



## “LANGUAGE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY”: A REFLECTIVE STUDY ON SOCIO LINGUAL PERSPECTIVES OF RURAL STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The digital and technologically reigned era has brought in plethora of changes in almost all the sectors and especially the educational field is experiencing a drastic shift. Virtual learning through various methods like CALL and MALL is getting reformed day by day resulting in the usage of technologies. This research article focuses on introducing and analysing how CALL assists in enhancing the listening skill of the learners by providing a self learning platform. Sociological and psychological aspects of the respondents are taken into consideration to analyse the difference in the performance of the respondents. The role of intervention and motivation is one of the objectives as the process of research methodology is based on intervention and not on the basis of conventional and experimental group. Thus, this research work aims in analysing the listening ability of the respondents by conducting pre test through traditional method and post test through CALL.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The process of language teaching and learning has taken up a drastic change in the 21st century. There is a demand for innovative teaching methodologies in this century of technology reigned world. It is all virtual worlds everywhere like virtual classroom, virtual shopping, virtual games and virtual life. Development in technology has resulted in a tough time for the graduates as the interviewing processes especially in the corporate sectors are highly technified. In such a scenario, importance of English language has also reached the horizon of different level. It is not just sufficient if a student is equipped with better academic results but the importance of better language proficiency is to be understood as it decides their career. According to The United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO), "Unemployment in India is projected to increase from 17.7 million last year to 17.8 million in 2017 and 18 million next year. In percentage terms, unemployment rate will remain at 3.4 per cent in 2017-18," the report added. The reasons for this could be many while the language proficiency level is also one among the reasons. In an era where corporate sectors is playing an important role in providing dream jobs, without a better English language efficiency it is not possible for the students to achieve their passion. One of reasons for this is, communication process in corporate sectors happens through online. This again magnifies the listening ability of the graduates. Only if a person has the ability to listen properly, the purpose of communication could be achieved through desired output.

In India, School education is entirely different from the higher education. When a student is introduced to different concepts in school, they are made to implement those concepts in practical life in college level. Exam results will be the main focus in the schools and the curriculum will not provide time for beyond syllabi teaching. Whereas in college, though syllabi completion and results will be the target, placement percentage adds on to the credibility of the institution. In engineering colleges of India, apart from core subjects English is taught only in the first year focusing only on grammar and in the third or final year of the graduation, learners are introduced to communication laboratories where they are made to complete the activities based on listening, speaking, reading and writing. When career is the next phase of a learner, having English in the curriculum for two or three semesters focusing only on theoretical perspectives will not improve the language ability of the student. It is also to be noted

and remembered that almost in all the competitive exams like IELTS, TOEFL listening ability of the candidate is tested through CALL which again is a threat to the beginners. Teaching methodologies in EFL classrooms has to cope up according to the technological changes and demands of the competitive job providers.

## 2. LANGUAGE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

In the present scenario, technology has an important role in educational sector. Blackboards are replaced with the smart boards in many schools and colleges while books are getting replaced with kindle reader. Even the assignments are sent to the tutors via e-mails. It is the virtual classrooms and the smart classes that are drawing the interest of the learners. Multimedia packages and internet are the backbone of education these days. Anything and everything is taught and understood by the learners with the help of internet. These are the days where computers and mobiles have taken up the role of the instructors. MALL and CALL are the mushrooming technologies at present. Though these were discovered earlier, the use of it is sweeping at the present time. The reason for all these is the development of technology.



Technology and education are greatly intertwined that it has started replacing all the traditional methodologies. Even the saying click of the mouse has changed to swipe of the finger. These changes are helping the learners a lot.

## 3. ORIGIN AND DEFINITION OF CALL

Computers have been used for language teaching since the 1960s. CALL in the 1960's was supported by mainframe computers connected to terminals by single campus or a cable. The users of CALL in the earlier days took part very actively as it was the only time spent innovatively by the learners. There were many software's and computer assisted instruction projects that emerged out in various places like UK, North America etc., and all these projects came out with the IBM collaboration. A German CALL project at Massachusetts Institute of Technology was thus explained in a review



"[The] tutorial to teach German reading uses the computer as a source of information to be consulted by the student as needed; the [other aspect of the program]. . . uses a model of the structure of the language being taught to enable the program to determine whether a response is correct and to provide the student with useful error analysis if it is not."(Nunan, 1989)

Levy provides the following succinct definition of CALL- Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) may be defined as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning.".(Levy, 1997)

This definition is a very broad one. A more precise way of describing CALL is to say this is method of language teaching and learning using computer technology as a tool to the staging, fortification, and review of contexts to be taught, often through inclusions of considerable interactive course topics.

CALL is a method applied in the teaching of all the four skills of the language as well as the grammar side of the same. It is very useful for the students to remember what they have learned, because they are not only listening to the conversation or the passage but are also seeing the material subject visually. CALL is defined as an approach in which language teaching and learning is made easy through the computer technology. In this, computer is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of the material to be learned. As a result, computer-assisted instruction appears to be considerably effective than the conventional or the traditional methods of teaching.

