

Self-learning and Motivation Effectiveness for L2 Learners through Using (CALL)

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Abstract: *This study aims to explore the effectiveness of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in promoting L2 learners' self-learning and motivation. The participants of this study are a randomly selected group of L2 learners attending English Language Training Program (EL). Their levels of proficiency range from beginner to advanced in order to ensure that they have had adequate exposure to English. Data were collected by circulating a 22-item survey consisting of two sections. The first section consists of eleven items that aim to identify the role of CALL in promoting participants' self-learning strategies, whereas the second section consists of eleven items that investigate the extent to which the participants' motivation has increased/decreased with the impact of CALL. Data were analyzed descriptively by looking at the participants' responses to the questionnaire in order to pinpoint any potential themes or patterns concerning the impact of CALL on promoting the two independent variables under study. The findings indicated that CALL contributes to increasing L2 learners' motivation fairly whereas promote their self-learning significantly.*

Key Words: computer-assisted language learning (CALL), self-learning, learner autonomy, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) has emerged in L2 learning and teaching contexts during the 1960s. CALL refers to a computer-delivered form of teaching and learning which involves educational means including, yet not limited to, elements-text, audio, graphics, pictures, images, animations, and video (AL-Hashash, 2007). The diversity of learning through using CALL has evolved during the last decade. Beatty (2013) argues that when L2 learners are engaged in CALL-mediated games, such games, if utilized effectively, will provide them with entertaining and motivating learning environments that will ultimately contribute to supporting their learning achievement. To illustrate, instructor can activate some applications that contributes in students learning such as Quizlet, which is a platform where students can compete to get the higher score by learning for example vocabulary through matching pictures with words. Other example, Duolingo app includes tens of languages that learners can learn in a reductively way which the

developers added to simplify learners' learning, additionally, the diver methods of learning between grammar, vocabulary, speaking, translation...etc.

Technologies are considered an effective way for encouraging students to learn another language (Chapelle, 2003; Reiners, et al. 2005). Therefore, researchers discussed the effectiveness of CALL in increasing L2 learner motivation by giving different perspectives. Warschauer (1996) for example, emphasized that CALL enhance L2 learner motivation because it provides access to the internet. This way allow learners to communicate with native speakers. Furthermore, the researcher asserted that CALL encourages learners to engage in a wide range of online activities, and it enables them to "feel they have more control of their learning and more opportunities to practice English" (p.9).

Statement of Problems

Many L2 learners have to be educated and aware of selecting appropriate, reliable and authentic language learning E-material, in order to enhance their self-learning. However, their L2 learning will not be promoted as they expected and they will lose their motive to learn. Another matter, learners need occasionally guidance from instructors to point out and assist them to search for E-materials and to teach them how to cope them.

Research Questions

- 1 What extent does CALL promote L2 learners' self-learning and autonomy?
2. How does CALL motivate or demotivate L2 learners?

Significant of the Study

The efficacy of using CALL in classrooms for teachers, professional, or curriculum developers is beneficial and important to develop learners L2 learning. Since, many language-teaching applications developed to facilitate learning process for groups and individuals. Therefore, CALL is considered a helpful tool to promote L2 learning, additionally, an effective motivation for learners to continue the learning process and improve their L2.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants are 17 (nine female & eight male students) ESL learners attending English Language Training Program (EL). Their levels of proficiency range from beginner (2), low-intermediate (12), upper-intermediate (1), and advanced (2), and their age ranges from (17 to 30). Their countries of origins are: Saudi Arabia (10), Kuwait (1), Oman (1), China (3), Taiwan (1), and Japan (1). Yet, for quantity constraints, I have decided to analyze the data of the intermediate participants (13) so that accurate conclusions can be drawn.

