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# Computer-Assisted Language Learning In The Efl Classroom: Teachers' Perceptions And Perspectives

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**Abstract**

The intend of the study reported in this research work is to examine factors influencing English as a foreign language (EFL), teachers' employability of computers and technologies in their classrooms, ways to improve CALL practice in educational institutions and to discover EFL teachers' perceptions of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). Fifteen African students were observed and examined in Institute of Hotel and Tourism Management, DBRAU. A questionnaire and follow-up in-depth interviews were conducted to assimilate data. The outcome of the research specified that the teachers have favorable and positive attitudes toward the use of the computers. They find computer technology as a valuable teaching tool that can upgrade ways of teaching by offering students a variety of language inputs and escalating students' learning experiences in authentic and actual contexts. This research also focused on external factors such as insufficient time, deficient computer facilities, appropriate textbooks and , inflexible college curriculum, lack of administrative support leaves an adverse influence while implementation of CALL in the classroom. Some Internal issues such as teachers' inadequate computer skills and knowledge leads to negative perceptions of CALL also seem to significantly affect teachers' decisions on the use of CALL. On the basis of the study, inferences are made for the effective execution of CALL in EFL contexts. These English labs should be mandatory at school level as well where students learn through four dynamics of teaching i.e. Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.

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**Keywords:** Computer assisted language lab, Foreign Languages, Learning experiences

**Introduction**:

The evolution in information and communication technology (ICT) has brought remarkable changes in education and societies. The Internet, particularly, has emerged as an important tool for communication. Internet has dominated the world so much that even computers at schools have become dominant in educational environments. In this era of high technology, The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE & HRD) in India, for example, has implemented several Educational Reform Plans to meet the upcoming challenges. It is rightly quoted that, "The follow-up programme of MHRD, CLASS 2000, has three components, viz computer literacy in 10,000 schools, computer aided learning in 1000 schools and computer based learning in 100 smart schools (Mallik, 2001) and CLASS 2002 the project has intended to accelerate the pace of introduction of IT in schools and create models of school computer education - so as to achieve the goals of universalisation of computer literacy among school passed outs within next five years. By 1990, the NCERT hopes to have spread its CLASS programme, to nearly 14,000 higher secondary schools in the country." Sharma, P. (2013). The Education Ministry executed the extensive arrangement for education in the Information Age which intended to edifice the infrastructure for learning between 1997 and 2000.

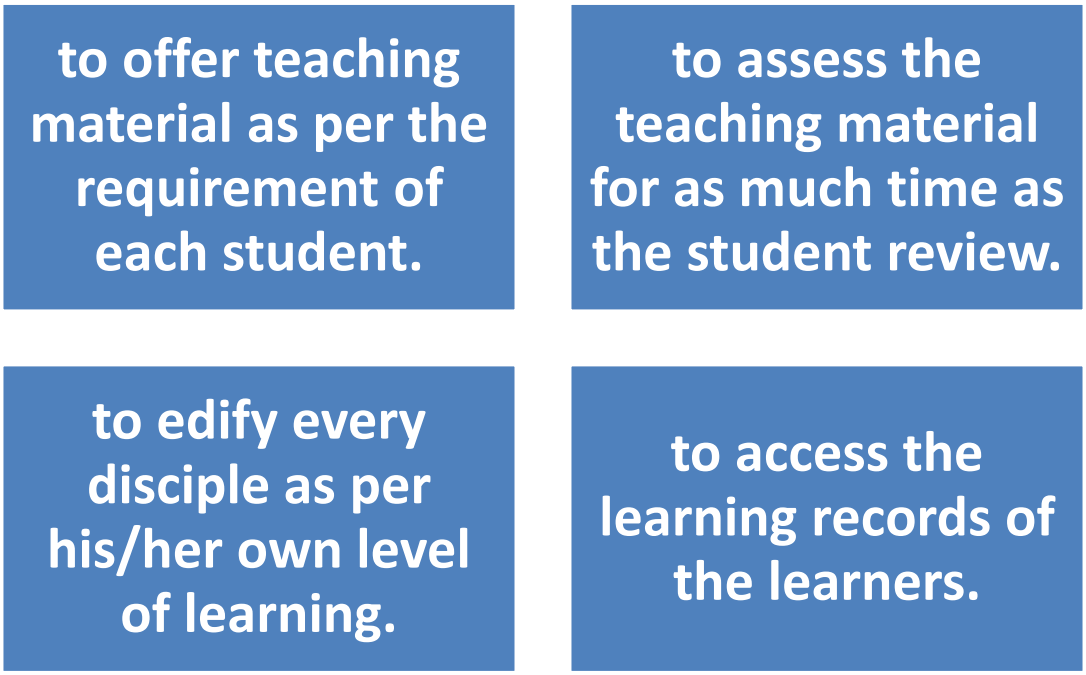
It included computer labs, ICT equipped classrooms, and digital libraries with internet to create technology-enhanced learning atmosphere at schools. On the basis of the plans, the Indian government has provided every school with multimedia computers, "The English language lab is well sophisticated with computers, headphones, speakers, LCDand different English language software etc. … GITAM is the top fourth private deemed university in India and the top private university in Andhra Pradesh according to MHRD survey" MADHAVI, K., & ANURADHA, V. (2012). 1(01), 07-12.