#### 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following reviews on CALL have made it possible to justify the topic as well as the points that are stated in the research work. It also helps to understand the various findings and the methods that were used by various researchers and reviewers on the use of CALL and its use to improve the listening skills.

Glenn Stockwell (2000) in his study titled "A review of technology choice for teaching language skills and areas in the CALL literature", states that CALL was used to analyze the communication skills of two hundred and six students from different universities at United Kingdom. According to the tests conducted to evaluate the listening skills, it is found that there was around sixty percentage of overall difference in the performance of the experimental and the conventional group. In addition, the data analyzed shows that eighty

percentages of the learners are interested in accepting computer as their instructor.

Fouad Abdalhamid (2012) in his research work titled "Listening comprehension strategies of Arabic-speaking ESL learners", states a total number of thirty samples were collected and pre-test and post-tests were conducted by dividing them equally. According to the data analysis, it is found that eighty-two percentage of the students got high scores in the post-test that was done with the help of CD-ROMs.

Hafsa Riyaz (1999)for his research entitled "A Study of Co-Relation between Teaching and Proficiency of Learners in Functional English" states that the samples collected for the study was taken from various higher secondary institutes of Srinagar city. The sample comprised of a total number of 160 respondents from which 80 belonged to General English course and 80 belonged to Functional English course. From the data collection made, it is understood that around 70.2% of the students from the experimental group got above 50% in the post-test that was conducted using the CALL packages and only 32% of the students belonging to the conventional group were able to score above 50% in the post-test.

A report by the US Department of Education (1995) stated that students felt that the use of technology made them feel smarter and empowered them with knowledge that others did not have. Students in this study also reported that using computers made them feel special and important. Seventy percent of students surveyed thought that computers "made learning more fun."

#### 5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to

1. Explain how the use of CALL method is effective for the enhancement of listening skill.
2. Scrutinize the role of intervention and motivation while introducing a new methodology
3. Analyze the variation in the performance of students in the pre and post-test.
4. Examine the performance of male and female students in pre and post-test.
5. Observe the performance of the students belonging to urban and rural area in their tests.
6. Examine the performance of the students through their medium of instruction in HSC.

#### 6. SAMPLING METHOD AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sampling method adopted for this study was the convenient sampling method. With the



population universe size of 2500 students pursuing first year under graduation in B E from a private engineering university, 60 were chosen as the sample population depending upon the various socio cultural backgrounds and it was ensured that the English course design of the selected population was Non – CALL course.

**7. RESEARCH PROFILE**

Pilot study for a duration of 40 hours that is for a span of 20 days which dealt with the questionnaire evaluation and classroom observation of the students by understanding their socio cultural background, common errors, language learning process, language proficiency, learning behaviour and interests this helped in zeroing down the problem of the study. Pre test on listening skill was conducted for seven days using the traditional method where the selected speeches of entrepreneurs were used followed by multiple choice questions. Following it, intervention sessions were conducted for 15 hours that is for a period of 10 days where the students were introduced about CALL and its importance in this highly technified society and how better they could be able master their listening skill through CALL aided programmes which would help them to perform better in their competitive exams and interviews. After this, session on CALL was conducted for two hours that is to state for three days and following it, post test was conducted using the experimental method for a span of seven days. For the post test for which CALL was used, a few speeches of entrepreneurs was used and this was one of the variable which helped in making a comparative study.

Table 1: The framework of the study schedule

S.NO	PROCESS	SESSIONS	DAYS
1	Pilot study	40	20
2	Pre Test	07	07
3	Intervention	15	10
4	Post Test	07	07

**8. SOFTWARE**

In order to conduct the post-test for the study, simple audio visual software was developed. This was created using the Visual Basic which is the commonly used software for designing a user friendly program. Apart from visual basic, .NET was also used to ensure that the output is obtained. .NET framework is a user friendly application which also has the potentiality to store data and other information.

**COMMON LANGUAGE RUNTIME (CLR):**

CLR is described as the “execution engine” of .NET. It provides the environment within which programs run. The most important features are:

- Checking and enforcing security restrictions on the running code.
- The .NET Framework class library provides a collection of useful and reusable types that are designed to integrate with the common language runtime. The types provided by the .NET Framework are object-oriented and fully extensible, and allow the user to seamlessly integrate the applications with the .NET Framework.

**FRONT-END: VB.NET**

**BACK-END: Microsoft Access**

The front end or the output that is obtained is executed using the Microsoft Studio. The Visual Basic script is the fore-runner of the program. The other software’s used to execute the created program includes Microsoft SQL (Special Query Language) server and Microsoft windows SDK

This software made use of the head phones to listen to the audio. The various pictures that were used as the background created interest amidst the learner folks. The step by step changes according to the need of the learners made them to perform well





in the test. This simple package resulted in a drastic outcome with excellent performances which could be analyzed using the tables as follows.

### 9. DATA ANALYSIS

Tool used for data analysis was SPSS. Based on the variables, T test and One Way ANNOVA was done. The overall results proved there is a

considerable variation in test performances of the respondents. As the respondents were not divided into experimental and control group, the role of intervention was high which resulted in the better performance. The following table 2 represents the difference in the overall performances of the respondents

Table 2: Represents the overall score differences

TEST	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	SIG (CORRELATION)	T VALUE
PRE TEST	30.1167	60	4.88197	.056	-13.358
POST TEST	42.4833	60	4.18023		

N value remains 60 for pre test and post test and from SIG value .056, it could be understood that there is a significant difference in the performances of the respondents in both tests.

