TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AS A ROAD BLOCK TO COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL) IN ESL CLASSROOMS: AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION IN THE DIPLOMA ENGINEERING COLLEGES OF ODISHA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a report of an empirical investigation carried out in Odisha (India) by the researcher to find out to what extent the English language teachers' attitude to CALL posed a roadblock to the use of CALL technology for developing Communicative Competence (CC) in English. The target population of the investigation comprised 20 English teachers teaching at the Diploma level in some selected Engineering colleges in Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha . A self designed structured questionnaire was used to solicit data and collect data on the following research questions:

1. How does the background of teachers influence their attitude towards use of CALL?
2. What are the teachers' opinion on using CALL for teaching English to Diploma level learners?
3. What are the major psychological barriers they face in using CALL ?

The findings of the investigation revealed that though the teachers were at home with technology and used computers privately, they rarely used CALL for imparting language skills or communicative competence to the learners mainly due to extraneous factors such as limitations in the learning context and learner proficiency. The teachers' attitude proved to be positive and inspiring, hence the hypothesis that the teachers' attitude acts as a roadblock to the use of CALL was invalidated.

Keywords: CALL**:** Computer Assisted Language Learning is defined as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" (Levy.1997 p.1)

ESL**:** English as a Second Language refers to the study of English by speakers with different native languages.

CC: Communicative Competence: It is defined as "a degree of mastering of a very considerable range of linguistic meaning and appropriateness in language and the ability to develop effective strategies for communicating in the second language." (Littlewod 1981:3)

Statement of the problem

In the recent years a lot of emphasis is being laid has been laid upon using the latest CALL technologies for teaching and learning second/ foreign languages as well as to develop the learners' Communicative Competence (CC). Owing to the Information Communication Technology (ICT) revolution during the last two decades, modes of social and cultural communication have drastically changed , making the traditional language teaching techniques look outdated, boring and ineffective. To woo the young learners hooked to internet, and social media, pedagogues have emphasized the use of the latest CALL techniques to be adopted for teaching a second / foreign language. Resultantly the English language teachers of India and elsewhere are under tremendous pressure to use CALL in the class rooms. But are the teachers and learners of India ready for this change? Are they equipped to implement the change? What are the roadblocks hindering the successful implementation of CALL in Odisha and other developing countries including India?

With regard to this Hee-Jung Jung presented an overview of CALL research from 1990 to 2000 where he observed:

> Most CALL empirical studies focus on the effectiveness of the medium itself particularly in comparison with conventional teaching tools which is too narrow.
>
> Therefore, we need empirical research on how the technology used in the classroom affects the whole language learning environment and what are the barriers to its success.

Other researchers like Schaefer (1981), Levy (1997) Egbert & Smith (2009) Jones (2006) observed that even when the teachers believe in technology and its "empowering potential", they do not always know how to use technology effectively in the class rooms. One such observation by Jones is typical .

> Although many teachers believe that computers are an important component of student's education, their lack of knowledge and negative attitude lead to a lack of confidence to attempting to introduce them in to their instruction by Jones is a reaction. (2006, 31)

Research reports by Bax,2003; Beatly,2003;Jones,2006; Boardbar, 2010 indicate that one such perceived barrier is the teachers' attitude to the use of technology, referring mainly to their technophobia and management anxiety. Taking a cue from the above observations, this researcher took up the challenge to demystify at least one perceived barrier on the path of CALL use; i.e. the teacher attitude.

Methodology

This paper is an attempt to present the report of an empirical investigation conducted using established cannons of educational survey and statistical methods of data analysis . This investigative field study was conducted as a non experimental, cross sectional survey using a reliable research tool ie: the questionnaire. language. It is hoped that this study will illuminate a complex problem which is faced all over the globe in second or foreign language teaching contexts, especially in the developing countries. This investigative field study was conducted as a non experimental, cross sectional survey using a reliable research tool ie: the questionnaire. The investigation zeroed down upon teachers' attitude as the focus. Hence 20 teachers of English, teaching to the diploma engineering students in Odisha, India , were chosen as the sample target population The field study was conducted in the urban local of Bhubaneswar, which is the capital of Odisha, during the academic year 2011-2012.The researcher surveyed ten local Diploma engineering colleges and served a self designed questionnaire to 20 teachers selected randomly.

