

Applying the New Paradigm Of Anywhere Any Time In ESL Teaching Experience In The KRG Province Iraq

University of Human Development

College of Languages

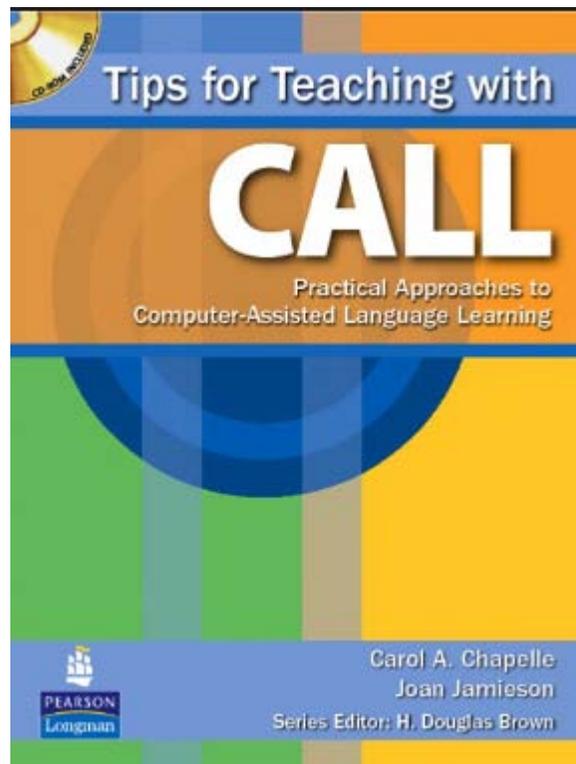
College of Science and Technology

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Ideas behind this Research

- ▶ CALL (computer assisted language learning)



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Abstract: Traditional Teacher Centered Learning (TCL) and Classroom-Oriented Learning (COL) methods and approaches are fast giving ways to alternative, rapidly evolving, styles in our modern Information Age [24]. English Language Teachings (ESL/TEFL), previously a tutor-centered and classroom-based activity, are similarly following suit as evidenced by the availability of CALL methods and technologies [1] [2] [10], and also by the widespread use of Applications (Apps) implemented in smartphones, tablets and pads as well as laptops. Before appropriately implementing any strategy in our case study, a literature review is done to reach an adequate understanding of the state-of-the-art in terms of technology-assisted ESL / TEFL. Next, an appropriately designed questionnaire was used to ascertain the various technological as well as user-centered factors which may impact upon the efficacy and usefulness of such a plan and strategy. Increasingly, students are dependent upon mobile technology for information gathering and communication. How successful can this be in the context of ESL/TEFL? What can we learn from these factors, and how can we best adapt this technology and resource in the context of the English Language learning experience in Kurdistan Iraq?

Index Terms: English Language Teaching, computer assisted language learning CALL, English Language Teaching, mobile learning and technological language learning development.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem statement:

Computer-mediated Learning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is a not a new methodology, although ICT has been implemented at varying levels and extents, in the mainstream education system [cite references]. CALL on the other hand, would seem to be a relatively new adventure and as a strategy has the potential of addressing known limitations and issues in more traditional ESL/TEFL settings. Our approach stems from the idea that both instructors and learners of English Language while necessarily, inseparable, this new paradigm of anywhere, anytime Language Learning is bound to change the education landscape and hence the learning experience. Both parties (learners and instructors) may no longer be bound by spatial and/or temporal confinements; distance learning and e-learning and virtual classroom-oriented delivery open up new horizons. However, social and other experiential (based upon traditions for example) factors may play a vital role in the outcome of such strategies and we need to identify these and incorporate them into strategy development, policy making, and learning outcome assessments.

We feel that given the rapid development in ICT on the one hand, and the relative wide spread use of mobile technology (including smartphones and tablets (pads) awareness on the other, leaves an ever-widening gap in learning strategy generally, but in Language Learning specifically in this region [cite and references here]. This continues to be a problem looking for suitable solutions. Our paper, therefore, attempts to ask these modern questions, and find relevant information whereby adequate solutions and strategies can be followed up:

1. How accessible/feasible is this technology as a strategy and as a resource in an otherwise traditionally based ESL/TEFL learning environment?
2. What may be the factors that influence learners' ability to engage and adopt this methodology and to what extent?
3. To what extent does CALL facilitate or promote student-centered (learner-centered) behaviour and responsibility / motivation?
4. What other challenges and issues do we need to take into account when adopting CALL strategies in relation to aims and learning outcomes?

Our paper investigates the opportunities of implementing modern ESL/TEFL teaching methods, taking into account the advent of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and the advent of mobile learning-teaching technologies as increasingly being made available on various platforms and devices. Today smartphones, tablets and pads complement other traditional PC & laptop devices as tools for learning. Keeping within the Student-centred learning-teaching, and self-directed study philosophies, this paper attempts to identify the various technical as well as any user-centred issues and factors which impact upon the students' learning experience. A survey was designed to help generate the data for this paper, simulating an actual assignment and providing a wide range of question styles testing the basic comprehension elements such as listening, reading and writing and including an element which uses a serious game to facilitate learning and identify factors affecting users' interest and attraction [1][2] [25] [26].

