Affordances and limitations of technology: Voices from EFL teachers and learners*

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Abstract

With the developments of new technologies appearing very quickly, the attention has been focused more on technology than learning. English centers and institutes have mostly been busy accommodating new programs and technologies and hence have not spent enough time to evaluate the CALL programs and technologies employed to find their affordances and limitations. The present study was an attempt to study the perceptions and evaluation of the Iranian EFL learners and teachers about CALL. To this end, 240 students and teachers of two big institutes in Iran where CALL is used in their English learning program participated in the study. The required data were collected through a mixed-method design. The results of data analysis showed that CALL can enhance language learning and English listening, reading, and writing skills. It can also increase students' motivation and interest in learning and their exposure to language. However, it cannot improve speaking skill well. It also causes technology addiction, lacks good standards and an interactive nature necessary for the development of communicative proficiency, and may give the confidence to the teachers that everything is prepared by CALL courseware designers and hence they may come unprepared. The present study argues that the mere focus on technological support is not adequate, and a pedagogical understanding of language teachers and learners new roles and identities in CALL environment should be developed.

Keywords: Computer Assisted Language Learning, evaluation, perception, language learning, language skills

Introduction

The effects and the presence of computer-based technologies can be seen and felt in all aspects of everyday life. Education in general and language learning in special are not among the exceptions. An array of computer programs, dictionaries, and e-materials are used to replace books and traditional materials and to assist language learning and teaching (Mokhtari, 2012; Tatiana Dina & Ciornei, 2013). Many unraveling attempts have also been made to integrate Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) to language learning curriculum to make language learning and teaching more interesting, effective, and convenient. Moreover, the number of the students, teachers, and centers using CALL is increasing around the world (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2003). CALL is, however, a young branch of applied linguistics, which needs to go too far to make its own identity and direction (Beatty, 2010).While society is making many uses of computer programs and the related technologies, education sector is lagging behind. Despite considering it as a panacea for language learning and teaching, CALL is still the Cinderella aspect of other issues in the field of language education (Jahromi & Salimi, 2013).

In developing countries such as Iran, more and more students enroll in English classes to satisfy the academic requirements or to enhance their communicative abilities. Traditional methods of teaching and classroom management are considered ineffective and boring by these learners. To solve this problem and hence to attract more students in the time of recession and inflation, English centers and institutes try to adapt their learning and teaching environments and pedagogies to be able to accommodate the latest technologies. It has put them in a kind of merry chase with the newest and the most attractive CALL programs to be the winner of this tight competition. However, in the midst of so many computer programs and technologies, it is essential to evaluate CALL programs to get a clear understanding of their weaknesses and strengths and hence give a direction to the future practice (Beatty, 2010). There are a number of studies (Mokhtari, 2012; Jahromi & Salimi, 2013) in the literature, which have tried to study language teachers and learners' attitudes toward CALL, few have, however, tried to study their perceptions and evaluation of it.

Review of the literature

Importance of CALL evaluation

Implementing CALL is not easy. Many decisions should be made regarding language and learning goals such as understanding the needs and goals of learners and selecting those aspects of language that should be worked on. When these decisions are clarified, decisions about methodological and pedagogical approaches should be made. Finally, appropriate technologies should be selected. As technologies should be selected based on learners' preferences, needs, and styles and also as different technologies require different ways of implementation, the last stage seems to be the most challenging one (Levy, 2006). It is not, however, the end. CALL designers and teachers should bear in mind that just working with technologies does not guarantee that everything works well. To make CALL effective and dynamic, evaluation is, therefore, deemed necessary. This will involve CALL designers in an interactive process of designing and redesigning their programs based on the feedback they get from their evaluation (Burston, 2006). McMurry (2012) argues that one way through which CALL programs can be evaluated is to examine CALL stakeholders (e.g., teachers and learners) evaluation of them. They can provide invaluable information for CALL courseware developers and designers. In recent years, efforts have mostly been made to catch up with the latest technologies which are appearing faster than ever; this has made those involved focus more on technology than on learners, teachers, learning, and the outcomes (Stockwell, 2010).