The structured questionnaire focused on three research questions:

1- Does the teacher background influence their use of CALL technology, if so how?

2-What is the level of teachers' awareness about CALL technology and their opinion on use of CALL in their teaching context?

3-Are there any psychological barriers which the teachers face for using CALL?

Nearly 90% English teachers responded to the questionnaire, only two teachers out of twenty could not be contacted. The summary findings of the investigation are presented below in tables and figures followed by brief discussion.

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Findings

Section 1: Background of the Teacher Respondents

It is well known that attitudes can be positive or negative. A positive attitude to any situation helps in growth where as negative attitude acts as a hindrance to growth. But attitudes are formed through experiences. Ajzen & Fishbein, the psychologist observes "the attitude of an individual is formed by one's background…" (1980) . Therefore a few questions were asked to the teachers, to understand its impact on their teaching of English. The data presented below would confirm whether their background has inclined their attitude positively or negatively towards CALL.

Background of English Teachers

Table No. 1

1	Age : a. Below 25	Nil
	b. 25 – 35	12
	c. Above 35	06
2	Teaching Experience	
	a .Below 5 Years	02
	b. 5 – 10 years	02
	c. Above 10 years	14
3	Educational qualification	
	a .M.A	05
	b. M.phil	10
	c. Ph.D	03
4	Training in ELT/Computer Application	
	a. PGCTE	02
	b. PGDTE	01
	c. BED/ MED	06
	d. DCA/ PGDCA	NIL

The data presented in the Table No.1 reveal that the maximum number of teachers are young (12 out of 18 within the age group of 25-35), experienced (14 out of 18 with above 10 years of teaching experience) educated (MA:05, M.Phil:10,Ph.D:03) but lack training in ELT(PGCTE: 02,PGDTE:01).That maximum teachers (12 out of 18) possess personal computers and use these outside the classroom, frequently for word processing, downloading of data and social networking. This suggests that most of the teachers, despite their lack of training in ELT or computer application, do possess the ability to use CALL technology in ESL classrooms.

Section 2: Teachers' Awareness of an Opinion on CALL

Most of the teacher respondents are educated, experienced and computer savvy. But do they take interest in developing their professional knowledge? Knowledge helps to form opinions and opinions modify attitudes. Hence, this section of the questionnaire probed into their awareness, opinion as well as their experience of using CALL.

2.1 Teachers Awareness about CALL Technology

Table No .2

Sl.No	Statements showing awareness about CALL	Frequency of Response		
		Yes	No	Can't Say
1	Are you aware of CALL ?	01	14	03
2	Have you been trained for using CALL for teaching English ?	01	14	03
3	Have you attended any seminar /workshop /refresher course related to use of CALL ?	02	12	04
4	Do you know of any softwares which can help your students develop their competence in English ?	01	14	03

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2.2. Access to CALL

Table No 3

Sl.No	Statements relating to access to CALL	Frequency of Response		
		Yes	No	Can't Say
1	Computers are provided by the institution for use in the classrooms for teaching English.	04	04	10
2	Availability of language labs	01	11	06
3	Administrative support for use of CALL	03	07	08

