The Differences between English and Russian Language Teachers' Attitudes towards CALL

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Abstract

Teachers play an important role in the implementation of Computer Assisted Language Learning(CALL) into language classes and their attitudes have proved to be significant predictors of using technology in their classes. In other words, Teachers' attitudes are considered as a major factor that influences the use of new technologies in the educational settings. Thus, their attitudes toward computer can play an important role in the acceptance and actual use of technology in teaching in general and language teaching in particular. A review of the literature shows many examples of student voice reports, but not enough studies have conducted on teachers' attitudes towards CALL. This study was an attempt to address the possible differences between the English and Russian language teachers' attitudes towards incorporating CALL into their teaching professions. To this end a number of 53 English teacher and 52 Russian language teachers participated in the study. They were asked to fill the E & L teachers' attitude toward CALL questionnaire.The collected data was analyzed using SPSS 22 through running independent sample T- test. The result indicated that there is a significant difference between English and Russian teachers' attitude towards CALL. Moreover, it was concluded that English language teachers have more positive views towards incorporating CALL into their teaching.

Keywords: E & R Questionnaire; CALL; Attitude towards CALL; Language Learners

1. Introduction

Computers have been integrated both technology enhancement and meaningful learning. Actually CALL, that is a new approach in language teaching, is generated by the use of computers in educational settings. In recent years, CALL facilitates foreign language learning in different dimensions of language teaching and learning (Means, 1994). Levy (1997) defined CALL as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning." Richards & Schmidt (2014) suggested another definition for CALL that is "the use of a computer in the teaching and learning of a second or foreign language."

A common believe of CALL is that it forces teachers and students to be more responsible and better organized. Some difficulties on the way of incorporating CALL into language teaching and learning, including those relevant to CALL literacy, may have negative effects on the language teachers and learners' motivations and attitudes towards CALL, so this method of instruction might not suit all

types of learners and teachers. The main advantages identified about the use of CALL are that it promotes independence in students and that it offers them flexibility (Bilbatua & de Haro, 2014). The main disadvantage in the use of technology in language learning is that it increases the workload of teachers, not only when it comes to managing CALL in a course, but also when it comes to learning how to use it.

CALL is one of the teaching approaches that can be absolutely different in use and efficacy. Teachers' resistance to some approaches that are adopted from other academic environments can explain such variation to some extent (Bain & McNaught, 2006). The level of users' comfort in implementing the new technology is a determining factor in using computers in approaches like CALL (Carballo-Calero, 2001). A view hold by older teachers is that if teachers does not have enough experience in using technology in teaching, they are not prepared to use such approaches properly and efficiently. In spite of the fact that all essential teaching tools are available, some teachers are not able to properly implement the tool to their particular classroom. Consequently, teachers' attitudes will be transmitted to the students. Actually, if the negative attitude is transmitted to the students, it may affect the efficacy of technology using trend (Bain & McNaught, 2006).

According to a number of studies teachers' attitudes toward CALL predicts computer technology acceptance and usage in the process of language learning (Koohang, 1989; Selwyn, 1997). This shows that end-users attitudes toward technology is a major factor at the early stages of technology implementation The current study was based on this significant need.

The impact of CALL and EFL students' attitudes towards CALL is investigated by many researchers (Afshari, Ghavifekr, Siraj & Jing, 2013; Başöz & Çubukçu, 2014; Kılıçkaya & Seferoğlu, 2013; Önsoy, 2004; Pirasteh, 2014; Zaini &Mazdayasna, 2014, as cited in Yazıcı & Uçar, 2017). Understanding the attitudes of students towards CALL might be beneficial for dealing with the problems that students may encounter in the process of language learning (Yazıcı & Uçar, 2017). Moreover, teachers' attitudes serve as a significant factor of how teachers feel about applying CALL in their instruction, and also their beliefs have a significant impact on the effectiveness of process of CALL implementation. They showed that those teachers who had positive attitudes seemed to be inclined to integrate technology more frequently in their instruction (Bolandifar et al, 2013).

