

An Instructional Approach To Computer Assisted Language Learning Enhanced Classroom Activities Based On Community Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

Advancements in science and technology often have a profound and widespread impact, bringing revolutionary changes to many fields. Recently, developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have significantly transformed the way education is delivered. English Language Teaching (ELT) has particularly benefited from these advancements, gaining new teaching aids and tools. This progress led to the emergence of a discipline known as Computer Assisted Language Learning and Teaching (CALL/CALT) in the latter half of the twentieth century, which has since become well established. As CALL continues to evolve, there is a high demand for research to address various emerging challenges. This article focuses on CALL, aiming to explore the potential for designing CALL-enhanced classroom activities within an existing curriculum.

Keywords: CALL, CLL, ELT, Classroom, Learning, Activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article attempt is focused on regional delivery of English courses, and it is concerned with college education in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. Therefore, it would be informative to present a brief overview of ELT in the state of Tamil Nadu. English has been a compulsory subject for more than five decades in the state of Tamil Nadu in which the study is conducted. Education was imparted generally through three different boards in the region. The three boards were the State Board for School Education, the Matriculation Board, and the Central Board of Education. English was a compulsory subject under all the three boards, and it is taught from the kinder garden under the Matriculation Board and the Central Board. Until recently, English was taught from standard Six, i.e. from the middle school under the State Board education system. Recent policy changes have brought the two boards – Matriculation and the State Board together under a uniform educational system. At the same time, new schools offering international curriculums have also been established in the state. A lot of changes were seen during the last decade in the state of Tamil Nadu all relating to school education. Under all the three systems, English was called ‘Part II’, where the mother tongue or the local language formed ‘Part I’, and other subject viz. Maths, Science, and Social Studies formed ‘Part III’. English was divided into two papers and the papers were called ‘English Paper I’, and ‘English Paper II’. These papers were taught using a prescribed textbook. The curriculum is set or revised centrally by a group of experts every three years or so. The textbooks would be printed based on the syllabus framed and would be distributed to the students for a nominal price or for free. The textbook for Paper I would comprise prose and poetry pieces which are for detailed study. The students would be tested using comprehension questions based on the prescribed text. There would also be objective questions focusing on vocabulary and content. Paper II focuses on non-detail study and the textbook prescribed would contain short story or one-act plays for non-detail study. Questions testing the students writing, organizing, and presenting skills would be tested under the paper. There would be composition questions viz. Letter Writing, Precise

Writing, etc. Of recent years, the objectives of these courses have shifted towards developing students' ability to communicate in English. The objective of the English textbook that is followed at the higher secondary standard (intermediate level) reflects the shift.

The ability to express clearly and convincingly (the main objective of the course work) depends on

- (i) Constant practice in understanding and making active use of a wide range of vocabulary (words, phrases, idioms)
- (ii) A sound knowledge of grammar, (word order, structural features) to enable to create whatever sentence to express oneself
- (iii) A pronunciation that is clear and correct
- (iv) The Linguistic confidence that is developed by ample practice
- (v) Constant practice to understand skills like speaking, reading, writing, study, occupational, creative and strategic, to appreciate the language better. (Sarah & Dorairaj, 2005) However, the realization of the objectives of the textbooks are not fully obtained in real time situations due to various shortcomings including lack of infrastructure and adequate teacher training. In this regard, the paper is also focusing on revisiting old methods that have lost their popularity due to some change in the outlook of both teachers and students or due to some incompatibility. However, with the view that the revisiting may unearth certain amount of usefulness in the methods which can be utilized, this research looks at the Community Language Learning method that looks at learning as counselling.