2.3. Frequency of CALL Use in Classrooms.
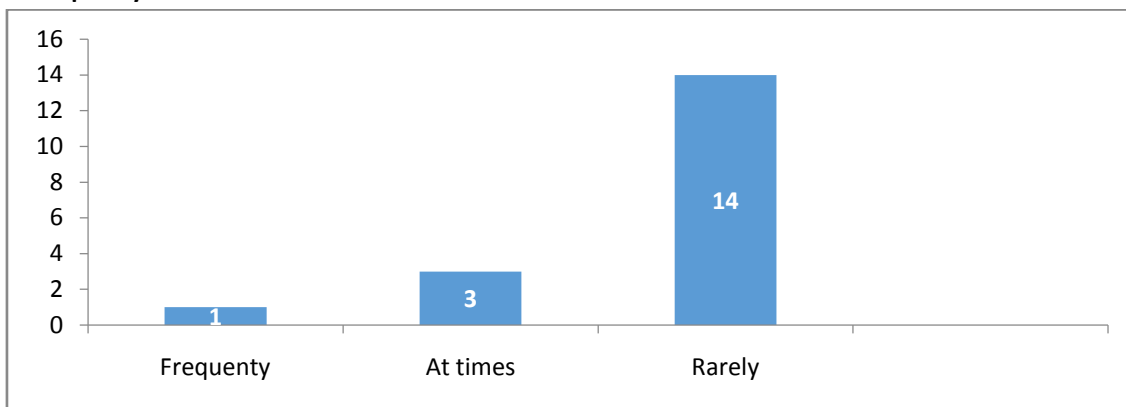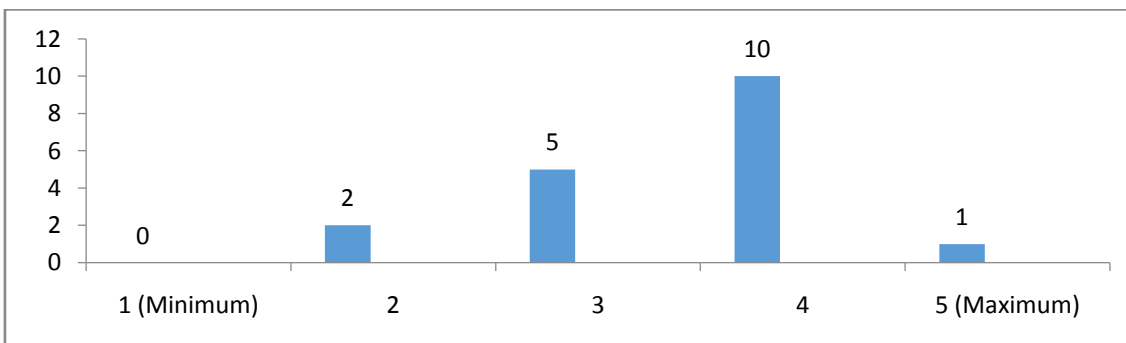

Fig. 1

2.4. Confidence to Use CALL

Fig 2

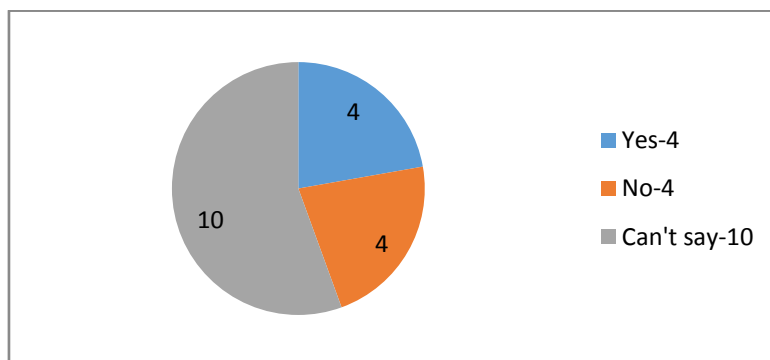### 2.5. Efficacy of CALL in Developing Language Proficiency

Fig.3

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The responses of the teachers regarding the use of CALL represented in the tables and figures above, reveal the following information.

- A large number of teachers (14 out of 18; ie.70% approx.) are not aware of CALL, even though at least 10 teachers have M. Phil and 3 teachers have Ph. D degrees. These 14 teachers who have no training in use of CALL, do not know of any CALL software. However only two of these fourteen have attended some workshop or seminar related to CALL .(T.2) These 14 teachers (70% approx.) also admit that CALL is rarely used for language teaching while the other four teachers who responded 'yes' to use of CALL in classrooms during face to face conversation confirm that they use computers but not software related to CALL.(T.3). In response to the questions on the efficacy of CALL 10 teachers admit that they cannot give any opinion on the effectiveness of CALL in language teaching-learning, as they are not aware of its utility .(Fig.3) About 60% of teachers (10 out of 18) do not have confidence to use CALL because maximum of them (14 out of 18) have no awareness about CALL ,nor have any training for use of CALL nor have any knowledge about the various softwares available to help them in teaching English language skills.(Fig 2) Only one teacher has training in use of CALL and the same person has awareness about CALL software. He confirmed during informal conversation that he has attended a national seminar on the topic, therefore he is aware of it, but is not well conversant with it.

- Only one institution out of the ten visited has a language lab, where as other institutions have provided no administrative support to the teachers to enable them to exploit the facilities available to use latest technological developments in language teaching .14 teachers admit that CALL is rarely used in the colleges.(Fig.1)

The above data confirms certain findings from researches conducted elsewhere (Ajzen & Fishbein ,1980 ;Doughty ,1987; Egbert & Smith ,2004) that the main hindrance in implementing CALL successfully in developing countries is not the teachers' attitude as Jones observes , but the non availability of both computers for classroom use and ICT software besides lack of administrative support and lack of motivation for teachers .

