

# The Investigation of English Teachers' Views on Computer Assisted Language Learning

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine the opinions of English teachers regarding the use of technology supported tools, such as; computer and internet, in foreign language education by taking into account the variables of age, gender, seniority and educational background. For this purpose, teachers were asked whether they make use of computer-aided teaching materials, if so, in which area of foreign language education they use, the differences between traditional education and computer assisted language learning, the difficulties encountered and the skills they should have. In this study, a case study pattern, which is one of the qualitative research methods was used. Participants of the study consist of 11 English teachers selected by the convenience sampling model. In the study, the data were collected through a semi-structured interview form consisting of six questions. data were analyzed using descriptive analysis method. First, similar opinions were gathered around under six themes and the codes of these themes were tabulated. results of the study show that 55% of teachers use educational technology to attract students' attention to the topic and to increase efficiency, 45% of them use the computer and smart board especially to improve students' speaking and listening skills, 91% of them stated that technology-aided education makes students more willing to learn because it provides permanent learning. It was seen that 55% of the participants have internet access problem and the 64% of the participants stated that they should have basic technology usage skills.

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### Keywords:

Computer assisted teaching, computer assisted language learning (CALL), learning technology

## INTRODUCTION

The advances in technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century enabled innovative developments in the field of education as well, and thanks to the developing technology, there is no doubt that computer assisted language learning (CALL) has become one of the most innovative areas in target language teaching and learning (Jones,2001). According to the Chapelle (2010) computer assisted language learning means using various technological applications such as interactive multimedia tools, online dictionaries and applications, electronic exercises, and these various technologies used in foreign language education have been increasing in recent years. Zandvliet ve Farragher (1997) emphasizes that computers have been increasingly involved in education over time compared to previous years and that they have enabled an increase in the quality of education. Computer assisted language learning is considered as the most innovative area in the foreign language learning process (Davies, 2002). Computer- assisted education continues to offer new ways for students with the advancement of technology. Research published in recent years shows that computer-assisted education increases the level of proficiency in foreign languages and learner autonomy (Jones, 2001). Amaral ve Meurers (2011) state that computers are widely used in foreign language teaching and learning, so that students are offered the chance to experience the target language and culture. They also emphasize the importance of existing internet-based applications, multimedia presentations, and applications that enable us to communicate in a foreign language during the language learning process.

Kohn (1995) emphasizes that in the previous years, computer-assisted education focused on activities such as vocabulary teaching and grammar exercises, but with the development of technology, the importance and function of computer-assisted education has increased in recent years. According to Witt (1999); technology supported foreign language education places a strong emphasis on student-centered materials that allow students to work individually, providing interactive learning and individualized learning environments. Warschauer (1997) states that computers serve many purposes in education as a motivating tool to help practice foreign language and practice basic language skills and to interact with the target language both in writing and visually. Lee (2000) sorts the purpose of computers in education as follows; providing learning experience, enabling the student to develop a positive attitude towards foreign language, increasing success, enabling access to original materials for learning, eliminating resource

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constraints and providing global understanding to the learner. According to Horwitz (1995), computer assisted learning reduces the tension that students experience while learning a foreign language and their fear of taking risks while using the language, increases motivation and all these are effective features for language learning.

The development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in foreign language education is supported by computer assisted learning materials. Thanks to computers, students can learn new vocabulary effectively with the videos they watch and movies in the target language, through sound and image thanks to their educational environment (Hai-peng ve Li-jing, 2007). It has been observed that technology also contributes to the development of writing skills. Liou, Wang, and Hung-Yeh (1992) state that, in addition to traditional education methods, computer assisted materials help students achieve higher levels of writing competence. Warschauer and Healey (1998) emphasize that some computer assisted programs contain reading passages and reading comprehension activities, and these applications have a positive effect on the development of reading skills. James (1996) recommends that computer programs should be a good model for the development of speaking skills by using technology in language classes. With the benefits of technology, students have the opportunity to talk to individuals from different countries who speak in the target language, and the opportunity to improve their speaking skills and pronunciation (Egan,1999).