Research Design and Tools

The research method is mixed (qualitative & quantitative). Accordingly the data were collected through two different ways. First, having obtained the participants' consent to participate in the study, a 22-item questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher, was sent to their emails. To ensure that they understand the study well, the participants were provided with examples of CALL-mediated instructions at the beginning of the questionnaire. Moreover, the questionnaire was sent to one of the teachers of the EL Training Program to help recruit more participants. Second, I met with one of EL Training Program teachers who helped me explain the questionnaire to the participants. Out of the 13 students attending that class, only did eleven respond to the questionnaire. The remaining six responses of the study were sent to me at another day via email.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The past few decades have witnessed a paradigm shift from teacher- to student-centered education where students are more involved in the educational process (Nunan, 1988; Brown, 2007; Benson, 2013). This has resulted in promoting student self-learning. One noteworthy issue is that self-learning does not mean the role of teacher is neglected; rather, s/he can model and scaffold the activity for students. Research has documented that various forms and programs of CALL have been seen key to reinforcing L2 self-learning (Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Levy, 2009; Chapelle, 2008; Benson, 2013). For example, having free and ubiquitous access to various forms of CALL provides L2 learners with an infinite number of language resources.

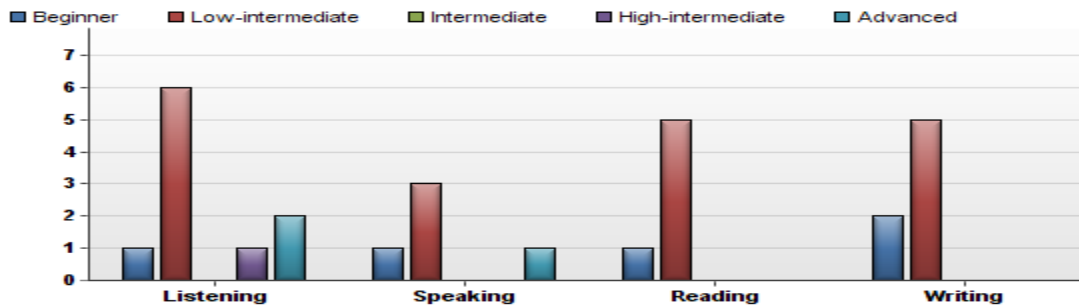
Nonetheless, selecting “the most suitable for them and to have the ability to use them appropriately” develops L2 learners' knowledge and skills to “identify their learning needs, plan their learning, and monitor their progress” (Thomas, Reinders & Warschauer, 2012 p. 361). This knowledge reflects a higher level of L2 learners' self-learning strategies and skills. Moreover, CALL-based instruction contributes to creating an independent-oriented learning environment where L2 learners can develop their independent learning (Benson, 2013). For example, when engaged in computer-based activities, L2 learners can continue carrying out these tasks outside the classroom, which allows them to develop their own self-regulated learning strategies (Benson, 2013). This will also enable them to practice their L2 anytime and from anywhere, which will ensure maintaining continuous self-regulated L2 learning.

Furthermore, CALL plays an integral role in promoting learners' motivation to learn another language in several ways (Lumley & Bailey, 1991; Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Warschauer, 1996; Beatty, 2013). There are several reasons accounting for this great role. For example, Thaipakdee (1992) found that there is a statistically significant correlation between e-mail correspondence and students' increased motivation. In the same vein, Beauvoi (1994) found that emails motivate L2 learners to practice a second language with their peers. Moreover, based on the factor analysis of a 30-question survey that was circulated 12 university academic writing courses in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the U.S. to explore 167 ESL and EFL learners' attitudes towards CALL, Warschauer (1996) lists three key benefits of how CALL increases L2 learners'

motivation as: 1) it allows them to communicate with native speakers effectively, 2) when engaged in extensively computerized activities, L2 learners “feel they have more control of their learning and more opportunities to practice English”, and finally, CALL improves L2 learners’ affective factors by helping them boost their “personal power”, and making it “less threatening to contact people” (p. 9). Therefore, learners are motivated to use CALL for their learning according to its role in promoting their L2 performance.