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Traditional Teacher Centered Learning (TCL) and Classroom-Oriented Learning (COL) methods and approaches are fast giving ways to alternative, rapidly evolving, styles in our modern Information Age [24]. English Language Teachings (ESL/TEFL), previously a tutor-centered and classroom-based activity, are similarly following suit as evidenced by the availability of CALL methods and technologies [1] [2] [10], and also by the widespread use of Applications (Apps) implemented in smartphones, tablets and pads as well as laptops. Before appropriately implementing any strategy in our case study, a literature review is done to reach an adequate understanding of the state-of-the-art in terms of technological as well as user-centered factors which may impact upon the efficacy and usefulness of such a plan and strategy. Increasingly, students are dependent upon mobile technology for information gathering and communication. How successful can this be in the context of ESL/TEFL? What can we learn from these factors, and how can we best adapt this technology and resource in the context of the English Language learning experience in Kurdistan Iraq?

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Problems and Questions

- ▶ Computer-mediated Learning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq is not a new methodology.
- ▶ Our approach stems from the idea that both instructors and learners of English Language while necessarily are inseparable, this new paradigm of anywhere, anytime Language Learning is bound to change the education landscape and hence the learning experience.
- ▶ We feel that given the rapid development in ICT on the one hand, and the relative wide spread use of mobile technology (including smartphones and tablets /pads) awareness on the other, leaves an ever-widening gap in learning strategy generally, but in Language Learning specifically in this region [(cite and references here)]. This continues to be a problem looking for suitable solutions.
- ▶ CALL as a new adventure and as a strategy has the potential of addressing known limitations and issues in more traditional ESL/TEFL settings. Our paper investigates the opportunities of implementing modern ESL/TEFL teaching methods, taking into account the advent of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and the advent of mobile learning-teaching technologies as increasingly being made available on various platforms and devices.

Major Questions

- ▶ 1. How accessible /feasible is this technology as a strategy and as a resource in an otherwise traditionally based ESL/TEFL learning environment?
- ▶ 2. What may be the factors that influence learners' ability to engage and adopt this methodology and to what extent?
- ▶ 3. To what extent does CALL facilitate or promote student-centred (learner-centered) behavior and responsibility / motivation?
- ▶ 4. What other challenges and issues do we need to take into account when adopting CALL strategies in relation to aims and learning outcomes?

Tools Used

- ▶ **Tools used:**

- ▶ 1. Questionnaire

- ▶ 2. Observation Classroom-Oriented

- ▶ 3. Pre Questionnaire - Preparation activity and assessments: online search for ESL Apps followed by a short presentation and report (thus combining comprehension tests for both elements of CALL and non-computer based forms).

- ▶ 4. Post Questionnaire – A tutorial based assignment

- 1. Social Media (Facebook) as a blog and a forum to record and track interactions and feedback with the tutor and among the student population of both departments (separately)

- 2. Google forms for the questionnaire and Google Class (email) for the written and communication elements.

- 3. face-to-face interviews and unstructured interactions for the purpose of making the exercise as natural and as fluid as possible.

Questionnaire

- ▶ Open Questions
- ▶ Closed Questions
- ▶
 - 1) How much time is spent on ESL per week?
 - 2) What is the overall response?
 - 3) How many participated percentage in comparison to total number of students?
 - 4) What technical challenges and issues were raised?
 - 5) How effective was the follow up process and other means of communication?
 - 6) What percentage of the total student population at UHD the 1st year CSD and ITD intake represents? 20% or less?
 - 7) How effective was the questionnaire?
 - 8) How typical is this scenario as compared to other universities and institutes within the KRG?
 - 9) How was the quality and the efficiency of the learning experience affected?
 - 10) How they reacted to the qualitative questions at the end of the assignment?
 - 11) any other pattern or factors which can be detected or suggested for further study?

Questionnaire cont.

- ▶ The study shows the 10-part questions with its analysis, as it shows below. Our results from this study are presented in the following tables and figures. A total of just over 180 students across the two departments of Information Technology (ITD) and Computer Science (CSD) with a ratio of 60 (CSD) : 120 (ITD) students.

Questionnaire cont.

- ▶ [The Questions](#)
- ▶ [Google Form](#)

Conclusion

- ▶ In this article, we have outlined some of the issues related to technology and language use in order to set the stage for a series of heuristic questions to guide teachers and researchers in determining for themselves how best to incorporate technology in their teaching and research. When teachers and learners use technology purposefully, and not just for its own sake, they will inevitably engage in some degree of critical reflection. Just as the technology of writing made language an object of analysis, today's communication technologies provide a means for language learners to become aware of, and actively reflect on, their own and others' communicative practices. What is important for language teachers and learners alike is to attend to the particular ways technologies influence how they use language, what communicative consequences follow those uses of language in terms of understanding and learning, and what social consequences might come of using one form of technology versus another. We believe that reflection on these matters is key to fostering communicative proficiency in a second/foreign language.

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