The research question of the study is as follows: What are the opinions of English teachers about computer assisted foreign language teaching? In line with this main problem, the following research questions were examined in this study.

- Do English teachers use computer assisted activities in their class?
- What are English teachers' opinions about the use of computer assisted activities as a teaching tool?
- What are English teachers' opinions about using computer assisted activities to teach different skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking)?
- What do English teachers think about the efficiency of CALL compared to traditional education?
- What are the difficulties English teachers encounter while implementing computer assisted activities?
- What do English teachers think about the necessary skills to implement computer assisted activities?

This study was carried out to determine what English teachers think about computer-assisted language learning, to what extent and for what purpose they use computer and technology-supported materials in their lessons, and the advantages and disadvantages of computer-assisted education.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

In this study, a case study pattern, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. In the case study; the area or event to be studied is examined in depth in its environment and it is aimed to make more comprehensive comments (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2016).

### **Study Group**

The study group consists of 11 teachers selected from the English teachers working in the Ministry of National Education in the 2019-2020 academic year. Convenience sampling model was used to determine the participants of the study. The demographic variables of the English teachers participating in the research are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Participant No	Gender	Age	Seniority	Education Status
1	Female	31	6	Bachelor's degree
2	Female	33	9	Bachelor's degree
3	Female	32	7	Bachelor's degree
4	Male	31	8	Master's degree
5	Female	32	9	Master's degree
6	Female	25	3	Bachelor's degree
7	Male	33	9	Master's degree
8	Female	40	17	Bachelor's degree
9	Male	45	22	Bachelor's degree
10	Male	28	4	Master's degree
11	Female	29	6	Bachelor's degree

It is seen in Table 1 that 8 of the participants were female, 3 were male; 4 of the participants had bachelor's degree, 7 of them had master's degree, the average age was 32.6 and the average of seniority in the profession was 9.09 years, and the ages of the participants were between 25 and 45, seniority years in the profession were between 4 and 22 years.

### Material

In the study, a semi-structured interview form consisting of six questions was used. Questions in the form were prepared by taking the expert opinion. opinions of English teachers' opinions about computer assisted language learning was gathered thanks to the interview form.

Semi-structured interview has some advantages which as follows; the analysis of the data is simpler than unstructured interview, and semi-structured interview gives the interviewer freedom of expression and providing rich information when necessary (Büyüköztürk vd., 2012).

### Data Analyses

Descriptive analysis method was used in the analysis of the opinions received from teachers. With the descriptive analysis method, the findings obtained from the interviews are interpreted and presented under the themes. (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

The data obtained in the study were classified under 6 themes which follows;

- i) the aim of teachers to benefit from computer assisted activities in English lesson,
- ii) the use of computer assisted activities as a teaching tool,
- iii) the areas where computer assisted activities are used,
- iv) the reasons that computer assisted education is more efficient and makes students eager for the lesson,
- v) difficulties encountered while applying computer assisted activities,
- vi) the characteristics that participants should have

During the analysis, similar opinions were gathered around the themes identified and the participants interviewed were coded as P1, P2, P3... P11.

### FINDINGS

English teachers' opinions about computer assisted language learning are shown in tables below. English teachers' opinions about the reasons for using computer assisted activities in their classes are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. English teachers' opinions about the reasons for benefiting from computer assisted activities in their classes**

Theme (Categories)	Codes	N	%
<b>Reasons for benefiting from computer assisted activities in English classes</b>	Attracting students' attention (P5, P7, Ö8, P9, P10, P11)	6	55
	Abundance of sources (P1, P3, P4, P9)	4	36
	Fun learning environment (P2, P6)	2	18
	Being suitable for different types of intelligence (P9, P10)	2	18
	Permanence of learning (P5, P8)	2	18
	Saving time (P4)	1	9
	Ease of access to information (P4)	1	9
	Developing pronunciation (P3)	1	9
	Reinforcement of learning (P11)	1	9

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that 55 % of the participants stated that they use computer assisted activities in their classes to attract students' attention during the lesson. 36 % of the participants stated that they use technology because of abundance of sources. 18% of the participants stated that they use technology in their classes in order to make their lesson enjoyable, the other 18% of the participants stated that they use technology to make their classes suitable for different types of intelligence and again the other 18% of the participants stated that they use technology to provide permanent learning. Finally, four other reasons were stated with the rate of 9% each, which are; saving time, accessing desired information, improving students' pronunciation and reinforcing what is learned. Some of the participants' opinions are presented below.