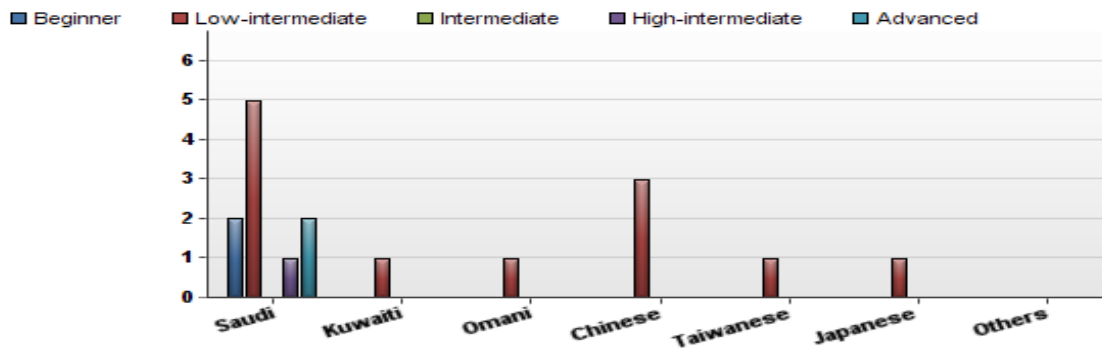
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings¹:



Graph (1) Participants’ Levels of English Proficiency

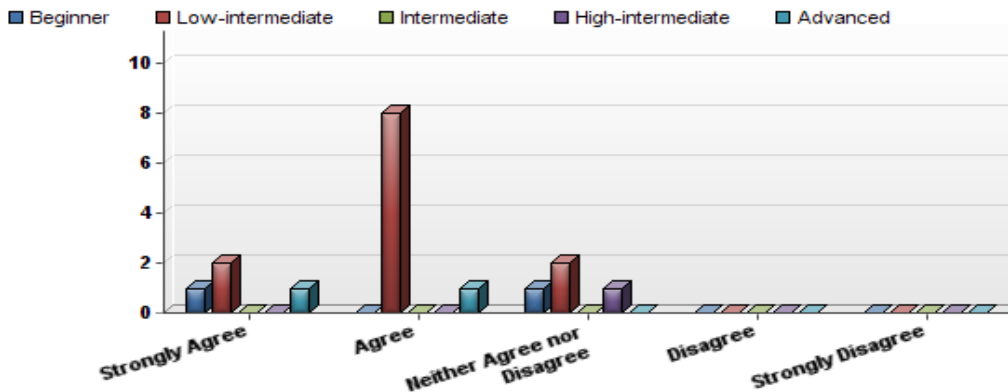
Before discussing the findings of this study, it is in a paramount of importance to provide the reader with some introductory questions about which the participants were asked. As shown in graph (1) above, one of the salient questions that the participants were asked was: What language skills have you ever learned via CALL? It appears that the participants have utilized CALL in learning listening, reading, and writing more as opposed to speaking, an interesting finding about which I wish I had interviewed them.



Graph (2) Participants’ Countries of Origin

Another key question, though not related to our research questions, was participants’ country of origin. This is because unlike China, Japan, and Taiwan, Middle Eastern countries are likely to lack using CALL at their schools. Hence, I found it interesting to identify any potential correlation between country of origin and using CALL. The findings, as shown in graph (2), indicated that 61.5% of the intermediate participants (N=8) are Middle Easterners while the remaining 48.5% are Asians (N=5).

The Impact of CALL on Increasing L2 Learners’ Motivation



Graph (3) Participants’ Attitudes towards the role of CALL in increasing their motivation