Community Language Learning (CLL)

The method is part of the Humanistic Approach, which views learning as a form of problem-solving. Like the Silent Way method, valued the student as a whole person. In a class using this method, students sit in a circle around an audio playback and recording device. With encouragement and guidance from the teacher, each student shares their thoughts on a given topic or responds to a question or argument. These utterances are recorded, and at the end of the activity, the recording is played back for students to listen to and analyse. The teacher acts merely as a facilitator, helping students communicate in English, the target language. This method encourages students to decide which aspects of the language they want to learn and fosters a collaborative environment where they work together to achieve their goals. The teacher serves as an adviser and guide, while students act as collaborators and group members. Although Humanistic Language Teaching/Learning approaches may not be widely used today, some methods and techniques from this approach can be effective in delivering truly learner-centered English courses. This research aims to explore the possibilities and implications of using such techniques, particularly in combination with Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Despite being a relatively recent development in ELT, CALL is a growing field with ongoing research projects aimed at optimizing the use of computers in language learning

2. OBJECTIVES

To revisit Community Language Learning method with the view to adapting it to present scenario

To understand the capabilities of CALL as an ESL tool

To design CALL enhanced classroom activities based on CLL to teach an existing syllabus

To conduct the classroom activities in a pilot project and evaluate its effectiveness

3. METHODOLOGY

The research followed the qualitative method of research that involved a detailed review of related literature, designing classroom activities, implementing the activities in a pilot project and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy. The formatting of the research paper follows APA style sheet second edition, and guidelines given there off. The research, for various practical limitations, focused on designing classroom activities based on the first year Undergraduate Part II English syllabus prescribed by the University. The research would attempt at creating five classroom activities based on a particular unit such as poetry.

History & Evolution of CALL

It is generally accepted that CALL originated in the 1960s when university Main Frame computers were used in language teaching. from then on CALL had a steady and gradual progress in terms of expanding its capabilities. CALL applications have been developed since the 1960s and at present, these applications vary from a simple text-input code of programming to a complex virtual reality software package. Scholars have tried to identify these types and have attempted at categorising them. "These included gap-filling and Cloze programs, multiple-choice programs, free-format (text-entry) programs, adventures and simulations, action mazes, sentence-reordering programs, exploratory programs—and "total Cloze", a type of program in which the learner must reconstruct a whole text. Most of these early programs still exist in modernised versions." (Levy, 1997) "Since the 1990s, it has become increasingly difficult to categorise CALL as it now extends to the

use of blogs, wikis, social networking, podcasting, Web 2.0 applications, language learning in virtual worlds and interactive whiteboards” (Davies et al., 2010). For the first time, advancements in computer science were able to provide all the necessary tools and resources to design and develop comprehensive and authentic language learning applications that were computer aided. However, quality CALL applications were not produced even after these advancements. It was found that the problem now lies in the lack of computer expertise on the part of language teachers. All the CALL applications that were developed during the beginning of the integrative CALL face were by commercial developers who lacked knowledge in language teaching methodologies and experience. Production of CALL applications employing a team of both language and computer experts was found to be beyond commercial viability during the initial face of the integrative CALL. Recently, after the setting up of language laboratories in almost all higher educational institutions and some schools, some IT corporate organizations have come up with projects to produce CALL applications to meet the demands of the language laboratories.

Advantages of CALL in ELT

Computers can redefine the role of teaching . Without them, students cannot significantly influence the linear progression of class content. However, processors can familiarise to individual, allowing them to control the learning pace and make choices about what and how to learn. They can skip unnecessary items or focus on challenging concepts. This level of control enhances students' sense of competence in their learning. Students often favour movements where they have control over the content, such as ramification stories, ventures, mysteries, or logic problems. In these scenarios, the computer provides an engaging context for language use rather than directly supplying the language itself.

"Authenticity" in language learning refers to opportunities to interact using one or more of the four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) through texts intended for a target language audience, not just for the classroom. Real communication acts, rather than teacher-contrived ones, empower students and reduce their fear of contacting others. Students believe they learn faster and better with computer-mediated communication (Felix, 2008). Additionally, they learn more about culture in such an environment. In networked computer environments, students consciously feel like members of a real community, fostering a sense of equality, especially when all participants are learners of a foreign language. This reduces stress and boosts confidence, as surface errors become less significant. This is most effective with synchronous CMC (e.g., chats) due to immediate feedback, but email exchanges also provide similar benefits in terms of motivation and student affect (Jones, 1986). Using computer technology in classrooms generally improves self-concept, mastery of basic skills, student-centered learning, and engagement in the learning process. It promotes active processing, leading to higher-order thinking skills and better recall, and boosts confidence in self-directed learning. These benefits apply to both language and non-language classrooms.