Several software programs and high-speed broadband Internet connections are integrated with ICT in daily teaching and learning practice.The paradigm of English education in India has changed into communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. The underlying theoretical concept of CLT is communicative competence, which refers to the ability for language learners to use socially, contextually and culturally appropriate language in communicative contexts (Savignon, 1997). However, most African learners of EFL face difficulties to excel their communicative competence beyond the classroom because of less conducive atmosphere of learning. Computer literacy and English language proficiency are currently essential elements in the African society in obtaining promotion, searching jobs, and preparing for higher education. It's the beautiful amalgamation of internet and language acquisition. According to Atkins and Vasu (2000), teachers' attitudes or concerns have a significant

influence on the use of computers in the classroom. Lam (2000) also emphasizes that teacher' personal beliefs of the advantages of using technology for language teaching influence teachers' decision regarding technology use.

**COMPARISON WITH TRADITIONAL CLASSROOMS:**

There are many differences between traditional classrooms and Computer assisted Language labs. Some are as follows:




National policy on Education, 1986 promoted computerization in India by the Government.It provides a dynamic interaction between computer and students. There are many procedures involved in it for example: collecting information, receiving the response, analyzing the response and giving immediate feedback to the learners. Thisprocedure is titled as Computer assisted instruction (CAI). Initially, in the year 1984-1985, NCERT initiated CLASS project as a pilot project in endorsing the use of microcomputers in Indian secondary schools.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The focal intention of this research paper is to discover the synergy between interactive multimedia Programme and traditional direct method of teaching English at graduation level, in relation to student's achievements and retention of acquired knowledge.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study is a quantitative research where an analytical comparison between Interactive Multimedia programme and conventional direct method of Teaching is conducted, while gauging the aptness of Computer Assisted Language Labs. The nature of this study is experimental; therefore experimental method with pre-test, post-test, randomized group design has been used. Fifteen African students of Institute of Hotel and Tourism Management, DBRAU were observed and examined.A questionnaire and follow-up in-depth interviews were conducted to assimilate data. Kim(2002) emphasized on teachers' perception and attitudes while employing the synergy of technology into the classroom. Even Redmond, Albion and Maroulis (2005)accounted that teachers' interest in ICT and proficiency in using it, strikes a wonderful balance in Teaching. On the other hand Egbert, Paulus and Nakamichi (2002) contradicted that only inclination towards Computer usage is not an assurance of technology in Teaching. Kim (2002) asserted that regularly teachers were found avoiding and delaying the use of technology in classrooms. Some of the factors affecting the usage of technology in classrooms are as follows: computer anxiety, lack of confidence, insufficient time, insufficient computer skills, limited class hours, incorporating authentic materials into their textbooks, lack of personal curiosity and interest. Shin and Son (2007) urged that sometimes inappropriate Internet connection and technical problems behaves like a hurdle in classroom teaching. On the basis of previous researches only students' problems and perspectives were highlighted but not in comparison to effect by teachers' perception as well.

