

COMPUTER MEDIATED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING AMONG STUDENTS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This study discusses the three phases of Computer-Assisted Language Learning: (CALL) which encompass behavioristic, Communicative and Integrative phases. Debski, (1996). Its greater emphasis is on the pedagogical relevance of Integrative CALL (Multimedia) in English in a Second Language (ESL) environment. Hypermedia provides a number of language learning opportunities such as the creation of more authentic leaning environment; enhancement of effective listening; to the native speaker of English; integration of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing; opportunity for students to have control over their learning as well as focusing on contents without sacrificing language form for learning strategies. This study adopts a descriptive approach as its methodological framework. Data presentation of the study shows that CALL is fraught with daunting challenges in Nigeria, some of which include Non availability of computer tablets, internet facilities in many public and private schools, lack of computer facilities in schools, poverty, poor network, erratic power supply, high cost of Smartphone's and their accessories; shortage of language programmers software developers in English Language Curriculum etc. The study then concludes by highlighting the benefits and challenges of CALL with a clarion call on language teachers to be more proactive and pragmatic in their, teaching methodology so as to enhance the utilization of CALL in schools. It also suggests that government should demonstrate greater commitment to the implementation of Applied Linguistics research findings, provision of ICT facilities in schools, security, workshops for language teachers in the use of Computers power points, you tube on-line teaching methods and provision of subsidy on the high cost of ICT equipment among others. The study then recommends some steps to be adopted by all stakeholders in the education sector to facilitate optimum utilization of CALL in schools for an improvement in learning assessment of students and documentation of their performance through the Information Communication Technology (ICT).

Introduction

The first phase of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) was conceived in the 1950's and implemented in the 1960's and 1970's. It was based on the then dominant behaviourist theory of learning. This programme consisted of repetitive language drills and was also known as "drill and practice". The computer served as a vehicle for delivering instructional materials to students. Pupils repeatedly exposed to same material which is beneficial and even essential to learning. Similarly, a computer was engaged to carry out repeated drills as it did not get bored with presenting the same material. It can also present same material to each individual thereby permitting the students to proceed at their own pace. Consequently, a number of CALL tutoring systems were developed for mainframe computers. This included PLATO system. The PLATO system ran on special PLATO hardware, central computers and terminals. The PLATO system included vocabulary drills, brief grammar explanations; drills and translations test at various intervals (Almad, Corbett, Rogers and Subsev, 1985). Behaviouristic CALL was effected by the rejection of behaviouristic approach to language learning at both theoretical and the pedagogical levels and by incomplete statement Re-cast.

- According to John Underwood (1984:52), communicative CALL, Focuses more; Teaches grammar implicitly; Allows and encourages students to generate original utterances; Does not judge or evaluate; Uses target language exclusively and creates natural environment for pupils participation.

Vance Steven (2000) contends that all, CALL activities should build in motivation and foster interactivity at both learner-computer and varieties of communicative approaches CALL includes the ones which involve course software for text reconstruction and language games in which computer remains the “knower-of-the-right answer” Taylor & Perez, 1989

Another CALL model used for communicative activities involves the computer as stimulus. (Taylor & Perez, 1989:63). It was designed not much for the students to discover the right answer, but rather to stimulate students’ discussion, writing as well as critical thinking.

The third model of Communicative CALL involves the Computer as tools; the computer aids pupils and enhances students to understand language by word processor, spelling and grammar checkers, desk-top publishing programmes and concordances.

The distinction between the models is not, however absolute. A skill practice can be used as a conversational stimulus; for instance, processor spelling checker can be used to scan errors in writing, punctuation and lexis.

Integrative approaches to CALL are based on two important technological developments namely multimedia computers and the Internet, Multimedia technology is represented today by the CD-ROM. It allows a multifunctional/dimensional or hyper media such as text, voice message, graphics animation and video to be assessed on a single gadget.

Significantly, multimedia resources are interconnected with devices such as modems, memory cards, flash with drives connected to the website. Similarly, Goggle search can be used to access the correct spellings, meanings of words, collocation and all aspects of language, learners just need to click on a mouse and follow the directives of the computer in typing. Correct and Standard English pronunciations have also be programmed on some systems for learners in multimedia CALL. Learners can also download English dictionary on their computer systems. Similarly, accessed error checking devices, adobe, word processor, spelling scanning can also be in their computer system.

A careful consideration should be given to pedagogy in designinig CALL softwares. Approaches in teaching foreign languages are constantly changing, from the era of grammar translation to the direct method, audio-lingualism and more recent Communicative/approach and constructivism (Decco 2001).