Problems in CALL Implementation

The impact of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in foreign language education has been modest for several reasons. Firstly, technological limitations, both in terms of capability and availability, play a significant role. Issues such as cost (Davies & Higgins, 1982) and the availability of resources like the Internet, which can be non-existent in many developing countries or suffer from inadequate bandwidth, contribute to this modest impact. Although computer technology has advanced significantly over the past three decades, the demands placed on CALL have grown even more. A key objective is to develop computers that allow for true, human-like interaction, especially for speaking practice; however, this technology is still far from being realized. Additionally, if computers cannot accurately evaluate a learner's speech, their usefulness is significantly diminished.

The challenges associated with CALL are also largely related to teacher expectations and apprehensions about what computers can achieve for language learners and teachers. Educators and administrators often have polarized views, seeing computers as either worthless or overly capable. Teacher reluctance can stem from a lack of understanding and fear of technology. CALL is often not implemented unless mandatory, even when training is available. This reluctance is partly due to the historical context from the 1960s to the 1980s, when computer technology was primarily used in the sciences, creating a real and psychological distance from language teaching. Language teachers may feel more comfortable with textbooks, which they are accustomed to, and there is a perception that computers threaten traditional literacy skills tied to books. This perception is exacerbated by a generational gap between teachers, many of whom did not grow up with computers, and students, who did. Moreover, teachers may resist CALL because these activities are more challenging to evaluate compared to traditional exercises.

Designing and implementing CALL Enhanced Classroom Activities based on Community Language Learning

Designing a classroom activity should also be given due consideration while delivering a course. This part will present a detailed account of designing classroom activities that form the ultimate delivery means of a course. This part will also look at designing three classroom activities based on CLL and that are enhanced by CALL.

Aspects in Designing Classroom Activities

Purpose decides the immediate objectives of the course. Plan determines the course of the class and the direction in which the course is to be taken. Procedure creates the action which is in turn directed by the strategy. Practice ensures reinforcement.