A thorough review of literature indicates even though there are lots of papers published on the attitudes towards incorporating CALL into the process of language learning and teaching, but majority of these studies have addressed the learners' attitude toward CALL, and teachers' attitude towards CALL have not been fully considered. Moreover, to the best of the authors' knowledge, there is no paper published focusing on the difference between English and Russian language teachers' attitudes towards CALL. Therefore, this study attempted to fill this gap, and tries to investigate the English and Russian language teachers' attitudes towards technology use in classrooms, and shed lights on the possible differences between the attitudes of these two groups of teachers towards CALL.

 In order to conduct the study, the following research was raised:

Is there any significant difference between English and Russian language teachers in terms of their attitudes towards CALL?

It was also hypothesized that there is no significant difference between English and Russian language teachers in terms of their attitudes towards CALL.

2. Literature Review

Regarding the obvious significance of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), in most of teaching and learning settings, people who are engaged in these settings are trying to use different available instruments as a resource for enhancing the quality of learning or teaching (Sarıçoban, 2013).

Some studies suggest that the ability of using technology in educational settings has become a significant part of language teaching and language learning, because applying technology in these settings will surely affect teaching and learning in different ways (Stockwell, 2014; Levy & Hubbard, 2016). Additionally, in developing education, implementing technology is a significant strategy in teachers' viewpoints (Xu, Dong, & Jiang, 2017).

It is clear that computers were primarily used for calculations and mathematical concerns, but utilizing them in educational settings particularly language learning, revolutionized classrooms (Ghalami Nobar & Ahangari, 2012). Before early 1980s, there were 2 terms that used instead of CALL, Computer-assisted Instructions (CAI) and Computer-Assisted Language Instruction (CALI) (Ean, & Lee, 2016). Karakash and Ersoy (2011) stated that, for referring to the use of computers in learning and teaching English, the term CALL was developed for the first time in the early 1970s (as cited in Ghalami Nobar & Ahangari, 2012, p. 40). Our revolutionized world is the result of computer and the Internet which appeared in all human life dimensions and one of these dimensions is language learning which is also affected noticeably by computer technology so that CALL is present in different courses throughout the world (Mokhtari, 2013). Although teachers, scholars and learners have used technology in educational settings for a long time, using technology in language learning is novel for them (Yadegarfar, & Simin, 2016).

In their study Bilbatua and De Haro concluded that three facts have become clear regarding the use of technology in language teaching. Firstly, the more IT-skilled teachers are, the more they use CALL and the happier they are with the use of computer-assisted instruction in their teaching; likewise, their students enjoy CALL more. Secondly, if we want to make sure that our students take CALL on board and use these resources, we have to give these exercises certain weighting in the final mark. Finally, CALL does not work as well in languages because of the nature of the subject, resorting to the long-existing stereotype that languages are different (Bilbatua & de Haro, 2014).

Almost all of the teachers believed that integrating internet in English language classes will increase the motivation of students and make learning process more interesting for them. They tended to describe technology as a useful source for communicating with other people around the world in the target language. Moreover, they pointed out that through integrating technology, students will be able to access many authentic language materials which can stimulate them to learn better. Although they believed that using technology is appealing for students, but some of them complained that making control of students becomes difficult when they use the internet in their classes (Bolandifar, Noordin, Babashamsi, & Shakib, 2013).

There is a large volume of published studies describing the fact that implementing technology for instruction in classroom and students' learning depend heavily on the attitudes toward technology (Baek, Jones, Bulger, & Taliaferro, 2018; Christensen, 2002; Scherer, Tondeur, Siddiq, & Baran, 2018; Teo, 2006). On the other hand, attitude plays a crucial role in determining technology adoption success in teaching and learning process (Afshari, Ghavifekr, Siraj & Jing, 2013). Bullock (2004) carried out a study in which he revealed that the major enabling/disabling factor in adopting technology is the attitude of teachers. In the same way, other evidence reported that without positive attitude toward technology, teachers are not able to use it in their teaching process comfortably (Kersaint, Horton, Stohl, and Garofalo, 2003; Petko, Prasse, & Cantieni, 2018). Actually, users' positive attitudes toward any change in instruction can lead to a successful new practice in educational settings (Woodrow, 1992, as cited in Albirini, 2006). Moreover, teachers who possess a positive attitude toward CALL, are most likely to use technology in their teaching process (Abas, 1995; Ma, 2017; Liao, Chang, & Chan, 2018).