Section3: Psychological Barriers to using CALL for ELT

The English lecturers of Odisha including those serving in the Diploma Colleges have been taught in the traditional mode of teacher-fronted , literature-oriented ,text-based classrooms in general colleges where use of technology is a distant dream even today. Does this learning experience create any psychological barrier for using technology while teaching? The following subsections deal with this question.

3.1. Opinion on the best method of teaching English

Since the inclusion of English as a part of school and college curriculum , many approaches ,methods and techniques have been introduced and adopted with the hope of inculcating better English language proficiency in the learners . .But some methods have been more popular than others , owing to their implement ability in the classrooms .This section included questions in the five point frequency scale from never to always regarding the use of different teaching methods .The frequency of responses were calculated to find out the mean value for each method .These are presented in the table No. 4.

Best Method for Teaching English

Table no.4

Sl. No	Teaching Method	Calculate Mean value of the responses
1	Grammar-Translation method	0.72
2	Direct method	3.4
3	Audio Lingual Method	1.8
4	Lecture Method	0.55
5	Interactive method	3.2
6	Computer-aided Method	1.6

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7	Structural drill Method	4.1
8	Situational method	4.6

An analysis of the mean value of the responses recorded indicate that teachers prefer more the Direct Method , the Interactive Method ,the Structural drill method and the Situational method to other teaching methods. The highest value has been by the teachers to the

Situational Method(4.6) followed by the Structural Drill method .The Computer- Aided Method has got the mean value 1.6 which suggests that the teachers do not rate this as a successful model for teaching language .This may be due to their ignorance of CALL technology or their own learning background.

3.2. Perceived Problems in Using CALL for Teaching English

Teachers generally blame the institutions and external factors for any kind of failure in their attempts to develop English language proficiency of the learners. The contextual factors of course play a major role in any teaching agenda. Therefore it was important to know what problems the teachers face on ground and which factors they perceive as hindrance to use CALL.The questions were in the Yes/No binary format.

Problems faced by Teachers in Using CALL Technology in English Language Teaching

Table No.5

Sl.No.	Problems perceived	No of Respondents	
		Yes	No
i.	Lack of resources	12	06
ii.	Lack of time	14	04
iii.	Lack of student motivation	04	14
iv.	Lack of adequate English Language proficiency of learners	12	06
v.	Lack of training in operating computers	02	16
vi.	Curricular restrictions	16	02

It is apparent from the above table that according to the teachers opinion lack of resources, time ,adequate English language proficiency of the learners as well as curricular restrictions are major problems in utilizing advanced technology for teaching English to the learners in the Diploma classes . Lack of training of teachers in using computers and lack of student motivation are not perceived as problems by the majority. The informal interaction with the teachers regarding the English language curriculum revealed that English is taught to Diploma Engineering students for two years of which the first year is devoted to traditional English Language teaching of grammar and writing skills whereas the second year is devoted to the practice of communication in different real life situations. Thus, the teachers' perception about curricular restriction is correct only to a certain extent but not completely, because the second year of the course prescribes communicative competence as a component of the syllabus. Regarding learner proficiency, it was gathered that most of the students lack the minimum basic standards in English, so much so that they are afraid even to respond to simple queries. The learner group in Diploma Engineering colleges is mostly pass outs from regional secondary schools, where English is taught as a subject without much practice in skills resulting in limited proficiency. However this problem may be seen as a hindrance to the use of interaction in English but should not be seen as a problem to the use of technology on CALL for helping them overcome their deficiencies in English language.

3.3 .   Psychological Barriers towards Using CALL

The third section of the questionnaire presented statements to explore the psychological barriers, if any, which the teachers might be facing while using CALL in their classrooms. The responses were to be given in the format of ranking scale 1 to 5 where 1 stands for 'Don't agree' and 5 stands for 'Strongly agree'. The findings of this section are presented in the table below.