Importance of teachers' and students' perceptions and evaluation

Teachers and students are believed to form a kind of tacit knowledge, as put forth by Kumaravadivelu (2009), about what constitutes good teaching and learning, and what useful tools, activities, and practices are in this regard. Research suggests that this knowledge, which is also referred to as beliefs or perceptions, heavily influences their pedagogical practices, decisions, and actions in the classroom (Borg, 2003; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Mangubhai et al., 2004; Horwitz & Gregersen, 2002; Riley, 2009; Mohebi & Khodadadi, 2011). Riley (2009), for example, believes that language learners form perceptions about the nature of language and language learning based on their attitudes, experiences, and expectations. Differences in perceptions can

make language learners approach learning tasks differently despite their similarities in language proficiency. Students' perceptions or beliefs can be both realistic and unrealistic, which need to be addressed appropriately by teachers to be able to form a supportive and cooperative environment in the classroom (Riley, 2009). Understanding how learners perceive language and language learning is, consequently, of utmost importance because in this way teachers can raise their awareness about their students' perceptions of different activities and practices employed and then try to correct those perceptions which are inaccurate and unrealistic and to plan their pedagogies to embody those which are realistic and accurate (Mohebi & Khodadadi, 2011). Otherwise, there will be mistrust and reluctance on the part of students and ultimately a breakdown in learning and teaching (Riley, 2009).

Teachers' perceptions are also strong predictors of their decisions and classroom practices. Nation and Macalister (2010) believe that what teachers do is determined by their perceptions or beliefs. In the same vein, Williams and Burden (1997) state that "teachers deep-rooted beliefs about how languages are learned will pervade their classroom actions more than a particular methodology they are told to adopt or course book they follow" (p. 57). Likewise, Kagan (1992) states that teachers' instructions and practices reflect their perceptions and beliefs about language learning and teaching. Borg (2003), on the other hand, notes that teachers are considered as experts by their students because they are active agents in educational contexts, who make instructional decisions and choices based on their knowledge, thoughts, and perceptions. They can, consequently, affect their students' perceptions and beliefs (Riley, 2009). Riley (2009) further argues that if teachers and students' perceptions are consistent with each other learning is enhanced, otherwise there will be a clash between teachers and the students. Understanding teachers' perceptions and beliefs about different aspects of language learning and teaching is also of crucial importance.

Moreover, teachers and students' perceptions have roots in several sources such as (a) their past experiences, (b) their academic education, and (c) the feedback from peers. Self-evaluation, self-observation, and self-analysis are also essential elements in the formation of accurate perceptions. They may lead to a kind of change or modification to the

already formed perceptions or to a kind of denial of change (Kumaravadivelu, 2009). In the same fashion, the social cognitive theory states that a student's or a teacher's perceptions are products of a continuous interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and contextual factors. That is, a teacher s or a student's perceptions are shaped by factors such as the reinforcements experienced by him/her and/or by others, and his/her own perceptions, evaluation, and interpretation of the task and context (Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2009; Bembenutty & White, 2013). Understanding their perceptions and evaluation of different pedagogical practices such as CALL courseware can, consequently, give a clear direction to research and pedagogy.

Review of the affordances and limitations of CALL

CALL is believed to help language learners improve both receptive and productive skills. It is used and implemented in a variety of ways from mimicking a textbook and/or acting as a partner in the classroom to substituting the whole classroom procedure (Greenfield, 2003). Through CALL use and implementation, language learning is envisioned as a proactive, conscious, and cognitive endeavor in which the learner is encouraged to access and evaluate his or her own learning (Brown, 2007). It is, therefore, believed that CALL can create an educational environment which is social, active, contextual, engaging, and student-owned (Carmean & Haefner, 2002). It can also provide students with ample authentic materials, which are not easily accessible in traditional ways. Hence, CALL can facilitate language learning by increasing students' contact and exposure to the language through providing variety of authentic materials that can be reached and worked on with ease (Blake, 2011). In this way, CALL can bring variety to language classes to satisfy varied needs, interests, styles, and predispositions of language learners. Repetition is also another merit of CALL. Through CALL, materials and classes can repeatedly be reviewed by the learners. It can, therefore, help them to reinforce the learned materials. Reinforcement is an essential aspect of language learning which is usually missing in traditional systems (Brett, 1996).

