

Teachers' Attitudes towards Using Computer and Mobile Assisted Language Learning at Upper Primary Level in Kyso Subcounty: Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract: *This study focused on teacher's attitudes towards the use of computers and mobile devices in second language learning contexts. The use of technology by teachers in education depends strongly upon their support and attitudes. The study applied the socio-cultural theory as developed by Vygotsky (1978; Lantolf, 2007). The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was English language teachers. Purposive sampling method was used to determine the sample size of the study which was 72 teachers. Data were collected through survey questionnaires. The findings of the study revealed that teachers held positive attitudes towards using Computer and Mobile Assisted Language Learning. The teachers perceived Computer and Mobile Assisted Language Learning as an effective tool in facilitating language teaching and learning, motivating students to learn and developing all language skills. Further, computers were perceived as valuable resources in English Language Learning class. The study therefore recommends that various stakeholders such as the government, curriculum developers, school heads and Ministry of Education should facilitate and support the implementation of CALL and MALL in schools.*

Keywords: CALL, Computer and Mobile Devices, English Language Learning, MALL, Teachers' Attitudes

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1. Introduction

Learning English as a second language in the recent years has been accompanied with the revolution of changes in the field of technologies. One of these changes is the use of computers and mobile phones in learning English or technically speaking, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Technological innovations have certainly brought changes in learning strategies and English teaching. Technology offers numerous opportunities for English Language Learners to simply communicate with native speakers in a foreign language context (Reinders and Benson, 2017). By means of the internet, both learners and teachers have access to a whole new range of authentic language material such as online newspapers, music files and videos that can be used for reading or listening activities.

One of the core objectives of the new curriculum in Kenya is helping children to be literate in their early years. Teaching English language is among the essential components of literacy achievement. Although this area is one of the greatest educational priorities, it is also one of the greatest challenges. Therefore, learners learning a new language need a great deal of language support. One of this supports is the integration of technological application in the teaching and learning of English language. Despite the importance of technology in fostering a wide range of literacies that enable learners to succeed academically, accelerate linguistic competency, and acquire necessary skills in their early years there seem to be laxity in the adaptation of new technologies and instructions in the classroom in Kenya.

One of the factors that impact negatively on the integration in English teaching is attitude. Various studies suggest that if teachers believed or perceived computer programs as fulfilling neither their own or their

learners' needs, they are not likely to attempt to introduce technology into their teaching and learning (cf. Mustafina, 2016; Sorensen, 2013; Odo and D'Silva, 2013). Further, various studies show that the integration of CALL AND MALL in the educational system enhances the learning of language skills (Ghavifekr, 2015; Ghorbani & Marzban, 2013; Gilakjani, & Leong, 2012; Kim, 2012). The attitudes of teachers play a great role in adopting CALL and MALL (Rehmat & Bailey, 2014; Ackermann 2001).

Russell, Bebell, O'Dwyer & O'Connor (2003) identify external reasons such as a lack of administrative support and training that can result in a feeling of less confidence with the use of technology in the education system. English language teachers face challenges in making classes more effective. Moreover, as classroom environments continue to change, teachers face the challenges of a large population who have high transient rates. Therefore, there is a dire need for studying the link between technological applications and English language learning in early years in Kenya and teachers attitude.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study applied socio-cultural theory (SCT) (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2007). SCT theory focuses on learning as situated in a social and cultural context, looking at learners in connection with the social and material environment where they interact (Wells, 2000; Warschauer, 2005). The socio-cultural perspective on language learning has profound implications for teaching, schooling, and education. The main idea in SCT is that social interaction plays a key role in human development. In the study the role of the teacher in providing Zonal of proximal Development through good instructions is assessed. Good instructions should proceed ahead of development to the learner. Hence, instruction can play an extremely important role in development. Thus, in language classrooms successful instructions should be within the child's zone of proximal development (ZPD) and also successful learning process cannot be an individual's unmediated or unassisted effort but a collaborative process. ZPD therefore emphasizes on collaboration and social interaction that enhance development. Thus, teachers both in practice and in training can achieve an insight to teaching through reflective practice and collaboration with other teachers.

3. Research Methodology

The study utilized descriptive survey designs. A descriptive survey design engages the people who are at the center of the research objective and it is a process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the status of the subjects in the study (Gay, 2006). The study utilized a descriptive survey of teachers' and learners' attitudes towards CALL and MALL as a teaching tool and their actual use in class in relation to the different language skills. A survey with Likert scale questions and open-ended questions were used in the study. The study was specifically carried out in Kyuso Sub County in Kitui County. The target population was teachers of English in these schools. The researcher purposively sampled 72 English language teachers from Kyso Sub County to participate in the study.

A survey for teachers' attitudes towards CALL and MALL as a teaching tool was used to collect data. The survey targeted both male and female teachers of English. The data on the Likert Scale were analyzed descriptively. Qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis. Data from observation schedules was interpreted to complement the data from questionnaires.

4. Results and Discussion

The data analyzed in this section revealed three forms of attitude; Perceived Usefulness (PU), affective, and behavioral components of teachers' attitudes towards the use of CALL and MALL in English classroom.