Table 3: Represents scores of respondents in pre test and post test

TEST	Variables	N	Mean	SD	T Value / SIG VALUE	TEST	Mean	SD	T Value / SIG VALUE
PRE TEST	MALE	32	31.9688	3.64102	3.413	POST TEST	41.9063	3.47674	-1.146
	FEMALE	28	28.0000	5.30548	3.331		43.1429	4.84359	-1.122
	URBAN	22	31.8636	5.71794	2.175		42.2727	4.48470	-.295
	RURAL	38	29.1053	4.07225	1.989		42.6053	4.05062	-.287
	ENGLISH	15	33.0667	4.96368	.052 (SIG VALUE)		43.0667	4.35015	.021 (SIG VALUE)
	HINDI	19	29.5263	4.61120			43.0526	4.03421	
	TAMIL	12	29.0000	4.69042			39.2500	2.92715	
	OTHERS	14	28.7143	4.44502			43.8571	4.07350	
	FIRST GEN	36	29.4167	4.97637	-1.370		42.5833	4.31194	.225
GRADUATED	24	31.1667	4.64071	-1.390	42.3333	4.06113	.228		

With respect to the mean value in the tables 2 and 3, it could be understood that the performance of the respondents in post-test was better than the pre test. Through the overall analysis made with reference to mean and T value, it is clarified that the score of the female respondents were better than the male respondents. N value remains same in pre and post test.



## 10. RESULT DISCUSSION

Objectives of this research article is to provide evidence that using CALL helps in enhancing listening skill and the socio cultural milieu has a significant role in the process of language learning. One of the objectives is also to prove that intervention and motivation has an important role in enhancing communication skills of the learners. With these objectives and data analysis, the results discussions are as follows

From the table, it could be seen that the performance of the female respondents were better than the male respondents. One of the reasons for this difference in performance is the psychological reason. The female respondents created a better understanding with the researcher because of same gender. Interpretation 2 and 3 vividly states that the performance of the respondents from the rural area was equal to the respondents from urban area and the scores of the first generation learners were equal to the scores of the respondents who belonged to the family of graduates. This implies that CALL is a new concept for the respondents and they were able to learn through CALL without any inferiority complex. Intervention and motivation helped the respondents to learn with better interest and curiosity.

Interpretation 4 which shows the difference in the performance of the respondents from different medium of instruction depicts that compared to all other respondents, the performance of the respondents from Tamil Medium background was minimal. The main reason for this is a student from Tamil medium background will usually be well versed in Tamil while compared to other languages. Whereas the respondents from other medium of instruction will be aware of more than two languages and hence, for them to enhance their English language proficiency will be easy while compared to others. This also brings to a finding that a person who is familiar with more than two languages will be fluent in aspects of English. Interpretation 5 concludes that the performances of the respondents were better in the post-test that implies the CALL based approach made it possible for the learners to enhance their listening skill in an interesting way. A

new method of learning will create an interest for the respondents.

## 11. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Using Computer Assisted Language Learning method for enhancement of listening skills has shown a positive result. Using CALL in the routine classroom teaching will improve the performances of the students by providing a virtual learning environment. The study has helped not only in finding out the use of CALL in the teaching learning process especially in listening skills, but has also helped to understand the difficulties encountered by the students in the listening process both in traditional method of learning and in using computer as an aid. It is also understood that the students show an extra interest to learn using the computers. The role of intervention is important in any teaching process as it would create interests among the learners by motivating them to learn and perform the task in a better way.

From the research made, it is found that the learners of English language showed high interest if taught through CALL. The emerging trend of smart and virtual classes could definitely enhance the communication skills of the learners. It is also understood that motivation plays an important role in the process of listening. To help students plan for listening, teachers should give reasons and needs for improvising the listening skill so that students become aware of the purpose. This would help the learners to foresee what they are about to listen. The repetition of the concepts through CALL would assist learners to get familiarised with the terms, as it will not be possible to comprehend the contexts first time itself. It is also not possible for everyone to understand what is being told the very first time itself. As Levy (2000:190) argues, "...for the CALL researcher, the technology always makes a difference..." and as such it is essential to have a clear idea in mind as to why a particular technology is used, and then to ensure that it is used in a way that justifies its adoption. From the study made, it is learned that CALL helps the learner to evaluate his performance without the interference of anyone. Even in the software created, there is a score sheet that gets generated at the end of the program this helps the learners to check out their listening skills



automatically. As often quoted, it is all in the hands of the tutors and the learners whether to make heaven out of hell or hell out of heaven.

This study is not without limitations. The results of the research cannot be universalized because of the sample size and lesser contextual usage. There are myriads of scopes like using different genres of literature, focusing on varied skills etc., theoretical perspectives of CALL can be used for language related study. With all its limitations, this study has paved a platform for using speeches in CALL method to enhance the listening ability.

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