Despite the above-mentioned affordances, CALL is reported to suffer from several limitations. The first problem is that CALL is costly for both learners and institutions. Institutions need to prepare appropriate space and ergonomic designs to implement CALL and

make it more efficient (Browne & Geritty, 2004). Learners also need to buy computers and the related technologies and to keep them updated; this may just be affordable by high-income levels of the society and by the educational elite, which is against the premises put forth by the followers of educational fairness (Gips, DiMattia, & Gips, 2004; Meyer et al., 2013). The next demerit or deterrent, as called by Jahromi and Salimi (2013), is the lack of motivation and/or acceptance for CALL on the part of language learners or teachers. This lack of acceptance or motivation for CALL has several reasons such as the lack of enough computer literacy, lack of sufficient technological training to guide teachers and students to use CALL appropriately, and the inadequacy of the existing CALL programs and materials. CALL programs also run on an artificial intelligence and hence cannot accommodate language learners' immediate needs and cannot deal with unexpected situations. They can just do what they are programmed for. Moreover, a computer cannot decide about the appropriateness of the language used by learners (Robinson, 2007; Roblyer, 2003; Van Braak, 2001; Robinson, 2007; Al-Kahtani, 2004; Warschauer, 1996). Another demerit of CALL is the lack of an interactive nature. CALL programs are usually used individually by learners, and, in this way, learners can just act within the repertoire of the existing situations and commands given to them. Through CALL programs, learners cannot, therefore, get involved in an open-ended interactive dialogue and receive the appropriate feedback as it happens in face to face conversations and negotiated interactions (Gündüz, 2005).

However, what affordances and limitations are attributed to CALL courseware in developing countries such as Iran has received little attention.

Research questions

Given these preliminary considerations, the present study is an effort to study the Iranian EFL teachers and learners' perceptions and evaluation of CALL courseware they receive. It seeks the answers to the following questions:

1. Is CALL effective for language learning in general and language skills in particular based on the Iranian EFL teachers and learners' perceptions and evaluation?

2. Is there a difference between the perceptions and evaluation of the Iranian EFL teachers and learners?

3. What weaknesses are attributed to CALL by the Iranian EFL teachers and learners?

Method

Participants

The sample of the study included 240 participants comprising 183 students and 57 English teachers from two big and famous institutes in Iran. The students participated in this study were learning English at the adult department in different levels from elementary to advanced. Their age ranged from 16 to 29. The majority of the teachers were also female. Their age ranged from 22 to 45. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants in this study. The teachers and the students of these institutes were selected because they were learning and teaching English with computers at the time of the study.

Table 1 *Participants' characteristics*

	Teachers	Students
Number	57	183
Male	23	51
Female	34	132
Age	22-45	16-29
Education	B.A to Ph.D.	Diploma to Ph.D.

Computer-mediated programs at the institutes

As mentioned, the participants of the study were the teachers and English learners from two famous institutes in Isfahan, Iran where CALL and the related technologies were used in their programs. To receive the online English instructions, the students logged into the website of the institute. The online program was procedural, meaning that learners could not go to the next step unless the first one was completed successfully. For each part, at first, the learners were provided with a form of warm-up, which was usually in the form of

some multiple-choice items to be answered. Then the system checked the answers and let the students receive the task itself. The students could receive variety of tasks, activities, and exercises on listening, reading, writing, grammar, and speaking. Finally, students were given some more multiple-choice items or some essay-type questions to be answered and mailed to the teacher. Moreover, students could chat with other students online. Students could also receive some DVDs that included some e-materials and soft-wares to be worked on individually if they thought they needed extracurricular activities.

Instruments

Data elicitation was done by the use of a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire and one open-ended question. To develop the questionnaire, at first, some questions were made based on the studies done in the literature about the merits and demerits of CALL and were given to a group of experienced English teachers and English learners. These questions asked them about the effectiveness of CALL programs they had experienced for language learning in general and each English skill in particular. Finally, based on the responses to these questions and available information in the literature, 33 response categories with the anchor points of 1= strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree were developed. The questionnaire was divided into five major parts which asked the participants about the effectiveness of CALL for: (a) language learning in general (15 items), (b) listening skill (5items), (c) speaking skill (5items), (d) reading comprehension (4items), and (e) writing skill (4items). To minimize the measurement errors, the questionnaire was translated into Farsi, the participants' native language (Brown, 2001).