Purpose of a class can be anything that forms the desired goal of the activity. In other words, students involve themselves in an activity and move through the process of learning that concludes in acquiring a particular aspect of language use or achieving a level of proficiency, and this aspect or level when thought out in advance by the teacher during the planning phase of the activity forms the purpose of the activity. For instance, an activity that when performed by the students if it helps the students acquire mastery over the use of interjections in a language, then the purpose of the activity is training students to use interjections while conversing in the language. Deciding the purpose of any activity in advance i.e. deciding it during the planning phase of the activity helps the teacher realize a clear picture of the activity and the role of the students in the activity. The purpose or the objective of an activity should be immediate and should be realistically achievable in a single class time. The level of the students, the strength of the class, the objectives of the course and the available infrastructure should also be considered while determining the purpose of the activity. Planning of the activity should follow determining the purpose of the activity. Planning should consider the scope of the course, the time of each class, the duration of the course, the level and proficiency of the students, the potentiality of available resources and infrastructure. Planning for an activity which is ambitious in nature, and which would prove the potential of the teacher is not the right way to plan an activity. The activity should be planned to meet the scope of the course – no less or no more. Activity planning is not to showcase the knowledge and abilities of the teacher, but to put all the available resources to their optimal use and more importantly to cater to the needs of the students. Designing classroom activities that underutilize the time allotted would also do injustice to the course. If an activity that is conducted in a class period is completed well before the allotted time, it creates disciplinary problems, student distraction, and teacher frustration. Activities that are completed before the allotted time leave the participants with a sense of incompleteness. The students are confused as to have left without doing anything in the class. The teacher is frustrated to look at the students and not to instruct them in any topic. Any instantaneous improvisation on the part of the teacher has the chance of deviating and distracting the students from the purpose of the activity that it reduces the effectiveness of the classroom activity. While planning the classroom activity the level of proficiency that the students possess in using English should be taken into consideration. The purpose of the activity should be arrived at based on this aspect. Instructional material, teacher's use of the language, course materials, teaching aids all should be organized based on the level of student proficiency to ensure students' participation. This aspect is very essential in creating the connection with the students. Designing activities that are way beyond the level of the students to grasp it would put off the students who would retreat from actively participating in the activity. Similarly, activities that are below power with the level of their competence would allow them to feel unchallenged and therefore consider the activity as useless and not time worthy. The next aspect that is to be considered while planning the activities is the availability of resources for teaching. Designing activities that do not use the available infrastructure is as bad as the activities that are designed based on using resources that are not available. For instance, if a classroom has the facility to project multimedia content, and no activity is designed to use the resource would not be a good activity design. Similarly, an activity that requires the use of computers in a classroom that has none would also not be a good activity design. The teacher while designing the activity should understand that any resource when used judiciously will always improve the effectiveness of teaching/learning. Overuse and over dependent on a single resource such as a computer or a smart board in a class and designing activities solely based on using the resource may also not be effective. The teacher should understand that even the most novel teaching aid when used continuously and always, would become monotonous to the students, and therefore lose its novelty. The use of any teaching aid has its advantages as well as disadvantages; the teacher should aim at taking advantage of the aid and should not think that the aid can take care of teaching. The procedure of the classroom activities should have clearly defined teacher and student's role. Unless the teacher is clear as to what role s/he is to play in the activity, it is very difficult for the teacher to conduct the activity to achieve the objectives. The teacher can play the role of an instructor, s/he can be a facilitator, or a leader, or one of the participants along with the students. Sometimes the activity may demand the teacher to play more than one role. For instance, the teacher should have to play the role of the instructor in the initial part of the activity, and may have to change the role to be a participant, then a leader etc. however, if the teacher is clear about the roles that s/he is expected to play in the activity, the teacher can play an active role in the learning process of the students through the activities. Therefore, the procedure of the classroom activities should have clearly defined roles for the teacher. The students' role can vary from being totally passive participants to totally active ones even in determining the course of the activity which is primary in methods like CLL. Listening, discovering, searching, sharing, leading, interacting, problem-solving are some of the roles that the students can play to perform communication as part of learning a language. Unless the teacher and students are not clear on their roles, the activity would end up in confusion and chaos. Any instruction to the students on the activity should be given before the activity. Instruction at the middle of the activity shall be avoided, however, if mid-way instructions are required, they should be brief, and the teacher should ensure that the instruction does not hinder the flow of the activity. Instructions are expected to be in simple and clear language. It should address the students. The teacher should ensure that the students have understood the instructions before moving towards the activity. The teacher should clear any doubts from the students regarding the instruction given. Clear instruction given on an activity ensures successful deliverance of the activity. Another important aspect that is to be considered during the design of classroom activities is determining the use of teaching aids and instructional materials. The teacher should consider the use of a teaching aid based on the activity's requirement. Even though a teacher can build an activity around the use of a teaching aid, s/he should not include a teaching aid without any purpose or plan. Only the judicious use of any teaching aid would contribute to the effective deliverance of an activity. The teaching

aid is only an aid and it should not take the centre stage in a class. The students should be familiar with the teaching aid. If advanced teaching aids such as computers are used as part of the activities, the teacher should ensure that the students are familiar with the workings of the aid. Complexity involved in using the teaching aid would end up spending much time in working with the aid than in indulging in the learning process. Unfamiliar teaching aids distract the students. However, if the distraction is minimal and proper instructions on the nature and use of the aid is provided to the students in the beginning of the activity, then the curiosity among the students can be used by the teacher positively. Any classroom activity would be considered complete only if it focuses on directing students' efforts towards practice which also ensures reinforcement. Practice may be included in the beginning of an activity where practicing the aspects of language which the students learnt during the previous activity is carried out. This practice may also form the basis for the activity that follows. Practice may be included at the end of the activity to provide a platform for students to use the newly familiarized language aspect. This helps students evaluate their understanding and grasping of the aspect and also leads to students' doubts in the course of practice which can be cleared by the teacher in the very context and immediately.