4.1. Perceived Usefulness

This section focuses on Perceived Usefulness by the teachers; the perspective of using computers and mobile devices for participants' in English language learning. 7 items were analyzed in this section on

whether teachers deem CALL and MALL to be a net benefit to the teaching and learning of English language. The first area of inquiry sought to ascertain the skills that teachers focus on with their learners when using mobile devices and computers. The findings of the study are presented in table 1:

Table 1: CALL and MALL support on the teaching of English skills

No	Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Strongly disagree		Disagree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Vocabulary	72	79.16	15	20.83	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	Pronunciation	72	76.38	17	23.61	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	Listening Skills	72	77.77	16	22.22	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Speaking skills	72	81.74	13	18.05	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Reading skills	72	66.66	20	27.77	4	5.55	0	0	0	0
6	Writing skills	72	43.05	21	29.16	20	27.77	0	0	0	0
7	Grammar	72	26.38	24	33.33	29	40.27	0	0	0	0
	Mean	72	64.44		29.99		9.727	0	0	0	0

The analysis in table 1 indicate that overall, all teachers recognize support of CALL and MALL in teaching of both receptive and productive skills when using mobile and computer devices. The results indicate that majority of respondents (79.61%) believe that CALL and MALL support the teaching of vocabulary. The respondents in an open ended question reported that CALL and MALL encourages peer interaction and that learners give feedback each other. Further, CALL and MALL activities enhance vocabulary retention. 55(76.38%) participants strongly agree that CALL and MALL support the teaching of Pronunciation while 17(23.61%) agree. The teachers reported that CALL and MALL offers SL learners many novel opportunities in a personalized and effective way.

77.77% of the teachers strongly agreed while 22.22% agreed that CALL and MALL can be exploited to practice listening activities. Cumulatively, all respondents reported to have positive attitudes towards using CALL and MALL for listening skill. CALL and MALL exposes the learners to the authentic materials which are relevant to their life. The use of CALL and MALL is an interesting and engaging learning tool that provides a valuable environment especially for an extensive listening activity (cf. Barber, 2007).

81.74% of the respondents strongly consider mobile and computer device as a material for teaching certain speaking activities while 18.05% agreed. The respondents reported that they prefer teaching speaking skills via CALL and MALL since learners find it enjoyable and they express themselves without any stress. In addition, 48(66%) of participants strongly agree that mobile devices are suitable for practicing a certain reading activity while 27(77%) agree. This was a fair percentage as compared to listening and speaking. The respondents in the open ended question reported that they teach learners to utilize a dictionary since CALL and MALL gives an opportunity for learners to learn the meaning of words. Further, reading via computers is more interesting to learners since it is supported with visual information and that CALL and MALL improves learners' vocabulary recognition and word decoding which lead to better comprehension in L2 reading by means of enhancing vocabulary learning.

43.05% of participants strongly agreed while 29.16% agreed that learners can practice any writing activities by using their mobile and writing technologies. 27.77% were neutral. The participants reported that CALL and MALL supports the use of correct grammar and spelling when they typed English words. Furthermore, Microsoft word program helps users when they want to write paragraphs in computers as it can give feedback directly regarding writing mistakes. The study observed that low response in this area might have been due to lack of skills in the Apps that support writing skills.

The findings on teachers' attitude towards CALL and MALL support for teaching grammar reveal that 19(26.38%) of teachers strongly agreed, 24(33.33%) agreed while 29(40.27%) were neutral. The findings

in grammar were low as compared to other English language skills. The findings in grammar may be attributed to the fact that grammar teaching with technology offers unique challenges as well as opportunities. The teachers find it challenging since they lack skills and knowledge on how communicative competence can be expanded to include technology.

4.2. Affective Factor of teachers on CALL and MALL

This section focused on affective component of attitude. The analysis in this section focused on 4 items that revealed the affective factor of attitudes as presented in table 2:

Table 2: Affective Factor of Teachers

No	Statements	N	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Strongly disagree		Disagree	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	I am confident to use CALL and MALL devices for language learning purposes	72	20	27.27%	22	30.55%	13	18.05%	6	8.33%	11	15.27%
2	Teachers do not have time for CALL and MALL	72	5	6.94%	7	9.72%	12	16.66%	19	26.38	28	38.88
3	Interacting via CALL and MALL MALL is often frustrating.	72	0	0%	0	0%	20	27.77	31	43.05	21	29.16
4	Using CALL and MALL will empower learners and teachers to be more autonomous.	72	40	55.55%	20	27.77%	8	11.11%	0	0%	4	5.55%

The findings in item 1 ‘I am confident to use CALL and MALL devices for language learning purposes’ reflects mixed reactions. Perceived self-confidence in technology is an important predictor of teacher’s future or present performance quality. Table 1 indicates that the majority of the participants (57.77%) answered positively: agreed (30.55%) and strongly agreed (27.27%). This suggests that the majority of participants feel confident enough in their digital literacy that they would be able to use CALL and MALL devices successfully within their teaching practices. However, (18.05%) of participants also stated that they neither agree nor disagree, (8.33%) strongly disagreed while (15.27%) disagreed. This could be due to participants not feeling sufficiently competent in their ability to successfully adopt technology, and may require training or support in how to implement such devices successfully, thus achieving digital competency.