To check the content validity of the questionnaire and the accompanying open-ended question which asked the students and the teachers about their perceived problems of CALL in English learning, it was reviewed by 6 experts in the field and the necessary changes were made based on their validation. It was also given to a group of 20 English teachers and 85 English learners which were comparable to the participants of the study to check its reliability, and the following index was obtained. As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's Alpha is bigger than 0.7 for both the teachers and the students, which exceeds the recommended minimum value of 0.6.

Table 2 *Reliability statistics of the questionnaire*

Cronbach's Alpha		N of Items
Teachers	0.721	33
Students	0.879	33

In order to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the Kaiser˚ Meyer˚ Olkin Measure Of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were calculated. The KMO was found to be 0.6 (KMO= 0.641 > 0.6) which exceeds the recommended minimum value of 0.6. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant ($^2 =$ 1.372), supporting the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Then factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. The results indicated that the 33 items fit into the five main parts hypothesized.

Table 3 *Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.641
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1.372
	Sig.	0.000

After getting the necessary permissions and observing the related ethical issues, the participants were given 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire during the class time preceded by a brief explanation of the purpose and nature of the study. The participants were asked to read the questionnaire through and evaluate each statement based on the choices available. For the open-ended question, they were asked to provide their feedback in the space provided. After the completion of the instrument, the questionnaires were collected by the researcher for the data analysis.

Results

The data were prepared for analysis and then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviations were used to describe the responses to the questionnaire. Moreover, to examine the possible differences between the responses of language teachers and learners, a number of Mann-Whitney U tests or T-tests were performed.Table 4 represents the descriptive statistics for the responses of the teachers and the students to different parts of the questionnaire. The highest mean in Table 4 for both the teachers and the students belongs to listening, meaning that in their perceptions CALL is very effective for the development of listening skill. Speaking, however, has the lowest mean, which shows that both the teachers and the students thought CALL cannot develop speaking skill well.

The frequency of and the differences between the participants' responses to each part of the questionnaire are given separately in the following parts. For the sake of simplicity, the data obtained from different parts of the questionnaire are summarized in the following tables. The first column of each table presents the Likert scale values (from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) and the numbers in the second and the third columns show the percent of the teachers and the students who selected those scales. The second part of each table, however, examines the possible differences between the responses.

Table 4 *Descriptive statistics for the responses to the questionnaire*

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.
Teachers	Learning	2.00	4.50	3.443	.572
	Listening	2.00	5.00	4.233	.768
	Speaking	1.25	5.00	3.208	.933
	Reading	2.50	4.75	3.658	.764
	Writing	2.25	5.00	3.925	.768
	Total	2.10	4.09	3.213	.446
Students	Learning	1.40	4.50	3.194	.659
	Listening	2.25	5.00	4.005	.756
	Speaking	1.00	5.00	3.036	.846
	Reading	1.00	5.00	3.600	.779
	Writing	1.00	5.00	3.647	.870
	Total	1.35	3.95	3.006	.502

The effectiveness of CALL in English learning

As shown in Table 5, around 73 % of the teachers and 60 % of the students selected the anchor points of either agree or strongly agree for the items existing in the learning part of the questionnaire, showing that the majority of the participants believed that CALL can enhance language learning in general. The second part of Table 5 examines if there was a meaningful difference between the responses of the students and the teachers to this part of the questionnaire. A Mann-Whitney U Test indicated that there was no meaningful difference between their responses to the items available in this part, $U = 104.6$, $p = .065$.

Therefore, the teachers and the students of this study had almost similar perceptions of the effectiveness of CALL for English learning, and thought that through CALL: (1) classes are less stressful and more enjoyable (items 1 and 2), (2) materials are varied, and more accessible (items 3 and 4), (3) learning is better and faster (items 5 and 6), (4) less time is needed by the teachers for teaching and giving instructions, and hence more time is spent on language use (items 7 and 8), (5) learning is done more autonomously and more independently (items 9 and 10), (6) students are better involved, more motivated, and more self-initiative (items 11 and 12), (7) there is more chance for repetition and language use, which are key elements in language learning(items 13 and 14); and (8) language elements are learned more appropriately because there is a richer and more varied context available (item 15).