*"I benefit. Because it is quite practical and diverse for the use of audiovisual materials necessary in language learning; It is also a very economical method in terms of material and time. Also, it is very important for the lesson to reach the desired information instantly." (P4)*

*"Yes, I prefer technology-supported activities in order to appeal to students with different learning styles in the most beneficial way, by differentiating the teaching methods and techniques. It is also effective to break the monotony and to attract students' attention. " (P9)*

*"Yes, I am. I use smart board applications to attract students' attention to the lesson, to participate effectively in the lesson, and to reinforce what has been learned." (P11)*

English teachers' opinions about the use of technology-supported activities as teaching tools are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. English teachers' opinions about using computer assisted activities as a teaching tool**

Themes (Categories)	Codes	N	%
<b>Using computer assisted activities as a teaching tool</b>	Efficiency (P2, P4, P6, P8, P9, P10)	6	5
		5	
	Variety of activities (P1, P3, P5, P10, P11)	5	4
		5	
	Motivation (P2, P10, P11)	3	2
		7	
	Making lesson fun (P7, P8, P11)	3	2
		7	
	Indispensability of technology (P1)	1	9
	Permanence (P4)	1	9
Facilitating learning (P7)	1	9	
Suitable for constructivism (P11)	1	9	
Directing the students (P2)	1	9	

In Table 3, it is seen that efficiency of computer assisted activities has highest rate with 55%. When other opinions are examined, it is seen that 45% of the participants benefit from technology in English lessons because of the variety of activities they offer, 27% of them state computer assisted activities increase students' motivation towards the lesson, and 27 % of them state computer assisted activities add fun to their classes. There are five other reasons stated by teachers and each of which has rate of 9%. These are; technology is indispensable for students, computer assisted activities ensure the permanence of learning, they facilitate the learning process, they are suitable for constructivist teaching, and they guide students to use technology in useful areas. Some of the participants' opinions are presented below.

*"It's all about the student's level of consciousness and interest. If the student can actually use a technological activity for learning, lessons can be efficient. But at the same time, students below a certain level can perceive technological activities as using the phone freely in the lesson."* (P6)

*"I find it very useful because it appeals to students both visually, verbally and it increases students' interest in the lesson."* (P10)

*"It improves students' pronunciation skills, allows you to use alternative techniques, increases students' interest in the lesson and contributes to positive attitudes. It increases their motivation, removes the lesson from monotony, and fits the constructivist understanding."* (P11)

English teachers' opinions about the skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) which are most likely to be used in computer assisted activities are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. English teachers' opinions about which skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) are most suitable for using computer assisted activities**

<b>Theme (Categories)</b>	<b>Codes</b>	
<b>Skills suitable to be taught by computer assisted activities</b>	Listening and speaking (P3, P4, P7, P8, P9)	5
	Listening (P2, P5, P10)	7
	Reading, writing, listening, speaking (P1, P2)	8
	Writing (P6, P10)	8
	Listening and reading (P11)	8

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that 45% of the participants state that computer assisted activities are useful in order to develop listening and speaking. 27% of them state that computer assisted activities are useful only for listening. 18% of them state that computer assisted activities are useful for all skills. 18% of them state that computer assisted activities are useful only for writing. 9% of the participants state that computer assisted activities are useful for listening and reading skills. Some of the participants' opinions are presented below.

