CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Overview of the Study

The study is based upon the assumption that Computer Assisted Language Learning can be used in teaching English, especially for developing writing skills of the students in the Polytechnics of Assam. This study also tried to gauge teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards the need for English language skills and the use of computer technology in teaching English in the Polytechnics of Assam. For this purpose a survey was conducted with the help questionnaires and interviews. On the basis of the findings of the survey and the insights gained from the findings of other similar studies, the researcher modified the existing syllabus, incorporating CALL in the traditional English class. An experiment was conducted between two groups of students of Nowgong Polytechnic, Nagaon (Group A) and Girls’ Polytechnic, Guwahati (Group B) on some selected tasks. The study was conducted during the span of one academic year. The main objective of the study was to use CALL, especially word processor, in teaching English in the Polytechnics of Assam. The justification of the study was that in India many research works have been done on CLT approach and some on theoretical basis of CALL in the Indian context, usually looking into their own domains. Research combining the two fields is not much common and no one till date has done research on the incorporation of CALL in teaching communicative English in any technical institution of Assam.

In the following sections of this chapter, the findings arrived at after analyzing the relevant data are presented. The findings are presented under three headings in relation to the major themes that have emerged from the study. These headings are: summary findings; limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.
Summary Findings

The findings that were arrived at from the survey in Chapter IV and from the analysis of the data pertaining to the experiment in Chapter V are presented in four subsequent sections. The first section below presents the findings of the pre-computer use survey: students’ and teachers’ attitude towards the need for and the use of computers in teaching English (Chapter IV), and the other three subsequent sections are: students’ performance in the Entry test, their performance at different stages during the period of experiment leading to the Exit test, a comparison of students’ performance in the Entry and the Exit tests; and lastly the effects of CALL on the development of the writing skills.

Students’ and teachers’ attitude towards the need for and the use of computers in teaching English (Chapter IV)

It is clear from the findings of the survey that both teachers and students like to use computer in teaching and learning English (67% and 88% respectively). While comparing their views about E-mail and its benefit, it is found that both teachers and students (93% & 84% respectively) think that communication and interaction by Email is a good way to improve English communication skills especially writing skills. It is also observed that both teachers and students have strong positive attitude towards the use of computer in the traditional English classroom. But it can be mentioned that both teachers and students have little communication through Email which often results in the lack of coordination among them.

Students’ performance in the Entry test, their performance till the Exit test, and a comparison of their performance in Entry and Exit tests

On the basis of the model syllabus discussed in the previous chapter the researcher conducted an online (asynchronous) experiment involving two groups of students (Group A – Nowgong Polytechnic and Group B—Girls’ Polytechnic) in a computing environment. The tasks for the experiment on writing contents of the modified syllabus were prepared on the basis of ‘CALL in writing activities’ propounded by de Szendeffy (2005, p.32-54). The answers of the students were
evaluated and the weightage was calculated in percentage. The collected data were analyzed with the help of the statistical software SPSS. The exit test score of the experiment has indicated a very positive effect of the use of the CALL especially word processor in developing writing skills (see Table 23 and 24). The study shows that students achieved significantly higher scores on all the tasks in the Exit test compared to the Entry test. Thus the findings of the study did not support the null hypothesis that the use of CALL has no effect on the teaching and learning of English, especially for developing writing skills of the students of the Polytechnics of Assam.

**The effects of CALL on the development of writing skills**

The researcher discussed the principles of the product and process approaches to writing and the features and the roles of word processing in composing in Chapter 3, and conducted the experiment and analyzed the use of CALL (word processor) in developing writing skills in Chapter 5. The experiment and its results show that CALL, especially the word processor, is the most significant composing medium and a valuable tool for the implementation of a process approach to writing. In the present study the process approach was adopted during the experiment and hence the defining characteristics of the word processor such as the ability to copy and paste parts, to insert and delete others, and to use grammar and spell checkers were extensively used by students for developing their writing skills.

The researcher also conducted a survey on the use of computer programmes and tool menu after Entry and Exit tests to find out whether the frequency of use has had any impact on students’ writing abilities. The result showed that frequency of the use of computer programmes/ tool menu has positive effect on developing students’ writing skills.
Limitations of the Study

The following limitations of the present study should be acknowledged:

1. The sample of the participants in the experiment was limited to twenty in each group. Statistical analysis becomes more valid when the number of the participants is bigger.

2. The number of tasks for experiment was four only. Students should be provided with more and more tasks and activities in the process approach to writing.

3. The study was conducted in a technical institution. However, it is advisable that comparative studies should be undertaken with students from technical and non-technical institutions to investigate whether CALL can be effectively used for developing language skills.

4. Lastly, it is difficult to make any generalizations of the findings of the study due to the diversity of students’ past experiences, differences in individual skills and infrastructure facilities provided by the institute.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study examined the use of CALL in teaching English especially for developing writing skills in the Polytechnics of Assam. The study specifically experimented with the writing skills of the students by using CALL in a number of writing tasks. However, classroom/online (synchronous) demonstration of the process approach to writing as perceived by teachers was not undertaken. Thus, further research on teachers’ observation of classroom activities and demonstration and active participation of teachers in evaluating the answers might be carried out for improving the teaching and learning of English. Also, case studies might be undertaken to understand how teachers could plan the integration of computer technology into their teaching. Further studies may also be undertaken to find out the correlation between the teachers’ use of computer technologies and student achievement.
Conclusion

To conclude, this study corroborates and extends previous studies on the use of CALL in teaching English especially for developing writing skills among the students in the technical institutions such as the Polytechnics of Assam. The findings of the study have indicated that the effects of using CALL for developing writing skills are positive even after taking into account such individual and social factors as the students’ diverse language learning backgrounds. These findings not only provide further support for previous studies that had suggested the importance of CALL in teaching and learning language skills but also serve as an empirical validation for incorporation of CALL in non-technical education, particularly in this part of the country.

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