Table 5 *Frequency of and the differences between the responses to the learning part*

	Frequency of the responses		The differences between the responses			
	Teachers	Students	Institute	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Percent	Percent	Teachers	57	70.63	2119.00
1	3.3	4.4	Students	183	57.12	5141.00
2	15.3	24.05	Total	240		
	8.1	11.4	Mann-Whitney U	104.6		
	63.3	51.1	Z	-1.845		
	10.0	8.9	p	.065		

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no idea, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree.

The effectiveness of CALL for the improvement of English listening
Table 6 represents the results of the analysis of the responses of the teachers and the students to the listening part of the questionnaire, which asked their perceptions of the effectiveness of CALL for the improvement of English listening. Around 93% of the teachers and 86% of the students selected agree or strongly agree for the items available in this part. It shows that in their perception, CALL can improve English listening to a great extent. As shown in Table 6, the Mann-Whitney U Test indicated that there was no meaningful difference between their responses to the items available in this part, $U = 1.207$, $p = .384$.

They, therefore, believed that CALL can provide them with: (1) varied accents (item 1), (2) audios and videos on more varied topics (item 2), and (3) better and more chances for the improvement of their listening by providing them with the options such as recording the audio parts, listening to the audio parts again and again, and accessibility to the background knowledge through the access to the internet and different dictionaries and soft wares available (items 3, 4, and 5), which are of great importance in the development of listening proficiency.

Table 6 *Frequency of and the differences between the responses to the listening part*

	Frequency of the responses		The differences between the responses			
	Teachers	Students	Institute	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Percent	Percent	Teachers	57	65.27	1958.00
1	1.3	0	Students	183	58.91	5302.00
2	3.3	8.2	Total	240		
	2	5.1	Mann-Whitney U	1.207		
	33.3	45.6	Z	-.871		
	60.0	41.1	p	.384		

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no idea, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree.

The effectiveness of CALL for the improvement of English speaking

While CALL was considered to be effective for the improvement of listening proficiency, it was somehow considered ineffective for the improvement of speaking proficiency based on the results of the analysis shown in Table 7. Around 53% of the teachers and 60% of the students selected either disagree or strongly disagree for the items available in the speaking part of the questionnaire. The results of Mann-Whitney U test shown in the second part of Table 7 also showed that there was no meaningful difference between the teachers and students responses to the items available in this part, $U = 1.104$, $p = .133$.

Both the students and the teachers, therefore, believed that speaking skill, which is an important skill in language learning, cannot be developed well based on their experience of CALL use. They thought that CALL cannot develop speaking well because: (1) there are fewer chances for face to face communication and negotiated interactions in which they can have a meaningful task and talk rather than react and respond (items 1, 2 and 3) and (2) most CALL activities require more reading and writing skills than speaking and when speaking is required it is brief and short (items 4 and 5).

Table 7 *Frequency of and the differences between the responses to the speaking part*

	Frequency of the responses		The differences between the responses			
	Teachers	Students	Institute	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Percent	Percent	Teachers	57	68.68	2060.50
1	10.0	16.7	Students	183	57.77	5199.50
2	43.3	43.3	Total	240		
3	17.1	18.3	Mann-Whit	1.104		
4	23.2	16.6	Z	-1.504		
5	6.3	5.1	p	.133		

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no idea, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree.

The effectiveness of CALL for the improvement of English reading
Reading like listening is also believed to be developed well via CALL. As shown in Table 8, around 70% of the teachers and 80% of the students rated either agree or strongly agree for the items available in this part. The results of Mann-Whitney U test also showed that there was no meaningful difference between the responses of the teachers and the students $U = 1.380, p = .843$. The participants of the study, therefore, believed that CALL can enhance reading comprehension because it can provide them with: (1) lots of varied and interesting reading materials (items 1 and 2), (2) variety of reading tasks (item 3), and (3) accessibility to the meaning of unknown words and expressions (item 4).

Table 8 *Frequency of and the differences between the responses to the reading part*

Frequency of the responses		The differences between the responses			
Teachers	Students	Institute	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Percent	Percent	Teachers	57	61.58	1847.50
1	0	3.2	Students	183	60.14	5412.50
2	19.6	10.7	Total	240		
3	7.6	7.2	Mann-Whitney U	1.318		
4	36.7	56.7	Z	-.198		
5	36.7	22.2	p	.843		

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no idea, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree.