Through an investigation of Indian EFL teachers' perceptions and perspectives on CALL practice, in comparison to African students perspectives of Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, this study highlights the

Brown (1991)highlighted learners as active recipients in a technology enhanced learning environment, learners' centered classrooms depicted byLam and Lawrence (2002) Teacher behaves like a "facilitator, a resource person and a counselor rather than the only authority and decision-maker" (p. 305). Bancheri (2006) emphasized on the changed role of teachers in new era of technology. Their work is not only to impart knowledge but also to provide them tools to acquire more knowledge. Jeong (2006) (Rilling, Dahlman, Dodson, Boyles & Pazvant, 2005) both of them reflected the transition.In order to deal with technological paradigm shifts efficiently, therefore, teachers should adapt the technical competence necessary to lodge CALL applications and utilizean assortment off unctions of the applications for academicintention (Cunningham, 2000).

**Research Analysis:**

This research includes ten EFL teachers and twenty students in the study. All the teachers were designated as lecturers in ITHM, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Agra. Out of the ten participants, two were male teachers and eight were female teachers (average age 42, ranging from 31 to 57 years). Teaching experience started from 3 years to 26 years whereas 4 years to 15 years computer experience in teaching area. Everyone had Internet access at home and College. Students were registered in BA (VOC) Ist year in Tourism. They were ranging from 18 to 20 years. All of them were computer literate.

**Information:**

**Some Basic Demographic Information about the participants:**

1. **Gender:**
   **Male**
   **Female**

2. **Age**
   **20-30**
   **31- 40**
   **41- 50**
   **51- 65**

3. **Highest Current level of Education:**
   **Graduation**
   **Post Graduation**
   **Ph. D**

4. **Current Job:**
   **Teacher**
   **Lecturer**
   **Professor**

**Social Networking:**

1. **How many social network profiles do you have?**
   **One**
   **Two**
   **Three**
   **Four**
   **More than Four**

2. **How many friends do you have on Facebook?**
   **Less than 100**
   **More than 100**

3. **How many times do you access your computer?**
   **Never**
   **Once**
   **Twice**
   **Thrice**
   **Every time**

4. **Do you have any computer skills degree or certificate?**
   **Yes**
   **No**

