            | S.Vani        | 42             | 14              | 10               | 12              | 1              | 79                 |
| 5.            | D.Sudha Kiran | 44             | 14              | 13               | 15              | 3              | 79                 |
| 6.            | Alvin James   | 42             | 11              | 12               | 16              | 1              | 82                 |
| 7.            | Sam Victor    | 41             | 13              | 11               | 12              | 2              | 82                 |
| 8.            | Benniamin     | 43             | 11              | 13               | 15              | 2              | 84                 |
| 9.            | Daniel Raj    | 37             | 12              | 12               | 13              | 3              | 77                 |
| 10.           | Williams      | 42             | 10              | 11               | 14              | 3              | 80                 |

The EG group average marks obtained is : 79.6%

The Inference Evaluation is : 13.4%

This CG – the Control Group was compared with the marks of the modern method of EG – the Experimental Group.



The bar diagrams themselves demonstrate the validity of the methods. An obvious difference is seen in the marks obtained by the students in the tests given to both the groups. By presenting the difference in achievements of both the experimental and control groups, the validity and dependability of using the computer as a medium of teaching English is demonstrated. The role of advanced technology in promoting faster and effective language learning is brought out in this paper. At last, feedback is obtained from the students about the methodology of language learning through computers.

Students are much involved in interpreting non-verbal literature like Bar Chart, Flow chart and Tabular Column, rather than Reading Comprehension. They find reading the long passage – a little boring, whereas the bar charts and flow charts are attractive and more appealing. Moreover, they could gather new ideas, methods, processes and descriptions in such pictorial representations, while in reading comprehension they read a passage in normal language. Regarding ‘Listening’ exercises, a few students have the capacity to recollect the ideas and are able to answer them. Majority of the students lack concentration, memory power and even they are unable to present the answers in a better way.

So, the researcher feels that there is definitely a motivational value of using computers in language learning. No doubt, they are now the heroes in an educational environment:

*“Computers are always available to give feedback, while a human teacher has to attend other students and other tasks and may be tired or distracted”*

Hence it is true that “The Future of learning and the future of computers are sure to go hand – in – hand”.

Although the ages old lecture method has been followed in our classrooms, it was felt that this method needs a change, considering the fact that better facilities are available by means of which the teacher could be more effective.

However, it is necessary to bring out the advantages and disadvantages of both these methods. At this point, the focus of the argument is that the students of the experimental group have performed much better than their counterpart and thus the computer has more reasons to recommend itself in the teaching of English .

The traditional lecture method of teaching can take place anywhere in accordance with the mood of the speaker and the students. There are no technical skills or devices needed for it. Moreover, it is an inexpensive method and the teachers find it easy to handle the classes. This method grants flexibility to both the teachers and learners. The rapport between both is very high as it is a face to face situation. In such a situation doubts can be cleared then and there.

On the other hand, it is essential to discuss the difficulties and disadvantages of the old lecture method. Students do not get motivated and so dislike it. They find it hard to carry numerous books. In the new method, the teacher needs a different set of skills like control over the class and technical knowledge. Moreover the numbers of bearers are limited to 50-60 and they must be regular students, as they are not allowed to do the tasks later or at home. The role of the teacher in this program is very significant. If the subject is not interesting, managing the whole class is difficult. When students resist learning the teacher punishes them. Thus the conflict continues.

While dealing with the modern method of ‘teaching-learning’ through computers, sufficient technical guidance is given to the students. No doubt it is a self-study method, where the teacher is only a guide and motivator. A student in this program need not be regular, and he may continue to work at home. Moreover there is no limit for the number of learners. The number of terminals available is the only limit for the number of students taking the course. It is purely a self-learning kit and it is not time-oriented. Due to this, students get psychological satisfaction is learning through the latest medium. Besides, being exposed to colour monitor, attractive sound effects, background pictures, readability, presentation, different fonts of different sizes, graphics and animation, students enjoy this class to the maximum.

## **CONCLUSION**

The conventional method has certain clear advantages and the modern method has certain clear disadvantages. When we weigh the merits and demerits of both, we are convinced that the modern method recommended by the researcher has more advantages and is more likely to stand the test of time. As it is, students are getting bored at the present day English classes and thus this attempt to make English language learning more interesting and more useful especially in engineering colleges where the technical subjects appear all important. The scores represented in the graphs substantiate the researcher’s claims.

As the developed world moves from the industrial age to the information age, economic activity and growth is based on interpretation of information and the development of knowledge.

In such a society, it is safe to assume that, computers are essential for success in almost every sphere of life. At present, personal computers are within the reach of even ordinary people. They have become more powerful, faster, cheaper, smaller, user friendly and more convenient. As hardware develops, computer is getting closer to the world of human beings. Some people use them as sheer means of entertainment. Some use them as word processors to write. Some use spread sheet programs to keep records and manipulate date. Some others use dictionaries, encyclopedias and other reference works on computers to look up information. While to some possessing a computer is a status symbol, to most it is functional. Thus every person who uses computers is using them differently. Nowadays, students go beyond interpreting net-based information and using effective on line writing multimedia programs with speech recognition software which can immerse students into rich environments for language practice. Computers can run various kinds of software. Users can run a word processing program, a spreadsheet, databases, games etc, all on the same computer. Students can use educational programs stimulations dictionaries etc...in the computer. Computer networks are also useful. Students can communicate with people all over the world.

So it is indispensable for a present day engineering student to know about the internet, browsing, chatting, mailing, downloading etc. They must be familiar with the components of computers and be efficient in their operation. They soon will achieve their own styles of learning in all walks of life. It is possible only through computers which is the source for survival. It may be expected that in a decade the lecture method will be totally given up so that the computers can take this rightful place in teaching, and coaching; and learning and self – study. The e-text here produced and the theories here put forward anticipate this change.

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