Due to the fact that the teachers' attitude toward CALL affects both the experience of teachers and the students, having positive attitude is crucial (Son, 2018). In fact, to achieve the purpose of implementing technology in classroom and benefit from CALL, first the focus should be on the positive

attitudes of teachers. Additionally, positive attitude leads teachers to learn necessary skills for computer-based activities in the classroom (Kluever, Lam, Hoffman, Green, & Swearinges, 1994).

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the positive attitude of students and teachers toward using technology in classroom (Al-Juhani's, 1991). Önsoy (2004), conducted a study in which he found that the attitude of students and teachers toward CALL is positive. As a matter of fact, in order to avoid teachers' resistance to perform technology-based activities in the classrooms, their attitude toward CALL should be positive (Watson, 1998, as cited in Albirini, 2006). According to some researchers (Abbott & Faris, 2000; Kumar & Kumar, 2003; Leem, & Sung, 2018) by integrating technology into the education world of teachers, negative attitudes toward CALL can be changed.

Roger (1995) pointed out that the way that teachers' attitude toward technology is changed largely depends upon the characteristics of the technology itself. He had mentioned some of the attributes of technology which seems to affect the acceptance of it. They are relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, observability, and trialibility. In this regard, Sooknanan (2002) did a study in Trinidad and Togo in which he found that between these five attributes, relative advantage, compatibility, and observability are exactly related to teachers' attitudes toward CALL but complexity is not related to teachers' attitudes at all.

Some scholars found that cultural and social norms in each society have a vital role in acceptance of a new technology (Rogers, 1995; Thomas, 1987). They claimed that the effect of people's cultural perceptions on their attitude is neglected in most of the studies. Li (2002) had investigated the effect of culture on students' technology use and the difference between Chinese and British students. He showed that students' culture played an important role in determining the Internet experience, attitudes, usage, and competence differences between Chinese and British students.

Teachers' computer competence is another factor that affects teachers' attitudes toward a new technology as well as computer attributes and cultural norms (Berner, 2003). In 2002, Al-Oteawi published a paper in which he described that because lacking computer skill and experience causes lack of confidence, it was the main reason for rejecting technology use by teachers. In other words, studies revealed that computer competence has a significant role in teachers' confidence in introducing technology to their process of teaching and consequently their attitude toward CALL (Berner, 2003; Na, 1993; Summers, 1990). Furthermore, in a recent study teacher perception of integrating technology in writing was investigated and it was revealed that the challenge of teachers in using technology is related to the limited access to computers and the time consuming nature of technology implementation (Regan, Evmenova, Schwartzer, Chirinos, & Hughes, 2019).

The other major factor affecting peoples' attitudes toward a new technology is computer access (Na, 1993). In a study that was carried out on Korean teachers by Na (1993), it was maintained that teachers' attitude toward computers is highly dependent on the level of computers' accessibility (home and school). He concluded that there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes toward computers and the level of accessibility to school computers, and number of computer resources in the school.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

Participants of the study are 52 Russian and 53 English teachers in different institutions in Iran. They are teaching English or Russian as foreign languages. Their ages are between 30 to 50. They all had language teaching experience ranging from 8 to 25 years, which means that they are experienced enough in language teaching. Apart from the hard copy of the questionnaire handed to the participants, an

electronic version of the questionnaire was also developed and sent to the language groups via telegram. The numbers of the participants given above, are the total number of the questionnaires backed to the researchers.

3.2. Instrumentation

The data collection instrument consists of a questionnaire, The Attitudes towards CALL Questionnaire designed by Vandewaetere & Desmet (2009). The reliability of the scale was calculated to be 0.80. The questionnaire consists of 20 items in Likert scale from 1 to 5(strongly disagree to strongly agree). Jalali and Ardebili (2013), translated the questionnaire into Persian and piloted it on 150 learners. The factor analysis was conducted, and the results were compared with Vandewaetere and Desmet (2009). The Cronbach's Alpha was estimated, and the results showed that the total Alpha was 0.81. the researchers distributed the questionnaire among the statistical population of the study. After the data collection procedure, the collected data were entered into SPSS 22 software.