The effectiveness for the improvement of English writing
For the writing skill, teachers were, however, more positive than the students. As represented in Table 9, around 90% of the teachers and 72% of the students selected either agree or strongly agree for the existing items. The results of Independent Samples T-test also showed that there was a meaningful difference between the responses of the

teachers and the learners to this part, t (238) = 1.556, p = .122; the teachers responses to this part were significantly more positive.

Both the teachers and the students believed that CALL can provide them with: (1) better and varied writing activities compared to traditional classes (items 1 and2), (2) immediate feedback on the misspelling and structural problems (item3), and (3) immediate access to the topical knowledge needed by the writing tasks (item4).

Table 9 Frequency of and the differences between the responses to the writing part

	Teachers	Students	The results of Independent Samples T-test			
	Percent	Percent				
1	0	3.3	t	df	p	Mean Difference
2	5.5	9.3				
3	4.3	14				
4	50.0	44.4				
5	40.0	28.9	1.556	238	.122	.27778

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no idea, 4 = agree, 5= strongly agree.

The responses to the open-ended question

The open-ended question asked the participants to write down any problems they thought CALL had for language learning based on their experience of CALL use. The participants' responses were collected and then analyzed separately for the teachers and the students. The focus in this part was on finding the limitations which had not already been reported in the literature by previous researchers. Besides those old problems mentioned earlier in the literature such as the high cost of computers and soft wares and lack of enough technical knowledge and support, there were some thought-provoking problems stated by the teachers and the students. Around 43% of the students reported that CALL and the related technologies can cause a kind of technology addiction. They believed that they were addicted to their English soft wares, disks, and online programs, and they did not feel good if they could not have access to them. More interestingly, some believed that English learning would be very boring without them. Other serious

problems reported by the students are lack of high standards and seriousness in CALL programs compared to traditional classes. They also believed that students sometimes waste a lot of time to go through the whole programs to see what is out there; this is not usually done with traditional books and materials.

Teachers also believed that CALL gives them a sort of false confidence that everything is prepared and planned for, and they do not need to spend as much time as they spend to get prepared for their traditional classes, and in this way the quality of their instruction is decreased. The teachers also believed that the interaction between students and teachers is decreased through CALL, and in this way students' hidden problems such as pronunciation problems and the use of wrong strategies and techniques cannot be recognized and fixed. Both the teachers and the students believed that communicative abilities can be developed better in traditional classes.

Taken together, the responses to the open-ended question can suggest that:(1) CALL can cause technology addiction; (2) the existing CALL programs lack high standards, and sometimes students can do the related activities without enough concentration; (3) students sometimes waste a great deal of time surfing the whole online programs, and contents of the disks; (4) teachers do not get enough; preparation because of the wrong confidence given to them by CALL, (5) students' hidden language problems cannot be recognized and planned for; and (6) students' communicative abilities do not grow well through CALL programs.

Discussion and conclusion

The findings of the present study show that based on the Iranian EFL teachers and students' perceptions and evaluation, CALL is advantageous for language learning in general. Based on their experience of using CALL, it can be inferred that: (1) CALL can increase students' motivation, involvement, autonomy, independence and self-confidence; (2) learning through CALL can be more enjoyable, faster, and better, and varied topics, materials, and activities can be presented to the students. In this way, students will be more exposed to the language; (3) the same materials can be taught and understood in less amount of time compared to traditional classes; (4) students also have the chance of reviewing a part or the whole class procedures or

materials; and (5) through CALL, listening, reading, and writing skills can be better improved because of the rich context, variety of topics, tasks, and exercises and the immediate access to the topical knowledge provided by CALL.

However, CALL based on the perceptions and evaluation of the participants of the present study has the following problems and weaknesses: (1) speaking which is considered to be an important skill and for some the target of language learning cannot be improved well compared to traditional classes due to the lack of face to face communication and negotiated interactions; (2) CALL can cause technology addiction, which is a modern social problem. It, in turn, can cause students to aimlessly go through the materials, disks, and related websites. This can take and waste their time; (3) CALL has lower standards compared to traditional classes which can affect students' accuracy; and (4) CALL programs also give teachers the wrong confidence that everything is prepared by CALL designers and they may go to the class less prepared or unprepared which can affect the quality of their teaching.