CLL Classroom Activities

Designing classroom activities based on CLL should also consider all the aspects that were discussed above. They should have purpose, plan, procedure, and practice. CLL based activities differ from other activities in the following aspects. The theme or the topic of the activity is not predetermined. This would make the determination of specific objectives of the activity difficult. Objectives that focus on specific language elements cannot be determined in advance. However, a general purpose, and objectives relating to language skills and language use can be set for a CLL based classroom activity. Unlike earlier methodologies, CLL encourages the use of first language, and does not demand student's use of the target language during the initial stage of the course and the classroom activity. However, latest methodologies especially CLT which is widely used today also does not discourage first language use. The highlight of the CLL method is developing students' self-confidence, self-esteem, and mutual respect for other students. Any classroom activity based on CLL should accommodate these main aspects in the learning process.

The nature of the classroom activities

CLL based classroom activities, in the strictest sense, will not have any fixed aspects. Any content or context that is presented in the class would be developed by the learners themselves based on the direction in which any communication among the learners takes shape. However, in designing these classroom activities, certain adaptations are made to a typical CLL class procedure. At the same time, it should be noted that the essence of the method – the counselling and learner-centred approach would always form the core of the design. In a CLL procedure, the teacher who acts as the counsellor, initiates conversation among the learners by giving them hints i.e. stimulus. In this case, the teacher will subtly direct the conversation of the learners towards a particular topic based on the prescribed syllabus. The text of the prescribed poems will also be used as a base for further discussions. CALL applications will be used as tools to present the content as well as to create platforms where the discussion can take place. CALL will also be used as a tool for reinforcing certain language aspects.

The parameters of the classroom Activities

These CALL enhanced activities based on CLL will reflect all the parameters prescribed in the syllabus of the chosen university. Therefore, the activities will focus on the following objective which is stated in the course curriculum of the university.

Three poems namely "*Where the Mind is without Fear*" by Rabindranath Tagore, "*The Road not Taken*" by Robert Frost, and "*The Village School Master*" by Oliver Goldsmith, were chosen from the syllabus that formed the content base for the classroom activities. Nine classroom activities (three activities based on a single poem) were designed to be implemented as part of the designing. Each activity had a specific structure, process, and time duration. Each of them focused on helping the learners communicate in the target language – English – without any self-conscious attempt which would be accomplished by drawing their focus towards the content away from their language use. This is a very important aspect of a CLL classroom activity – offering a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in which the students learn without any pressure.

The nine classroom activities were grouped under three categories based on their similarity in structure and process. For practical purposes these categories were named 'Type A', 'Type B', and 'Type C'. In other words, three classroom activities – Type A, B, and C were designed based on a single poem, which in turn totalled to nine activities. All the activities were enhanced by CALL tools of different nature. Even the multimedia capability of CALL and access to internet is also utilized in these classroom activities.

Type 'A' classroom activity

Type 'A' classroom activity intends to introduce the poem and the theme it deals. The task is accomplished by presenting a multimedia rendering of the poem. An audiovisual clipping is played along with the text of the entire poem. As CLL allows the use of L1 in the initial stages of the course, translation for select words in the first language is the poem is provided. The activity is focused on listening and reading.

The classroom activity is designed with the CALL tool as its centre. The activity begins with the division of the class into small groups of four. With forty students it would allow five groups of four. Each group then is made to sit in front of one computer. The students are then given instructions on how to use the CALL application. The students have to first watch the audiovisual rendering of the poem. The clipping will include visuals that are usually created by the poem lines. A voice over will also render the poem lines corresponding to the visuals. The first task of the activity will urge the students to understand the meaning of the poem, not by paraphrases but by visuals. The second task of the activity presents the lines of the poem for the students to read. As first language use is allowed under CLL, translations for the select words are given. Students must hover the mouse pointer on these select words to get their Tamil meaning (which is the first language for these students). The third task of the activity asks the students to answer a few questions that would ensure their understanding of the poem and its theme. This would be important, as the main crux of the CLL activity depends on the theme of the poem which is going to serve as the lead for the classroom discussion that is going to begin after the 'Type A activity'. Once the students successfully complete the three tasks of the first activity, they will be taken to the second classroom activity on the poem.