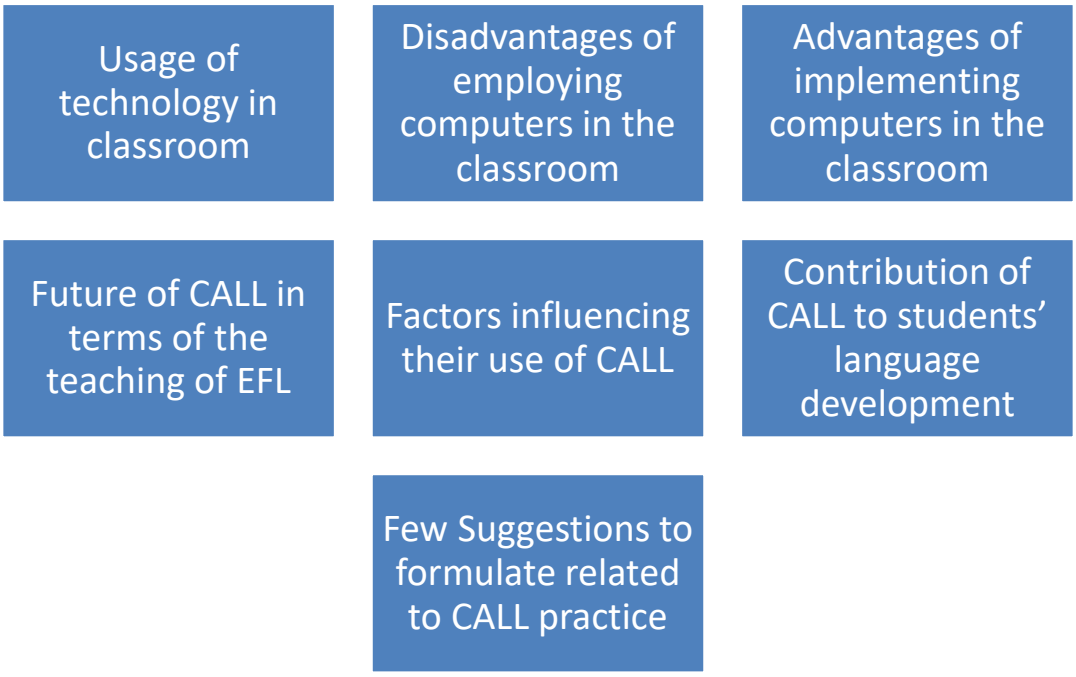
**Data collection and analysis**

A questionnaire was sent to the ten EFL teachers via e-mail. It consisted of two sections. In Section A, there were 22 questions of yes/no and multiple-choice questions. They were to attain participants' background information alongwith to illustrate their reactions to the application of computers in the classroom, their knowledge of computer skills, preferences in CALL applications.

Section B, the teachers were requested to givedeclarationreview as per their level of consent or rejection while reflecting their discernments of and approaches toward CALL implementation.

A 5 point Likert scale (A psychometric response scale in which responders specify their level of agreement to a statement typically in five points: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree.) was employed.

An Interview was also conducted along with Questionnaire. The interview was premeditated to extract information about the teachers' perception on CALL execution in teaching contexts. Seven open-ended questions were raised: 1. Usage oftechnology in classroom? 2. Advantages of implementing computers in the classroom? 3. Disadvantages of employing computers in the classroom? 4. Contribution of CALL to students' language development? 5. Factors influencing their use of CALL?6. Future of CALL in terms of the teaching of EFL? 7. Few Suggestions to formulate related to CALL practice?

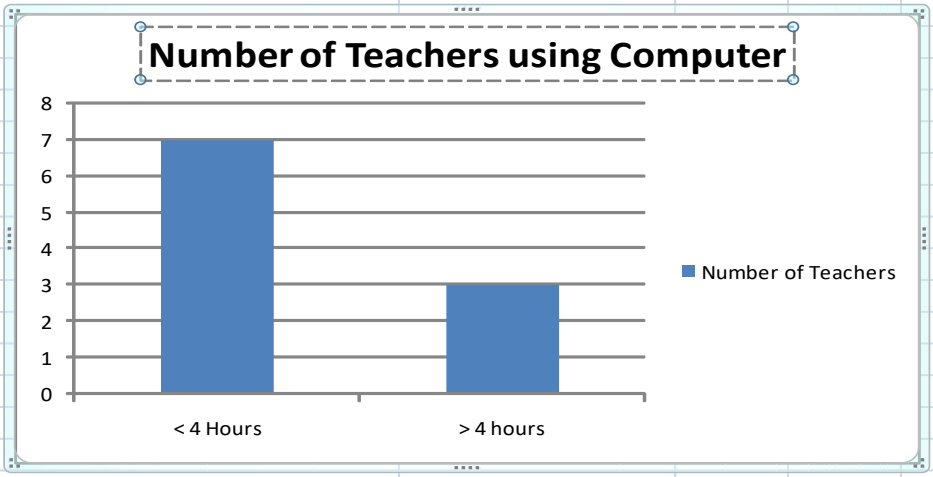



Each interview was documentedand analyzed. Results analysis clearly indicates that ten teachers used computer for arranging activities and teaching materials. Out the ten teachers, seven teachers indicated

that they work on computer for less than 4 hours a day and three teachers specified that they work on computer for more than 4 hours a day.