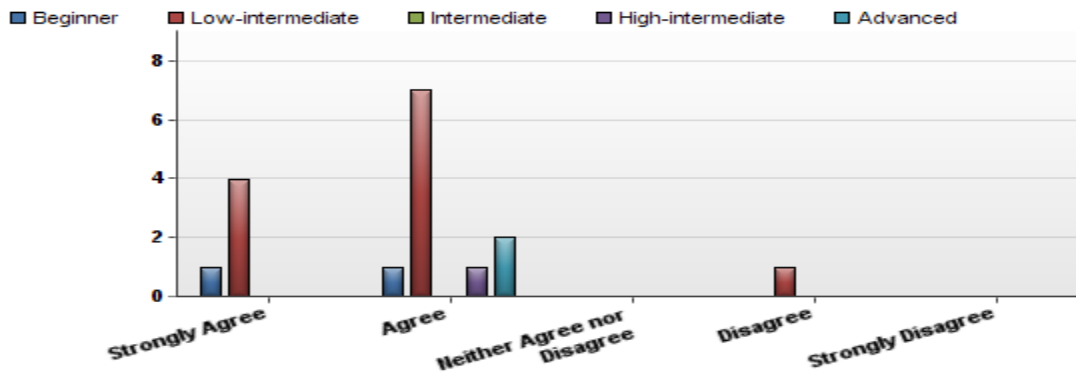
Graph (3) shows that eight out of thirteen agreed that CALL is useful for increasing their motives to learn English. This suggests that, as it can do so during intermediate stage, CALL can meet L2 learners’ levels of proficiency. Moreover, language and culture are seen inseparable in L2 learning. The findings revealed that four of the participants’ strongly agreed that CALL encourages them to learn about and grasp the target culture, eight agrees, and one was uncertain. This implies that CALL can be a key factor of promoting L2 learners’ motivation, as it integrates L2 cultural components.

#	Answer	Low-intermediate	Intermediate	High-intermediate
1	Strongly Agree	0	0	0
2	Agree	3	0	1
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	0	0
4	Disagree	3	0	0
5	Strongly Disagree	4	0	0

Table (1) Participants’ views about the impact of CALL on promoting interaction with native speakers

On the other hand, although Warschauer (1996) argues that CALL allows L2 learners to communicate with native speakers effectively, the participants asserted that it does not play a vital

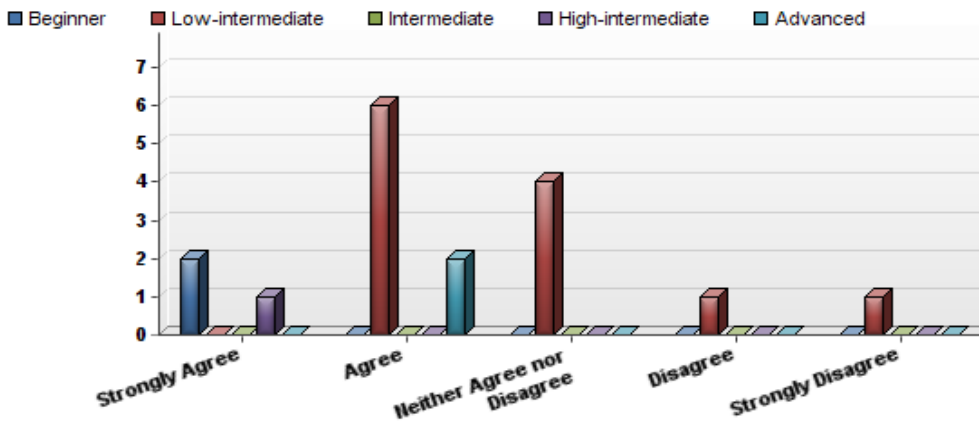
role in promoting such interactions inside and outside classrooms. Statistically speaking, table (1) above shows that almost four of the participants strongly disagreed that CALL afford them an opportunity to interact with native or non-native speakers effectively, three disagree, two were uncertain, and only three agreed. Nonetheless, this might be ascribed to CALL-irrelevant factors such as participants' personalities of social interactions.



Graph (4) Participants' attitudes towards the role of CALL in facilitating L2 learning.