'Type B' classroom activity

This activity is designed around a 'Discussion Board' application. The students remain in groups of four. One computer is used for the activity and it should be preferably connected to an LCD projector allowing all students to view the screen. The task will present a question for discussion. The question will be based on the theme of the poem. Each group should discuss among themselves and come up with one single sentence stating their view in the discussion. The sentence will be presented to the teacher who will correct any mistakes if any. One student from each group will then go to the computer and type the sentence in the given text box. The sentence will then be added to the discussion. It will appear on the discussion board on the screen. After all the groups submit their sentence on the discussion topic, the teacher will ask the students to read the entire discussion, and further discuss the topic based on the information given in the discussion board. The activity will focus on all the four language skills. The activity will over when the teacher reads aloud the the sentences on the discussion board. He or she will then copy the content of the discussion board which will form the basis for the next activity.

'Type C' classroom activity

The next activity calls for the use of the internet. It will utilize one of the online language resources viz. a concordance. In this case, the concordance given in the 'wordandphrase.info' web site will be used. The teacher will paste the content of the discussion board from the previous activity into the text analyser of the concordance. He or she will then click the 'Analyse' button in the concordance to analyse the text. Based on the analysis, the teacher will reinforce language elements such as word order, idioms and phrases, collocation, etc. using his or her discretion, the teacher will also encourage the students to create new sentences based on the language analysis. This activity will reinforce what the students learnt in the context during the previous activities in terms of language. A concordance can be a powerful tool in allowing students to understand the workings of a language. It allows them to analyse their own constructions in detail. However, the presence of the teacher and his or her assistance and guidance is very essential in this activity. This is the reason for stating, in the beginning of the chapter, that the CALL applications used in this project are not focused on self-learning. Concordances can be used in several creative ways by the teacher in the class. Further impromptu tasks can be given to the students by the teacher which can utilize the features of a concordance. All the three types of activities are created for the three poems that were chosen for the study. Each activity is designed in such a way that it can be completed in one class period which is around one hour. Detailed information on the procedure is given in the sample lesson plans that are given in the appendix. The class time is equally divided between instruction, performance, and feedback. The CALL applications used in the project serve only as tools that facilitate the classroom activities.

Designing the CALL tools

The CALL tools were designed using HTML and JavaScript. This gave enough flexibility and at the same time, reduced the complexity involved in designing and developing computer applications. Audiovisual materials were downloaded from the internet in 'mp4' format and were incorporated in the application. The navigation of the application was set to linear to avoid complexity in using the application. All the elements in the application were centred giving a sense of space. The tasks under each activity were presented in a single page which also ensured linear movement. Even though the page was long, each task was designed to fit the window at a time, which allowed easy access. HTML and JavaScript were used in the development because it gave the flexibility of using a browser. This allows following the navigation and interface model of a web site navigation which is in turn very familiar to the students as they regularly use the internet. All the navigation was kept simple and standard. The navigation was in the form of links with which the students were very familiar. The instructions given in the application was very minimal. As this application was designed to be used as a tool by a teacher, there are no detailed instructions like in applications which are of the self-learning type. It should also be mentioned that this application will be of little use to a student in putting it to optimal use without the assistance of a teacher. Keeping this aspect in mind, there is no help content which is also a usual feature of a self-learning application. The application also uses external resources that are available online such as the web site 'wordandphrase.info'. The application opens the web site in a separate window which allows the use of the site and at the same time, the students can get back to the application to the exact place where

they left. The application allows the copying of the generated content from the application page to the page of the external web site. However, due to restraints and the limited nature of this application, this copying and transferring process was not automated and the teacher has to manually do the task.