The participants had varied responses on item 2 which was a negative statement: ‘Teachers do not have time for CALL and MALL’. Table 2 indicates that the majority of the participants answered negatively: (38.88%) disagreed while (26.38%) strongly disagreed. This implies that majority of teachers believe that they have time for CALL and MALL. However, a significant number of participants (23.6%) believe that ‘Teachers do not have time for CALL and MALL’; (6.94% strongly agreed while (16.66%). This implies that there are tough barriers to the use of technologies other than required resources including lack of time available in classes.

The results on item 3 show that majority of respondents (43.05%) strongly disagreed with the statement that interacting via CALL and MALL is often frustrating while (29.16%) disagreed. A significant number of respondents (27.77%) were neutral about this statement. This implies that the teachers have a positive affective attitude towards interacting with learners CALL and MALL.

The results on item 4 shows that majority of respondents (83.32%) believe that using CALL and MALL empowers learners and teachers to be more autonomous. However (11.11%) were neutral while 5.55% disagreed. The teachers reported that CALL and MALL empowers them to be autonomous outside the classroom. CALL and MALL gives them the opportunity to choose the best learning resources for their learners.

4.3. Perceived ease of use

Perceived ease of use is defined as “the degree an individual believes that using a particular system would be free of effort. Davis (1986) stated that the user would put less effort with a tool which is easy to use, thus they will be able to spare efforts to accomplish other tasks. Perceived ease of use could help improving one’s performance.

Table 3: Teachers Perceived ease of use of CALL and MALL

	Statements	N	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Strongly disagree		Disagree	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	CALL and MALL lessons can be easily developed	72	30	41.66%	29	40.27%	7	0.09%	6	0.08%		0%
2	Teachers do not have the expertise to develop CALL and MALL lessons	72	25	34.72%	32	44.44%	15	20.83%	0	0.08%		0%
3	Teachers should be able to develop CALL and MALL materials for teaching	72	17	23.6%	18	25%	28	38.88	9	0.125%		0%
4	Producing CALL and MALL materials requires a lot of mental effort.	72	19	26.38%	24	33.33%	29	40.27%		0%		0%
5	I find it takes a lot of effort to become skillful at using CALL and MALL	72	0		21	29.16%	20	27.77%	31	43.05%		%

The findings in Table 3 reveal that CALL and MALL lessons can be easily developed. 30 (41.66%) strongly agree while 29 (40.27%) agree that CALL and MALL lessons can be easily developed. However, a significant number of respondents 6 (0.08%) disagreed. The findings show that teachers are willing to create CALL and MALL lessons. The findings of item two show the need for training of teachers in the application of technology in the curriculum. Further, 25(34.72%) strongly agree and 32 (44.44%) agreed that teachers do not have the expertise to develop CALL and MALL lessons. However, 15(20%) of the respondents were neutral that the statement that teachers do not have the expertise to develop CALL and MALL lessons. The findings reveal that very few teachers implement the integration of technology in the teaching of English. This was further revealed in their attitude towards their role in development of CALL and MALL materials for teaching. The findings revealed laxity of teachers in preparation of CALL and MALL materials for teaching; while 17(23.6%) strongly agreed 18(25%) agreed and 28(38.88) remained neutral and a significant number of respondents 9(0.125%) disagreed that teachers should be able to develop CALL and MALL materials for teaching.

A good number of respondents still feel that producing CALL and MALL materials requires a lot of mental effort. This shows the need for training of teachers in the use of technology. As far as Item 4 is concerned, 19(26.38 %) chose strongly disagreed that it requires a lot of mental effort to produce CALL and MALL while 24 (33.33%) agreed and 29(40.27%) were neutral. Finally, for Item 5(43.05 %) of the respondents strongly disagreed that it takes a lot of efforts to become skillful at using CALL and MALL while 20(27.77%) were neutral 21(29.16%) agreed. This implies that respondents have mixed reactions on ease of use of CALL and MALL.

The most important finding in this study in overall is a high proportion of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement about the easiness in development of using CALL and MALL lessons. This is an indication of the positive perception of the role of MALL in enhancing learners’ English. This implies that if the teachers acquire the necessary skills CALL and MALL are the promising devices future of language learning since these devices are changing the language learning process become more genuine, personalized as well as situated.

5. Conclusion

This study has presented, analyzed and discussed teachers' attitudes towards using CALL and MALL in English language teaching classes. The findings of this study indicate that teachers' have a positive attitude towards the use of CALL and MALL in English language teaching classes. The teachers believe that CALL and MALL has the potential to leverage the teaching of English skills such as Vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking reading, writing and grammar. The study concludes that teachers show their readiness to adapt CALL and MALL. The study revealed that CALL and MALL seem more valuable to teachers as it empower their education practice. The study recommends that the government should organize more training in instruction of teaching using CALL and MALL. Therefore, English language teachers should be involved in modern technology courses to aid in working with CALL and MALL.

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