However, one of the questions that have received a relative consensus among the participants is the extent to which CALL facilitated L2 learning by means of providing them with effective activities and constructive and immediate feedback. In other words, graph (5) shows that out of the thirteen intermediate participants, almost four of them strongly agreed that CALL facilitates L2 learning, provides interesting activities, and generates immediate feedback, seven agree, while only one participant disagree. Such finding implies that, at least based on this population, CALL is an effective form of language learning that provides L2 learners will almost all aspects of necessary language learning such as making learning easier, engaging learners in interesting activities, and correcting their language mistakes with the help of accurate computer-generated feedback.

Paradoxically, the participants argued that CALL does not appear to contribute to helping them internalize the target language cultural communications. This is an interestingly contradicting finding in that how come CALL does not help the participants interact with native speakers and it yet contributes to providing them with an opportunity to learn and understand the target culture. This can be attributed to the assumption that technologies can provide L2 learners with several embedded cultural aspects of the target language that are not yet necessarily relevant to interaction factors (Levy, 2009). I believe such a question requires a second round of data collection (i.e. interviews) to obtain a broader insight into it.



Graph (5) Participants’ attitudes towards CALL ability in introducing integrated-skills activities.

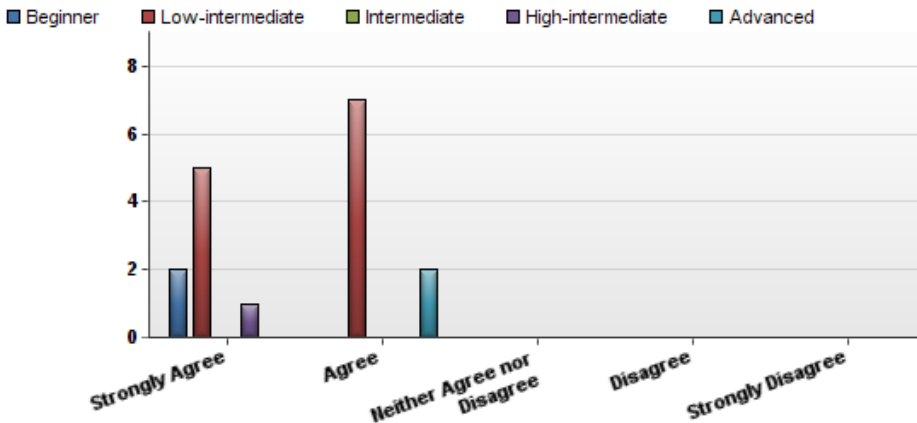
One of the motivational benefits of CALL is providing L2 learners with “integrated skills-based and communicative practice” (Fotos & Browne, 2004, p. 9). The findings are yet inconsistent with that of Fotos and Browne (2004). That is, only half of the participants did agree that CALL is efficient for integrating the four skills into one activity, while the other participants were uncertain (4), disagreed (1), or strongly disagreed (1). This question should however receive relatively similar responses (either agreeing or disagreeing), as the literature reports that CALL is effective in providing L2 learners with integrated skills-based activities (e.g. Levy, 1997; Garrett, 2009). I expected that most of the participants would find CALL either effective or ineffective in this regard rather having four participants uncertain about it.

#	Answer	Low-intermediate	Intermediate	High-intermediate
1	Strongly Agree	1	0	0
2	Agree	3	0	1
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	7	0	0
4	Disagree	0	0	0
5	Strongly Disagree	1	0	0

Table (2) Participants’ views of whether CALL can integrate language skills together for motivational purposes