Structure of the CALL application

The application has eleven pages in total. The first page is the welcome page which explains the purpose and nature of the application. The movement from the first page to the second page is through hyperlinks. The second page presents the first exercise which is a 'Type A' activity based on the first poem. The second page leads to the third page which is a 'Type B' activity based on the same poem. The next page presents a 'Type C' activity on the first poem, and the next page presents a 'Type A' activity on the second page. All the following pages follow the same order. Hyperlinks allow moving to the next page as well as moving to the previous page. This navigation links are present at the top of each page as well as at the bottom.

The general design of the application was kept simple. It ensured a smooth flow from one task to another. Design aspects such as colour, font, and arrangement of elements were standardized and were left to the default settings of any browser which would be used to open the application. Even though the application will work with any browser, it is optimized for Microsoft Internet Explorer. Any computer which runs a windows operating system with Multimedia features should be able to run the application. The application is a collection of basic web pages created using HTML and JavaScript; therefore, it does not need any special software or platform to run. Even in case of efficiency, the application does not need any high-end configuration to offer optimal performance. In short, any basic computer with multimedia capability can run the application. Furthermore, as the application is basically a collection of web pages, it can be run on a mobile platform such as a smart phone or a tablet. However, such experiment with M-Learning is beyond the scope of this research. However, it also shows that such research can be conducted in future.

Implementation of the classroom activities

The class consisted of forty students. These students belong to the first year of their Undergraduate course. They all took a paper on English as Second Language during the semester and the course followed the prescribed syllabus. As this was a pilot project, the implementation was carried out as extra-curricular activity. In other words, the course work and learning related to the chosen areas were already delivered to the students in the conventional way. Therefore, the effectiveness of the pilot project was obtained only in the form of feedback from the students using a questionnaire. However, the feedback obtained from the students became significant as they had undergone the same topics in both the conventional method and CALL enhanced activities based on CLL.

The project was conducted during class hours with prior permission from the administration. The students were clearly informed on the purpose and usefulness of such a project and were requested to participate with due diligence. Each classroom activity was conducted in one class period which amounted to nine class periods. The tenth class period was utilized for obtaining the feedback on the pilot project.

Feedback on the pilot project

Feedback on the pilot project was obtained from the students who participated in it. The students were given a questionnaire and were asked to answer a few questions. A specimen of the questionnaire is given in the appendix. The questions were aimed at understanding student experience in undertaking the pilot project. They also focused on problems in using computers, absence of lectures, more student participation, etc.

The feedback shows that most of the students not only had a pleasant experience with the project but also were able to improve their language skills. An overwhelming percentage of the students felt that the activities gave them confidence in using English and in interacting with their peers. As the use of first language was not discouraged, many students felt that they were totally relaxed and did not feel any pressure in learning English. A tabulated presentation of the students' feedback is also given in the appendix. As the pilot project, due to the limited scope of the research, did not offer an elaborate course of activities, the feedback was only a superficial response in evaluating the effectiveness of CALL enhanced classroom activities based on CLL in learning/teaching English as Second Language. It should be noted that increased levels of student participation and interaction was observed during the implementation of the classroom activities by the research scholar who acted as the teacher during the implementation. Another important point to be mentioned is that the entire infrastructure such as computers required for the pilot project was already available with the institution, and there were no problems in terms of lack of infrastructure in implementing a CALL enhanced course.

4. CONCLUSION

The research effort focused on designing and implementing classroom activities based on Community Language Learning (CLL) to teach a prescribed syllabus. Additionally, the research aimed to incorporate Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) within this framework. It was found feasible to design both CALL applications and CLL-based activities for teaching a prescribed syllabus and integrating both approaches effectively. The pilot project's implementation with a group of students was successful, and feedback indicated that the activities met students' expectations in improving their language skills, as

well as boosting their confidence and self-worth. Therefore, it can be concluded that CALL-enhanced classroom activities based on CLL can be effective in delivering standard English courses for ESL learners.

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