**Fig. 1: Optimum Utilization of Computer**

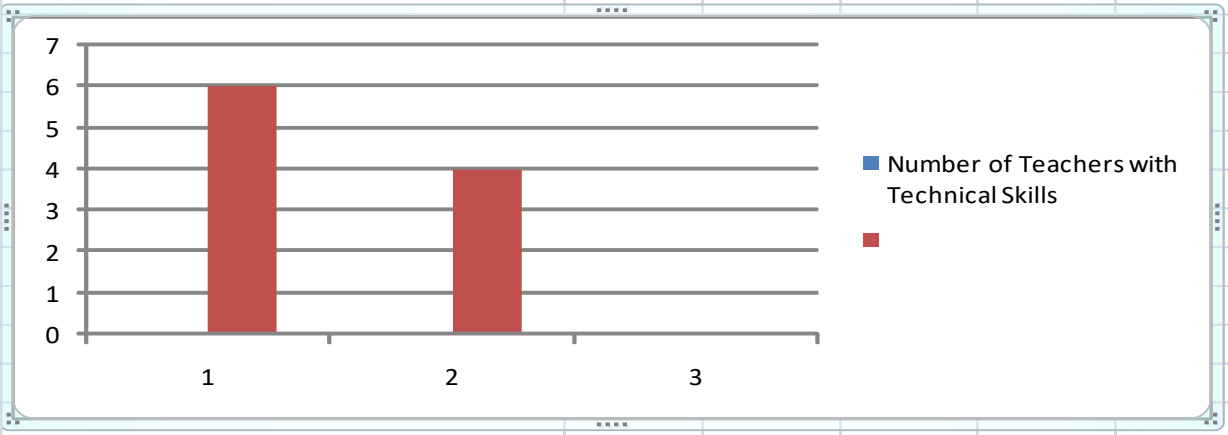
| Number of Hours on Computer Usage | < 4 Hours | > 4 hours |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Teachers | 7 | 3 |




According to teachers' assessment of technical skills, six teachers are fair or good while four teachers admitted that their computer skills are very poor. While implementing CALL applications in the classrooms, teachers exhibited their inclination towards CD-ROMs as well as the Internet.

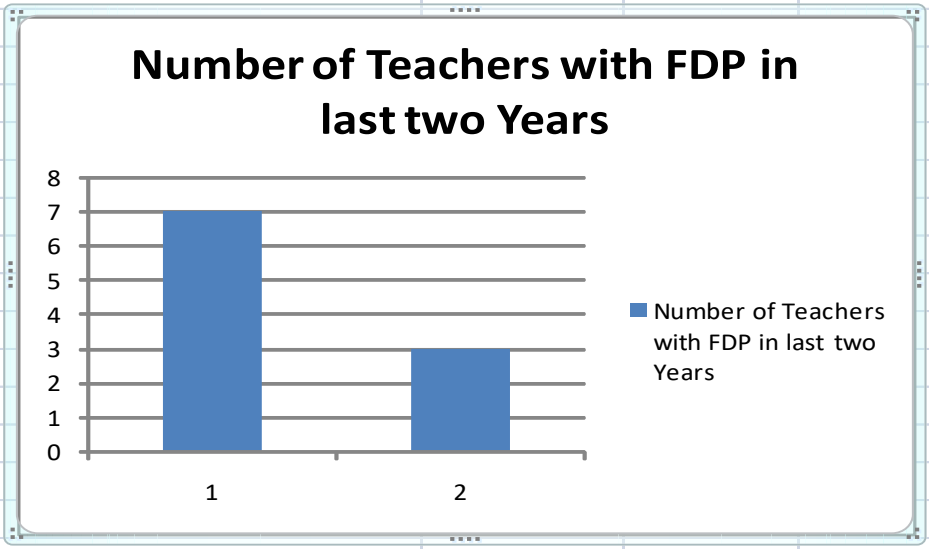
**Fig. 2 TechnicalSkills Chart**

| Number of Teachers with Technical Skills | High Tech | low Technical Skills |
|---|---|---|
| | 6 | 4 |