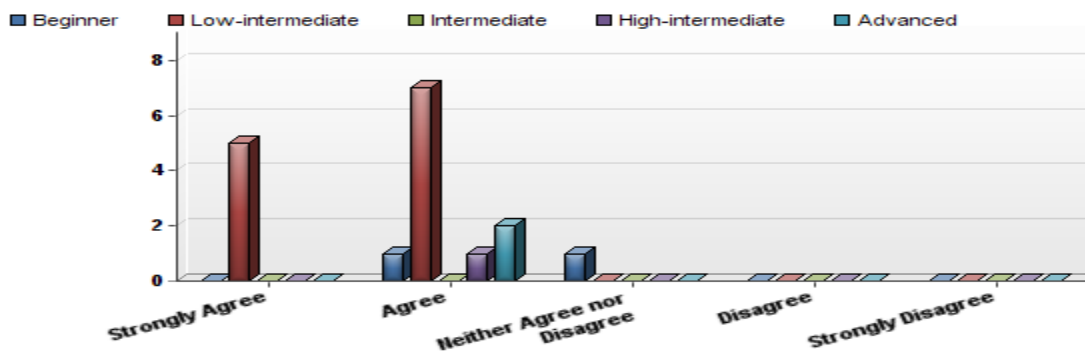
The last part of the motivation section of the questionnaire revealed peculiar findings to some extent. In other words, Pennington (2003) found that CALL affords L2 learners the opportunity to save their language performance in the computer and revisit them from time to time to improve previous learning. However, seven of the participants, as table (2) shows, they are uncertain about this advantage. This is likely to be attributed to the participants’ potential unfamiliarity with using computers for documenting and recording their own work.

The Impact of CALL on Self-Learning



Graph (6) Participants’ attitudes towards the role of CALL in promoting self-learning.

Unlike theirs in the motivation section, participants’ responses to the self-learning section of the questionnaire mostly indicated a positive impact of CALL on promoting L2 learners’ self-learning. Yet, to ensure the accuracy of these findings, one should first identify the contexts in which L2 learners can take over self-oriented learning. For example, most of self-learning activities take place outside the classroom; hence, the participants were asked: Does CALL encourage you to practice English outside the classroom? Both intermediate and other participants indicated that CALL helps them practice English outside school contexts, in that five of the targeted participants strongly agreed and seven agreed to this item. Such finding suggests that CALL allows L2 learners to practice what they have already learned in external contexts, which is an evidence of the impact of CALL on promoting self-learning.

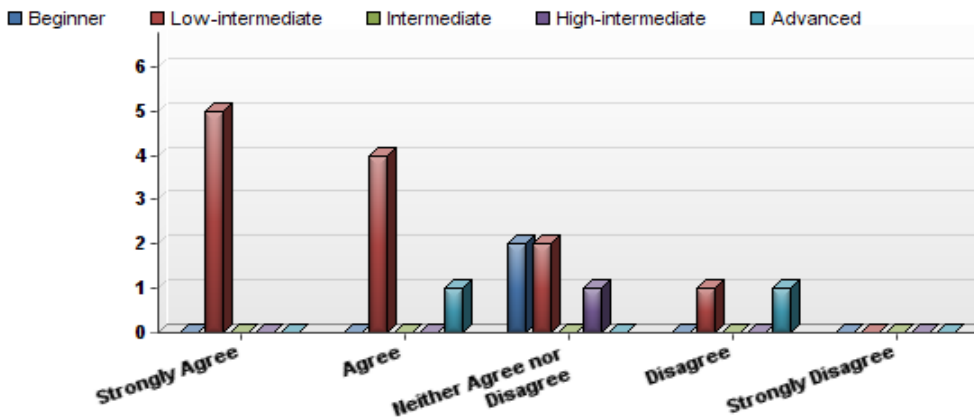


Graph (7) Participants’ views on the extent to which CALL allows them to work independently

As shown in graph (7), all of the intermediate participants’ found that CALL is an inspirational tool for them to work independently for completing their language tasks. More specifically, seven of the targeted participants had chosen (agree) and five had selected (strongly agree), suggesting a substantial impact of CALL on enhancing self-learning.