A basic use of CALL is in vocabulary acquisition using flash cards, which require quite/simple programmes such as spaced repetition; a technique whereby the learner commits vocabulary items to memory until retention is achieved, with the assistance of (SRS) Supermamo package and BYKI and phase 6.

Stepp-Geamy had postulated that the teacher should continue to address the needs of pupils especially those of low-ability learners as well as facilitiating interactive multimedia, internet facilities, corpora and concordance.

CALL PROGRAMS AND APPLICATION RELEVANT FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING:

Computer as a tutor

Grammar: CALL grammar programmes designed for teaching grammar include drill and practice on a single topic, irregular verbs, definite and indefinite articles, as well as drills on a variety of topics in advanced grammar series.

Grammar lessons are also included in a number of multimedia packages.

Multimedia programmes which are specifically designed to promote second language are also available. Similarly, programmes for cartoons, videos and games also exist for children in the use of programmes on pronunciation in form of conversation in standard British. American and English allows pupils to record and playback their own voice and compare it to the standard Received Pronunciation RP.

Collaborative writing consists of tools which help students on the collaborative writing on computer connected to pupils via local and international network, some of these tools include modules for real-time discussion, word processing, electronic mail, citation software and e-dictionary.

Ideally, functional and reliable programmes should be able to understand a user's spoken input and diagnose a student problem with Standard English pronunciation syntax, usage and then decide among range of options. Computers programmes such degree of intelligence is rare to come by and exorbitant to procure. Through Artificial Intelligence (AI) a more modest degree exists which requires few funds

to apply for the language classroom. Multimedia technology may also involve an integration of meaningful and authentic communication in all aspects of the

Scholarship is replete with research on Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). According to Wikipedia, CALL is “The search for the study of the computer in language teaching and learning”. CALL embraces a wide range of Information and Communication Technology applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages, from the traditional drill-and-practice programmes that characterize CALL in the 1960s and 1970s to more recent manifestations of CALL as it is used in virtual learning environment and web-based distance learning. It also extends to the use of concordances, interactive whiteboards, Computer-mediated communication(CMC).

Davies and Higgins 1982.p3). Proposed an alternative terms, Technology-enhanced language learning TELL, which emerged in the early 1990s.

The current philosophy of CALL puts a strong emphasis on student-centered materials that allow students to work on their own through an interactive and individualized learning. The design of CALL materials generally takes into consideration principles of language pedagogy and methodology, derived from different learning theories e.g behavioral, cognitive, constructivist and other second language learning theories such as Stephen Krashen’s monitor hypothesis.

A combination of face-to-face teaching and CALL is usually referred to as blended Learning. In his own contribution, Deco(2001), had emphasized the use of flash cards, software designing for pedagogy language learners have access to

authentic and natural learning environment in which all language skills have been integrated in a single activity and users just need to set the computer systems accordingly.

www.reverse.net >spet – checker

English spell- checker: Check grammar and spelling on line, automatically correct your English texts, search in definition, dictioner. With www.grammarcheck.me, a learner/user can grammar check his spellings, find errors in grammar, spelling, writing style and get instant feedback on problem Grammar check.net allows an ESL user to check any text on-line viagrammar checker in: computing terms, is a program that attempts to verify writing text for grammatical correctness its implementation makes use of natural language processing, grammar translation.

Aim :

The specific aim of this paper is to discuss the prospects and benefits of using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for the improvement of pupils performance in Learning as a whole and English Language Specifically. It also aims at examining the mirage of constraints that the use of (CALL)/Computer Mediated Language (CML) Learning has in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study: The objectives of this study include:

- (i) to highlight the benefits of CML, CALL.
- (ii) to suggest some solutions to the constraints it might have been facing in Nigeria

(iii) to encourage government, private sectors influential persons to be in synergy facilities, in the provision of parities, curriculum, that will facilitate the teaching of English teachers Language at Semantics, Lexicology, Syntax/grammar and phonology levels on the internet, google and with the use of play group, sending and receiving recorded learning materials, so as to adapt pupils to correct standard English pronunciation, correct word usage, grammar, story telling etc.

(iv) to encourage group learning and students-teacher participation in learning, to improve the performance of Nigerian Students in English Language: it is a status determiner, nation's official language, compulsory criterion for employment, into higher Institutions.

Research Methods: The study examines the availability or otherwise of computers and internet facilities; programmers with knowledge in English language learning, Curriculum, English language teachers who are sound in computers, pupils who have access to laptops, moderns, wi-fi, Projectors, Screen board, Power points; Twelve schools in Ede Local Government Area of Osun State were selected; comprising 6 private schools and six public schools.