In past two years, seven teachers did not partake in any Faculty development program while three teachers attended FDP. The three teachers who participated in training courses reflected their wonderful contribution in technology integration in their classrooms. The seven nonparticipants in FDP reported that due to deficient time and interest in training, they couldn't participate. **Fig. 3**

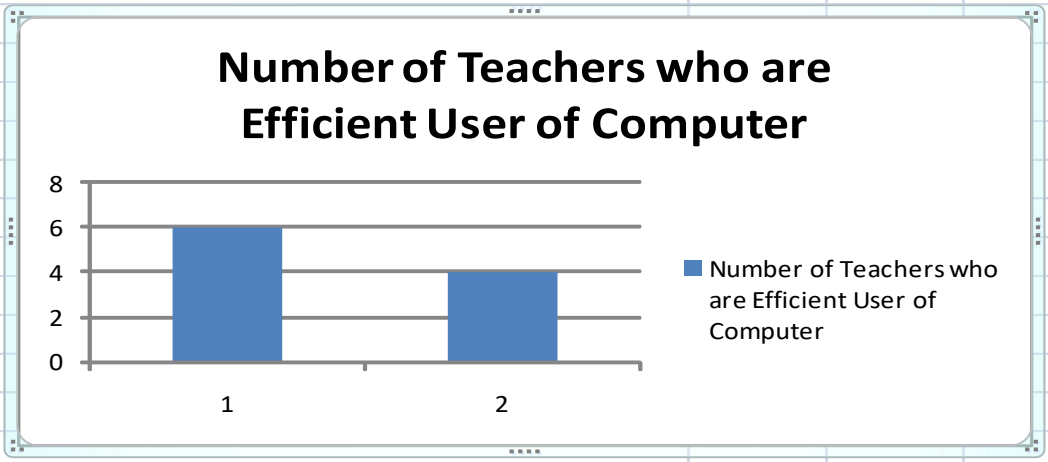
| Number of Teachers with FDP in last two Years | 7 | 3 |
|---|---|---|




According to the analysis of Section B of the questionnaire, four teachers enjoyed using computers and six teachers felt comfortable employing computers in the classroom. Six teachers agreed or strongly agreed to use computer-based materials while four teachers reflected their uncertainty about the efficacy of employing computer-based materials.

**Fig. 4 Efficient Computer Users Chart**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Teachers who are Efficient User of Computer | 6 | 4 |




On the mean rating of 3.3, seven teachers consented that a learner-centered environment could be formed by using computers while the other three teachers were uncertain or disagreed with it. However, Eight teachers agreed that computer usage will enhance their teaching skills and considered CALL as effective medium of teaching foreign Language. Six teachers agreed that CALL enhances the quality of teaching; Eight teachers approved that CALL stimulates students in learning EFL and; nine teachers approved that CALL makes the students as active learners.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Promoted learner-centered environment | 7 | | |
| Computer usage enhance teaching skills | 8 | | |
| Supported CALL effective medium of teaching foreign Language | 6 | | |
| CALL stimulates students in learning EFL | 8 | | |
| CALL makes the students as active learners. | 9 | | |

