The Impact of using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in Teaching and Learning Hindi as a Foreign Language in Sri Lanka

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INTRODUCTION

Information Technology plays an inseparable role in current society. As the rapid development of technology, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has been introduced to develop the virtue of language learning. According to Levy in his scholarly work *Computer-Assisted Language Learning* defines CALL as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" (as cited by Jiang, 2008) As a result, latest technology including computers, internet, mobile devices and latest language tools are been used in language teaching and learning process. The aim of developing CALL is not to provide language with novelty, but is to improve the quality of language teaching (Cameron, 1989).

PURPOSE

Hindi has been offered as a foreign language in universities of Sri Lanka for several decades. University of Kelaniya has initiated teaching of Hindi through CALL. This paper illustrates the impact of using CALL in teaching and learning Hindi language in Sri Lanka. Although this is a popular language teaching and learning aid, many students as well as teachers who are in Humanities face difficulties. Hence, it is significant to examine whether using the CALL in teaching Hindi to Sri Lankan students is effective. The aim of this study is to identify the attitude of the students as well as teachers on using CALL while teaching Hindi as a foreign language to the university students. It also expected to examine the difficulties faced by both these parties while using CALL.

METHODOLOGY

A case study has been done to collect primary data with a subsequent qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The survey was conducted with 50 students and 7 teachers attached to the Department of Hindi Studies, University of Kelaniya. Journal articles and books related to the topic were used as secondary data.

RESULTS

This study revealed that using CALL is a novel experience to the teachers. Hence, they face difficulties while integrating CALL in the language classroom. According to the data gathered through questionnaires 90% of teachers believe that using CALL is not successful in teaching Hindi as a foreign language to the students. According to this study 83% of them believe that CALL does not affects to the language teaching and learning process. It also highlights that 83.3% students are not interested in using CALL. Furthermore, 57% of the teachers face technical and language difficulties when working with CALL. According to them using this system is more time consuming and thus they do not pay interest in teaching with CALL. More than 85% of the teachers believe that CALL cannot be used in teaching Hindi literature. Novels, short stories and dramas are included in the syllabus of Hindi literature. Hence, they believe that CALL cannot be of much use while teaching these components of the curriculum. None of the teachers provide lesson notes to the students through CALL hence they believe that if they do so students may not attend the lectures. More than 80% of them do not assign activities in CALL because they assume that students will not complete them. However, 20% of teachers assign activities through CALL and students hand over the answers as hard copies rather than submitting them online.

This study also revealed that 72% of students are interested in using CALL in learning Hindi. They believe that CALL is important as well as easier for them to communicate with teachers. Nevertheless, around 43% believe that

it is time consuming and find it hard to type in Hindi fonts. According to 77% of students CALL is helpful them in improving their IT knowledge. The findings of this paper indicate that most of the students and teachers are inclined to using social media network rather than using CALL.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Above discussion highlights he majority of the students as well as teachers still believe in traditional language tearing and teaching methods. Both these parties suggested that workshops should be arranged to solve the problems regarding using CALL. According to the teachers CALL should be made compulsory for the students. This paper elaborates that attitudes of the teachers as well as students should be changed regarding CALL. Teachers should try be innovative while teaching Hindi with CALL and technical support should be provide to the teachers and students until it becomes a familiar tool for them. Progress of the usage of CALL should be assessed on a regular basis and should inspire those who started using this tool in teaching and learning.

As a part of this research we personally used CALL as a teaching tool with the students attached to Department of Hindi Studies, University of Kelaniya. All the lesson notes related to the lessons were provided through CALL before the lecture. CALL was applied in teaching the History of Hindi Literature and Hindi literature including novels, poems and dramas. Since the introduction of CALL the attendance of the students showed marked improvement due to their motivation. According to the students they attended the lectures to get more knowledge regarding the provided notes and to clarify their doubts. It was easier for them to understand the lession hence they knew about the lesson before the lecture, as well as author got more time to have discussions with students. This study revealed that teaching and learning with CALL makes Hindi language more popular among university students.

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