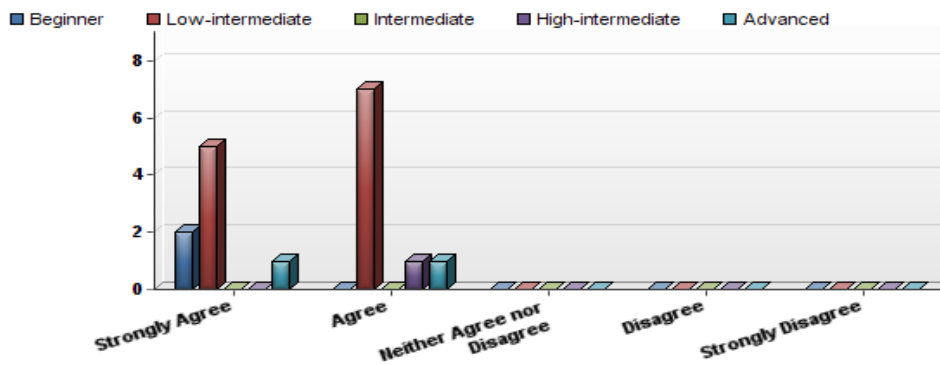
#	Answer	Low-intermediate	Intermediate	High-intermediate
1	Strongly Agree	4	0	0
2	Agree	6	0	0
3	Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	0	0
4	Disagree	0	0	0
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0	1

Table (3) Participants' views about whether computers enable them to choose what they need to learn. Moreover, Thomas et al., (2012) found a statistically significant correlation between higher levels of self-learning and learners' choice of language tasks and materials. In other words, the more L2 learners are aware of selecting appropriate and authentic language tasks, the more likely their self-learning will be enhanced. Thus, as shown in table (3), the participants here indicated that four of them strongly agreed and six agreed that CALL allows them to select whatever they want to learn about English.



Graph (8) Participants' views on the extent to which CALL helps them make learning choices

As discussed earlier, CALL has been found critical in increasing students' agency, which promotes their decision-making in L2 learning (Alm, 2006). Thus, the results denoted that five of the participants strongly agreed with this statement, four agreed, one disagreed, and two were uncertain. This suggests that most of them have become aware of their learning choices by virtue of CALL, which is consistent with what has recent research concluded that CALL plays a key role in enabling L2 learners to "identify their learning needs, plan their learning, and monitor their progress" (Thomas et al., 2012 p. 361).



Graph (8) Participants' views on the extent to which CALL helps them make learning choices

Most importantly, the participants indicated that one of the effects of CALL in promoting their self-learning and autonomy is concerned with the fact that CALL-mediated programs can be accessed ubiquitously. In other words, all of the intermediate participants either strongly agreed (7) or agreed (5) with this statement, suggesting that easy accessibility to CALL is one of the salient factors for promoting L2 learners self-learning.

Limitation

The findings of this study are interesting, there are still some limitations that this study have. First, number of participants is relatively small which makes it difficult to consider the findings generalizable. In other words, if the participants had been interviewed, a broader insight into our topic would have been effectively obtained. Second, not only did the number of the participants create a limitation, but also the lack of diverse levels of proficiency is another perplexing problem; as most of the participants are low-intermediate. However, if we have an adequate number of participants with various levels of proficiency, this is likely to help us yield valid and generalizable data. Moreover, motivational and learning-style studies should be conducted on a pre- and post-test data through which participants' self-learning and motivation can be measured at the beginning and the end of the course. That is, it would be more practical and reliable to measure participants' motivation scales and self-learning skills first, and then re-measure them after engaging the participants in at least a four-month course. Otherwise, questionnaire, though helpful, might not be a sufficient research tool for measuring learners' characteristics.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings provided us with some evidence about the role of CALL in promoting L2 learners' self-learning and motivation. For example, once they experience real control over their own learning, L2 learners would be highly motivated to learn more about the target language. Furthermore, it is needless to say that CALL is an effective tool for providing L2 learners with a variety authentic activities that help enhance their self-learning and motivation. Such authentic activities and will contribute to helping L2 learners maintaining continuous learning. Another salient contribution of CALL to boosting L2 learners' self-learning and motivation can be evident in its potentials in providing L2 learners with integrated-skills activities, which can have a great

impact on reinforcing their learning autonomy and motivation. In sum, CALL can provide L2 learners with both an independent environment and interesting language activities that help promote their self-learning and motivation respectively.

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