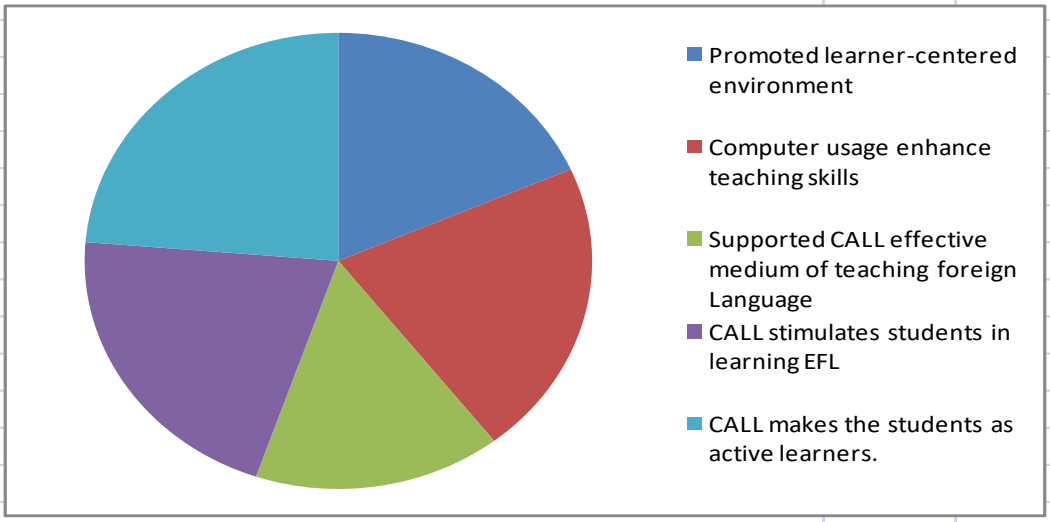



**Fig. 5: Teachers Consent Chart**

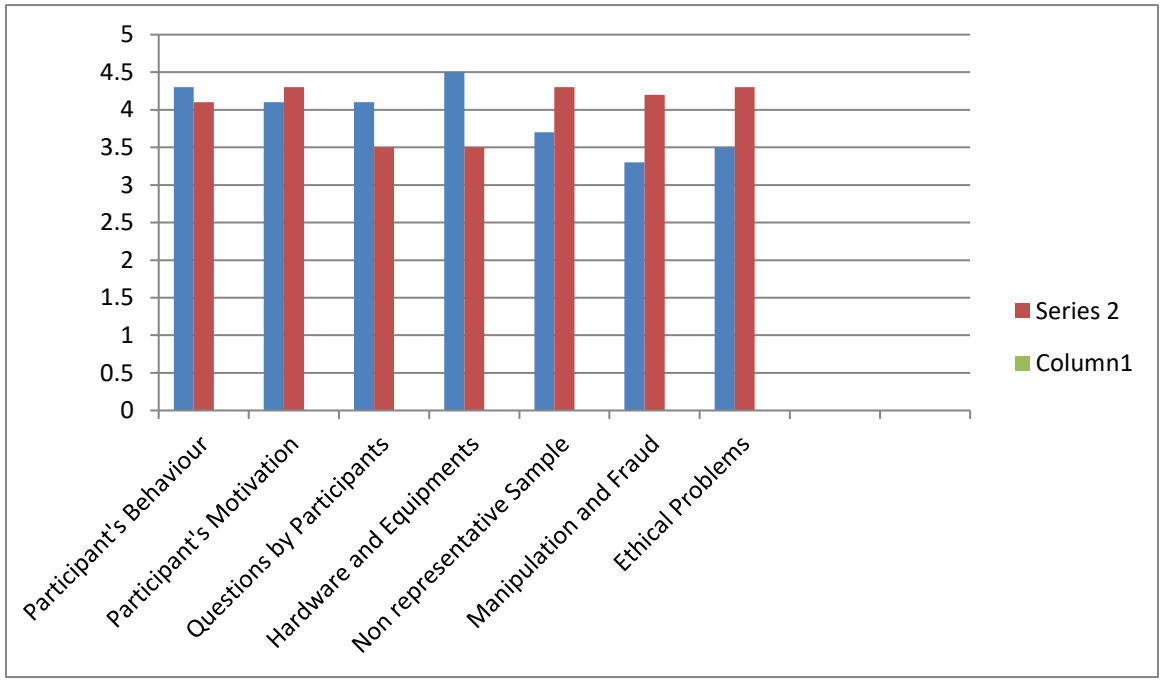
All the teachers consented that CALL offers progressive learners with a chance to indulge in real learning and makes foreign language learning appealing. Since in India we have students from Heterogeneous background, Internet usage in classrooms makes it more interesting. Six teachers showed their inclination towards teachers' perspectives and openness leads to CALL implementation; however four teachers were uncertain about it. Simultaneously, four teachers were indecisive and two teachers disagreed that teachers should take a chief role in the CALL classroom.