Data Collection: Both direct and secondary sources were used as a means of getting the data for the study. Direct source includes a personal observation and sighting of the available computers in the schools, the number of teachers and pupils who can have access to connecting devices to internet such as modems, Wi-fi, Viber; and schools. Institutions that can afford functional portals, sets of computer for Computer Based Test, language laboratory, lecture theatre with

functional projectors, power points and laptops/ Desktops; teachers with lecture notes, textbooks, and who have knowledge of teaching English language with power point, programmers in ESL Curriculum, energy supply. Questionnaires were for pupils also administered on major stakeholders in this regard, as well as conducting interviews.

Data Analysis: Relative frequency method was used to analyse the data collected above: This is so because the study involves a discussion, examination and description of some of the constraints/challenges militating against the use of CALL & CMC in order to improve the performance of students in English language.

Findings: Findings show that while 85% of Nigerians pupils, teachers from the selected a secondary schools and the two tertiary institutions use the GSM to send and receive voice and text messages; only about 10% can enable it for learning through you-tube, on-line teaching videos.

Many pupils and teachers find it extremely difficult to subscribe to data, afford smartphones, labtops, desktops; the few secondary schools that have CBT centres, use the few facilities for Joint Admission And Matriculation Exams (JAMB); the computer learning facilities, in the tertiary institutions were not functional; only few lecturers have their lecture notes and textbooks in softcopy, many projectors and screen in the lecture theatres have been vandalized; though the institutions had organized many seminars for staff on the use of power points; this has not improved the situation as only few lecturers from ICT Department can

deliver lectures with powerpoint for teaching There is no language laboratory in all the schools but the SSC III students were given computer tablets by the state government in 2013; 95% of these tablets are no more functional as they only contain orthodox course outline of English Language. They are not suitable for on-line English language learning in which pupils are opportuned to be taught by native speakers correct standard pronunciation, syntax, idioms, and in ESL environment are exorbitant and many Private Schools can not afford them. English Language learning. In crèche and Nursery, there is poor supply of automated computer learning materials that may first expose pupils to correct pronunciation of English sounds in teddies, keats, and other play group gadgets, kiddies programmes on you tube, DSTV etc. All these can expose young brains to English lexis, pronunciation, and grammar in the fictional stories riddles, quiz, documentary on animals and real videos. The amount involved in the procurement of all these as well as monthly subscriptions to Digital Television Stations, subscription to Internet Data, Wi-Fi, to access you tube and other connecting device are not affordable by many schools managers.

Conclusion: It is unfortunate that as the whole world is being digitalized in almost all sectors, the educational system in Nigeria in general and the teaching of English language is particular are not benefiting from this modern Information Communication Technology on the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning CALL/CML. This is ironical in view of the important roles that the language has been playing since inception especially as a strong criterion to get jobs, and

admission to Higher Institutions, as a status determiner, official language in Nigeria; international language and language used for the internet.

Unfortunately economic recession, and ignorance have disallowed many phone users to adapt it for learning in general and language learning in particular. The only few students that use these gadgets on internet used them for anti-social purposes e.g Yahoo; pornohraphy, to dupe people, send wrong information on line etc.

Recommendations: In view of the enormous benefits of the use of Computers mediated language learning/CALL, the paper recommends as follows:

- (i) government, private sectors, individuals and all stakeholders in the nations education should ensure the provision of ICT facilities in all schools and their maintenance cost.
- (ii) English language teachers should be exposed to seminars and worksops on the use of ICT to teach English language at all levels-phonology, Syntax/grammar, lexis and structure, Semantics.
- (iii) All private schools should have Computer based play-group facilities, automated teaching aids computer drawings, pronunciations; Digital television with connection to on-line teaching of English by the natives, teachers, CNN, BBC.
- (iv) Language laboratories, with the installation of ICT devices.
- (v) Improved knowledge on the use of word processor, spelling and punctuation error scanners in computers, voice.

- (vi) Many softwares and programmers versatile in English language Curriculum should be trained and employed by government and posted to schools.
- (vii) Provision of constant source of power supply e.g solar energy for CALL centres and lecture theatres as well adequate security for the ICT equipment.
- (viii) Subsidizing the cost of laptops, modems, softwares etc for academic staff and students by government and private sectors.
- (ix) Provision of viable portals, data stations, Wi-fi, fiber etc for all at affordable prices.
- (x) Nigeria Communication Commission should penalize mobile phone operators for exploiting subscribers on internet and improve on GSM network and Internet networks.

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