International Journal of Applied Research

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Using computer assisted language learning as a tool to enhance the language creativity among children

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Abstract
New information technologies such as computers and electronic networks are now being used in all facets of teaching the English language arts. Computer assisted language learning embraces a wide range of information and communications technology applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages. Malhotra and Kumari (1990) defined Language creativity as the multi-dimensional attitude that is differently distributed among the people and includes mainly the factors of fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. Computer assisted language learning can be constructively applied in enhancing fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration of the language skills which play a pivotal role in enhancing the creativity in the expression of the language. The studies show that computer assisted language learning is more effective on improving the language creativity than the traditional methods of teaching of English. The finding is supported by the studies of Mammucari (1989) which determined the positive impact of teacher training programs in creativity on improving observable traits of creative teaching. The researcher makes an appeal to the policy makers and the educationists to inculcate computer assisted language learning in the curriculum.

Keywords: Computer assisted language learning, language creativity, curriculum

Introduction
New information technologies such as computers and electronic networks are now being applied in all facets of teaching the English language. These wide ranging applications raise the question: "What role should these technologies play in teaching and learning?" This report discusses examples of applications grouped into five roles: (a) tutor, (b) tool, (c) ways to explore language, (d) medium, and (e) learning environment. A computer program for teaching beginning reading that uses a phonics method would then be examined in relation to other approaches to teaching beginning reading, and only incidentally to other computer programs (Wikipedia, 2014) [16].

Computer Assisted Language Learning
Computer assisted language learning is defined by Levy (1997) [8] as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning". Computer assisted language learning embraces a wide range of information and communications technology applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages. The recent manifestations of computer assisted language learning are virtual learning environment and web-based distance learning. The design of computer assisted language learning materials generally takes into consideration principles of language pedagogy and methodology, which may be derived from different learning theories (e.g. behaviourist, cognitive, constructivist). A combination of face to face teaching and computer assisted language learning is referred to as blended learning. Blended learning is designed to increase learning potential and is more commonly found than pure computer assisted language learning (Pegrum 2009, p. 27) [12].

Wright (1992) [17] validated the usefulness of computer assisted language learning to enhance the use of language learning strategies. Feng (2012) [4] concluded that computer assisted language learning promoted innovative teaching practices, increased English teaching effectiveness, and improved instructional approaches and strategies. Umstead (2013) [14] found a positive correlation between the language proficiency growth of English language learners and the innovative computer based strategy.

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Language Creativity

Beginning in the 17th century, scholars were taken by the idea that language was the medium in which thought was conducted. First, they agreed that thought was exceptionally powerful, in the sense that there were no limits to the creation of ideas. In other words, man was in principle capable of an infinite variety of different thoughts. "Reason is a universal instrument which can operate in all sorts of situations" (Descartes, 1960) [3]. Second, language was a medium in which thought could be expressed, because it too was capable of infinite variety. Descartes expressed this as follows: "For it is a very remarkable fact that there are no men so dull-witted and stupid, not even madmen, that they are incapable of stringing together different words, and composing them into utterances, through which they let their thoughts be known". Modern linguists describe this as the creative aspect of language Chomsky (1966) [2]. "An essential property of language is that it provides the means for expressing indefinitely many thoughts and for reacting appropriately in an indefinite range of new situations" (Chomsky 1965, p. 6) [1].

The creativity of language is important to modern cognitive science, because it is assumed that this creativity is the product of a finite system. This idea was clearly expressed by Humboldt (1999) [6], that language is quite peculiarly confronted by an unending and truly boundless domain, the essence of all that can be thought. It must therefore make infinite employment of finite means. Malhotra and Kumari (1990) [9] found that the students who were exposed to the synectics method of teaching showed significant improvement in language creativity.

Dimensions of Language Creativity

Malhotra and Kumari (1990) [9] defined Language creativity as the multi-dimensional attitude that is differently distributed among the people and includes mainly the factors of

1) Fluency- Fluency is a quantitative aspect of creativity, i.e. coming up with large quantity of ideas, words, and ways of expressing them.
2) Flexibility- Flexibility is referred to as thinking up a variety of ideas and new way of dealing with situation.
3) Originality- Originality is designated as uncommon with respect to figural, verbal of symbolic transformation.
4) Elaboration- Elaboration is referred to ability by giving one or two simple lines on a complex object or given situation.

Positive Influence of Computer Assisted Language Learning in Enhancing the Language Creativity

Computer assisted language learning is useful in enhancing the language learning strategies (Wright, 1992; Feng, 2012; Umstead, 2013) [17, 4, 14]. Language is created rather than a mere recall of speech and sound. Computer assisted language learning is based on visuals, audio as well as text and it contains various forms of media which appeals to the learners to invoke their interest in learning. Computer assisted language learning can be constructively applied in enhancing fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration of the language skills which play a pivotal role in enhancing the creativity in the expression of the language. The studies show that computer assisted language learning is more effective on improving the language creativity than the traditional methods of teaching of English. The finding is supported by the studies of Mammucari (1989) [11] which determined the positive impact of teacher training programs in creativity on improving observable traits of creative teaching. Malhotra and Kumari (1990) [9] found that the students who were exposed to the synectics method of teaching showed significant improvement on all the four factors viz. fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. Han (2000) found that creative ability in young children is rather domain-specific. Huh (2005) [5] found a close relationship between creativity and language learning and the positive impact of incorporating creative thinking skills into language instruction in computer assisted language learning environments. Lee (2006) found that creativity can be enhanced through conscious and creative efforts. Kennedy (2007) [7] reported that the computer assisted vocabulary learning program was successful in significantly increasing students' receptive and productive knowledge of foreign language vocabulary words. Salemic (2010) [13] found positive effects of instruction emphasizing fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration on students' vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. Wang (2011) [15] reported the positive role of language retrieved pictures in supporting computer mediated intercultural brainstorming to promote creativity. The learners are more motivated and participative in computer assisted language learning classrooms. This aids the educators in creating enriched classrooms and encourages the learners to explore new realms of expression. The researcher makes an appeal to the policy makers and the educationists to inculcate computer assisted language learning in the curriculum.

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