4. Results

The main research question of the study was that; *is there any significant difference between English and Russian language teachers in terms of their attitudes towards CALL?*

In order to answer this research question and also to test the main hypothesis, the independent sample T-test was run using SPSS software. The results are discussed as follows:

Group Statistics

	teachers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
attitude	English	53	3.78	.547	.075
	Russian	52	2.89	.488	.067

As it could be seen in table.1, the mean scores of the two groups of the teachers are different. In order to see whether this difference is statistically significant, we need to report the results of the main table for **Independent Samples Test(table.2).**

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
attitude	Equal variances assumed	.126	.723	8.825	103	.000	.89
	Equal variances not assumed			8.834	102.086	.000	.89

As it is shown in the table.2, the Leven's test is not significant (p=0.723), which means that the main assumption for the T test is fulfilled, and the variances for the two groups are homogeneous. Therefore, we are in safe place to report the results of the T-test. Based on the data from table. 2, the difference between the mean scores of the Russian and English teacher is statistically significant (t (103) =8.825, p=0.000<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study is strongly rejected, and we can safely claim that there is a significant difference between English and Russian language teachers in terms of their attitudes towards CALL.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

It goes without saying that computers play an undeniable role in human life in general and in the life of teenagers in particular because this new generation uses new technologies more than others. This study was an attempt to shed lights on the possible difference between English and Russian language teachers in terms of their attitudes towards CALL. Based on the data analysis conducted in the results section, we concluded that there is a significant difference between the attitudes of these two groups of language teachers towards CALL. It was also concluded that, English teachers outperformed their Russian counterpart in their attitudes towards CALL, and had a more positive attitude toward incorporating technology into their teaching profession in comparison with Russian language teachers.

As it was acknowledged by the researchers, teachers' attitudes serve as a significant factor of how teachers feel about applying CALL in their instruction, and also their beliefs have a significant impact on the effectiveness of process of CALL implementation. They showed that those teachers who had positive attitudes seemed to be inclined to integrate technology more frequently in their instruction (Bolandifar et al, 2013). Therefore, the overall results of this study, which tells us about the positive attitudes towards CALL, by the two groups of language teachers, while being in the same vein with the current literature, could be a wakeup CALL for the language teachers, other than English, to be aware of the distance they have with English language teaching in terms of utilizing technology in their teaching.The results of the current study are in line with most of previous studies who demonstrated positive attitudes of teachers who perceived CALL as an effective and efficient tool for enhancing students' learning (Albirini, 2006; Bilbatua & Herrero de Haro, 2014; Gallardo del Puerto & Gamboa, 2009).

It was also revealed that the Russian language teachers' attitude towards using CALL in their teaching profession is slightly above the average, which stresses the current status of English language in comparison with other languages, and clarifying this fact that English is the lingua franca, and make use of any possibilities and facilities, including CALL, for helping the ELT profession. As it is said before, the more positive the teachers' attitudes toward CALL, the better they incorporate it in their language classes. So we can conclude that current status quo for CALL in ELT, is significantly different from other languages like Russian, and ELT profession is going to reach its hird phase of using CALL in language teaching, which is called integrated phase, while other languages are in the first phase of CALL which is the open phase (Bax, 2003).

The findings of the study could be useful for language teacher educators to include the advantageous of incorporating CALL in their lectures to motivate the teachers to use technology in language teaching. Another beneficial groups from the finding of this study are teacher education centers to be aware of the place of CALL in today's teaching and the attitudes of language teachers towards CALL, and therefore devote some units to make the student teachers familiar with the effects of using CALL in their professions. The same goes for the language departments in universities. They can also pave the way for using technology by language teachers, through learning the importance of CALL in language teaching and by language teachers, and, therefore, make CALL as a part of their language teaching syllabi.

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