This corroborates that the position of teachers is critical in shaping the learning process, evaluating materials and organizing activities in the CALL classroom, as focused by many researchers (e.g., Han, 2006; Jeong, 2006; Johnson, 2002; Lam & Lawrence, 2002; Schulz-Zander, Büchter&Dalmer, 2002). Half of the instructors perceive that teachers' readiness or keenness for CALL execution helps students develop language skills. They consider that CALL increasesstudents' self-direction and independent learning. In the new-fangled environments, learners can be at the centre of learning - they become responsible for their work, manage learning by collecting information and organize the speed of learning. The teachers act as facilitators and activity guides, not like the powerful adjudicators for the learning process. They undergo their role transition in the CALL classroom and meet the new demands of ICT-based society.

On the contrary, the other teachers have different perspectivestowards teachers' roles in the CALL classroom. They believed in dominant roles of teachers in class,accountability for scheming students'

activitiesand progress. However they appear to convinced that CALL makes language learning interesting. Students and teachers have expectation from parents, peers, schools and society that everyone should be competent of teaching with computers in the techno-savvy age.

**Fig. 6: Comparative Analysis of Non Technosavvy and Technosavvy Group of Teachers**




**Conclusion**

The results of the study confirm several factors that have already been identified in previous studies (e.g., Albirini, 2006; Egbert, Paulus &Nakamichi, 2002; Kim, 2002; Lam, 2000; Lee & Son, 2006; Shin & Son, 2007; Smerdon et al., 2000; Yildirim, 2000). External factors such as inflexibility of curriculum and textbooks, insufficient computer facilities at school, limited time anddeficiency of administrative support, internal factors including teachers' partial computer knowledge and skills about CALL and their perceptions of and attitudes toward CALL are directly related to teachers.

First, it is recommended that instructors should be provided with well-equipped computer facilities and technical support. Although teachers have affirmative attitudes toward CALL, limited resources discouraged the use CALL. Second, synergy between existing curriculum and educational softwares should be made with CALL pedagogy.Third, teachers should build up level-differentiated CALL software programs to react to students' requirements, interests, learning styles and backgrounds. The programs should be promoted regularly according to the feedback of teachers and students. Fourth, small group faculty training is recommended since it can offer individual teachers with practical skills and sound pedagogy for CALL, while providingsufficient opportunities to performessential computer skills and teaching methods appropriate to their classrooms. Throughout this training, teachers mayobtain computer literacy and integration skills, Fifth, CALL-related communities or organizations, ESL/EFL/OREL Websites for local teachers can be supportive for sharing valuable teaching experiences with CALL,

useful information, creative ideas, and resources with others. Through off-line meetings or on-line discussions, teachers and students can discuss practical implications and issues of CALL with other. At the conclusion, teachers ought to have optimistic attitudes toward the transformation of society and technological use. Teachers' personal beliefs of the advantages of CALL are helpful for improving their self-confidence and practical teaching skills. Hence, it is significant for teachers to makeindividual efforts to lay down up learning targets, organizegenuine materials appropriate for the level of learners and incorporate them into the classroom.

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