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Psychological Barriers towards Using Technology

Table No. 6

Sl.No.	Propositions reflecting psychological barriers	Mean Value (mv) of response
	Teachers do not use CALL technology for language teaching owing to :	
1.	Lack of confidence in using electronic gadgets, computers etc. in the class	1.21
2.	Lack of motivation to devote time for preparation.	2.42
3.	Fear of loss of control and authority in class	0.62
4.	Fear of loss of self esteem and ability to cope	0.8
5.	Anxiety about using the softwares and skills required for that	2.51
6.	Resistance to change	0.2
7.	Belief that computers cannot replace teachers	3.4
8.	Belief that using CALL for this level of students is a waste of time	4.2
9.	Lack of incentive from administration	2.82
10.	Completing the course in time as the major motive.	3.76

The findings of the section three of the questionnaire were somewhat unexpected. The mean value calculated from the response frequency presented in T.6 revealed that the teachers were not resistant to change (mv,0.2) ,not afraid to lose control, authority or self esteem(mv;O.62,08) nor did they lack confidence to use computers and other electronic gadgets in the class(mv;1.21).

The main psychological barrier to the use of CALL was found to be their belief that "using CALL for this level of students is a waste of time"(mv-4.2),as well as that " computers cannot replace teachers "(mv.3.4).On the other hand teachers seemed to agree that completing the courses in time is the major motive "(mv;3.76) and " lack of incentive from administration" and "lack of motivation to devote time for preparation"(mv2.82& 2.42) are deterrents to the use of CALL.

On the whole the teacher respondents whose background study showed that they are young, educated, experienced and are habituated to computers for personal use are a group of confident, techno – savvy instructors who do not resist change or do not reflect anxiety or fear for using latest technology in the class room. But their belief that "using CALL for this level of students is a waste of time" (T.6)certainly reflects a negative attitude towards progression from the static point. Hence it is evident that their attitude is one of the many roadblocks to the implementation of CALL in the ESL class rooms at the Diploma level .Besides their blaming the inadequacy of student ability, administration support and curricular structure as handicaps for successful use of CALL in their classrooms, indicate another attitudinal barrier. They seem to be blaming the road instead of the traveller. With will for innovation and change, the teachers can change the status quo.

Conclusion

An overall objective analysis of the findings of this investigation on teacher's attitude towards use of CALL in ESL classrooms leads to the conclusion that the attitude of the teachers teaching in the Engineering Diploma Colleges of Odisha,(India), is actually one of the roadblocks, but not the main road block to the successful use of CALL for teaching English as a second language. The other probable road blocks seem to be :

   i.   Curricular restrictions, in terms of providing scope to use CALL.

   ii.   Inadequate English language proficiency of learners rather than their lack of motivation to use technology.

   iii.   Insufficient administrative support in the forms of provision of required facilities, training to utilize the facilities as well as instrumental motivation for the same.

Hence the findings of this study corroborate the ntradict a few research findings which blamed the teachers' attitudes;

"Teachers' attitudes have been found to be a major predictor of the use of new technology in instructional setting." (Ajzen &Fishbein, 1980)

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but contradicts the observation on their role:

"A major deterrent to use of computers by teachers was computer phobia, psychological fear of losing control over student activity ,loss of confidence , self esteem ,habits and anxiety about new skills".(Jones & Youngs ,2006)

None the less, pedagogues believe that CALL technology can support and enhance language learning .It has scope for "providing effective feedback to learners" (Jones, 2006)","promote exploratory and global learning," (Hubbard, 2009) and it provides access to authentic material". (Bordbar, 2010) etc. These observations should be taken more seriously by teachers.

With the changing times, technology and computers have certainly gained in popularity and access .Mindset is changing along with the growing globalised culture. It is hoped that teachers and institutions will recognize the utility of CALL soon. Dillip Barad's article "Experimenting ICT in English Language and Literature" already records this fact. He demonstrates that technology can be successfully used for teaching both language and literature. However, Phillip Hubbard's observation on CALL research, "It is exciting, complex, dynamic and frustrating" holds a mirror to the complexity of the situation because CALL is a quickly changing context of learning with software experts regularly testing, updating and adding to the tools to make them both teacher friendly and learner-friendly.

To my mind what needs to be done is to change the learning context, learning material and assessment patterns, make them pro-technology and foster a culture of acceptance among the end-users; for the real road block in integrating technology to education is more human than technical. However at all levels teachers have to take the initiative .They have to be more proactive, put aside the problems, find solutions and influence the learners and the society because they are the pioneers of change and growth.

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