The results of the present study in line with the studies done in the literature (Carmean & Haefner, 2002; Beaty, 2010; Blake, 2011 Mokhtari, 2012; Tatiana Dina & Ciornei, 2013) further prove that CALL can enhance language learning in general. One reason based on the results of this study is that CALL can bring variety to language classes; this can provide learners with opportunities to work on materials and activities that are based on their predispositions. Experts (Tomlinson, 2010; Armstrong, 2009; Visser et al., 2006) believe that students are varied in terms of needs, styles, and intelligences and to make the class more interesting and to make the students more motivated and involved, variety of activities and tasks should be used in the class. The results of the present study also showed that CALL can increase language learners' motivation and interest. Motivation and interest are considered to be important elements that can fuel language learners to overcome their language learning problems (Brown, 2014).

The results of the present study, however, showed that speaking proficiency cannot be improved via CALL. This is because CALL programs do not involve language learners in negotiated interactions. Kumaravadivelu (2009) believes that students need to choose topics

and talk rather than answer and respond. He believes that there are two types of activities: (a) activities that draw learners' attention to the form, make some structural elements salient, and help learners to internalize them and (b) activities that focus learners' attention on the negotiation of meaning and interactional modifications. Unfortunately, CALL programs rarely involve the latter. Consequently, instead of being in a kind of merry chase with the newest technology, CALL courseware designers should focus on finding appropriate computer-mediated tasks and activities such as scaffolding instruction that can cause language learners to have meaningful interactions.

Teachers also need to bear in mind that CALL should not be considered as a substitute for the whole class and the teaching process (Cowie & Sakui, 2013). Rather it should be used when it can improve the quality of language learning and language skills as with listening, reading, and writing skills in the present study and should not be used or should be complemented with other activities when it has limitations as with the speaking skill in this study. Actually, novice teachers should know that using CALL does not mean that everything should be changed radically, and that CALL is a tool that can direct teachers, students, and the whole learning and teaching process. It should, however, be viewed as an option that can be employed when it can change the classes for the better (Cowie & Sakui, 2013). Second, Comas-Quinn (2011) contends that CALL transforms teachers identity and roles as they move from traditional classroom-based teaching to online teaching. To support this transformation, focusing on just technological literacy is not adequate. Rather, teachers require to develop a sort of pedagogical understanding of this new instructional medium and their new roles and identities. As such, besides technical training and support, which are deemed essential based on the results of the previous studies (Jahromi & Salimi, 2013; Robinson, 2007; Roblyer, 2003; Van Braak, 2001), regular meetings can be held with students and teachers in which they can reflect on their experience with CALL and receive consultation from experienced teachers and staff. In this way, both teachers and students would know when and how to use CALL to receive the most optimum result. Self-regulation techniques can also be helpful in all educational settings especially in CALL programs (Vohs & Baumeister, 2011). Self- regulation techniques

based on these researchers include some techniques that involve students in setting goals, evaluating and monitoring academic progress, setting a good plan, choosing an appropriate place, and avoiding distractors. By employing these techniques, language learners would be able to get rid of the distractors and lack of seriousness caused by CALL.

Finally, Warschauer (2004) believes that every technology can reshape how human beings act and think. He also suggests that in designing CALL, we should not only pay attention to the classroom but also to the social context it forms. It means that the widespread use of CALL in language education can reshape the ideas about what language learning and teaching are. Therefore, if the above-mentioned problems are not dealt with, speaking may give its position to reading and listening due to the nonexistence of an interactive nature in CALL tasks to develop it, and lower standards will be set and accepted for language classes, which may lower the quality of language learning and teaching (Brown, 2007).

Like any comprehensive attempt to aggregate data, the present study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the present study examined only teachers and language learners perceptions and evaluation about CALL. Nonetheless, McMurry (2012) argues that CALL has other stakeholders such as parents and courseware designers as well. This study failed to examine their perceptions. Second, this study did not test how the teachers and the students perceive their roles as language teachers and learners in computer-mediated courses. This, according to Comas-Quinn (2011), can have determining effects on how CALL programs are implemented successfully. Finally, this study failed to examine the effects of different computer-mediated tasks such as task repetition (Amiryousefi, 2016) or new approaches such as flipped and blended learning (Chen Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2016) on EFL learners language learning and development.

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