*"Of course, I think it is more useful for the listening area as it contributes to the student to hear the original voice in the target language. Still, it is essential that computer-aided activities attract students' attention to the lesson and contribute to learning. It is suitable to be used in all areas if needed."* (P2)

*"Listening exercises are activities that develop children aurally. Secondly, I think the exercises that will enable them to speak English will be useful. When children see that there is a lesson they can bring to life, they will love English more."* (P3)

*"Listening and speaking should be used predominantly. I think it is important to listen to native speakers in order to pronounce words correctly. The student can understand when the Turkish teacher makes simple English sentences, but*

*when the same sentence is said by the native speaker, he does not understand. It is necessary to use technology to improve listening skill.” (P7)*

English teachers' opinions about the reasons why computer assisted education is more efficient than traditional education and makes students more willing to class are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. English teachers' opinions on efficiency of computer assisted language learning**

Theme (Categories)	Codes		
<b>Efficiency of computer assisted language learning</b>	Permanence of learning (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10, P11)	0	1
	Increasing interest (P2, P4, P5, P6, P9, P10, P11)		4
	Increasing attendance (P2, P4, P5, P6, P9, P10, P11)		4
	Making the lesson easier (P1, P3)		8
	Making the lesson enjoyable(P1, P3)		8
	Variety of activities (P7) Inadequacy of traditional methods (P1)		

When Table 5 is examined; it is seen that permanence of learning is the most frequent idea stated by 91% of the participants as for the efficiency of computer assisted language learning. 64% of the teachers stated that computer assisted language learning fosters students' interest and participation, 18% stated it makes the lesson easier and more enjoyable, and 9% stated that it enriches the content of the lesson. 9% of the participants stated that traditional education methods are insufficient. and in Some of the participants' opinions are presented below.

*“I definitely think it's more efficient. I believe it provides substantial learning. Children of this age do not grow up in a way that the traditional education system can satisfy. The new generation comes with new habits, new learning styles and new perceptions with the development of technology. We realize that classical education methods are definitely insufficient in some areas. Therefore, teachers have to adapt themselves to the age in this context. When we perceive the needs of the age and analyze children's habits, computer-aided education becomes both easier and more enjoyable.” (P1)*

*“Yes, it becomes much more efficient. I can personally observe the difference between the students' interest and participation rates when I study with only the textbook or the traditional method. When I take the technology into the lesson by using the smart board and phones, I learn the technology more permanently. In this way, you can include even the most uninterested student in class.” (P2)*

*“I think computer that is suitable for today's age is actually a tool that students are accustomed to and love outside of school. Its usages in classes is very useful to motivate the students. Therefore, I think that computer assisted education is more efficient and provides permanent learning.” (P4)*

English teachers' opinions about the difficulties they face in using computer assisted applications are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. English teachers' opinions about the difficulties they face while using computer assisted applications**

Theme (Categories)	Codes	
<b>Difficulties in implementing computer assisted activities</b>	Internet access problem (P2, P3, P4, P5, P10, P11)	5
	Lack of technical material (P1, P5, P8, P9)	6
	Lack of proper program (P2, P4)	8
	Difficulty in finding material (P6, P7)	8
	Lack of expert support (P2)	
	Class management (P11)	

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the most frequent problem encountered by the participants is the internet access problem with a rate of 55%. In addition, technical material deficiency is seen as another common problem with the rate 36%. 18% of the teachers mention about the lack of a suitable program on the smart board for the applications that are desired to be used, and 18% mention about the difficulty of finding materials suitable for the student level. 9% of participants state that they cannot get support from the Information Technologies teacher and 9% state that they have problems with classroom management. Some of the participants' opinions are presented below.

*"Internet access restriction is the biggest problem. When I prepare the activity at home, the lack of a suitable program that can open the application on the smart board from time to time and the lack of a person (such as an Information Technologies teacher) to help with this in schools causes loss of time and the activity cannot be done."* (P2)

*"The internet, which is specially connected to smart boards in schools, does not benefit from the desired level and this leads to negativities. The requested information is not available. Also, sometimes files and activities prepared at home may not be supported on the device in the classroom."* (P4)

*"Necessary equipment is not available or problematic. The computer can be very slow, the required programs may not work properly, the speakers may be of poor quality."* (P10)

English teachers' opinions about the knowledge and skills they should have in order to implement computer assisted activities are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. English teachers' opinions on the knowledge and skills they should have in order to implement computer-aided activities**

Theme (Categories)	Codes	
<b>The features that teachers should have in order to implement computer assisted activities</b>	Have basic computer skills (P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P10)	4
	Being open to new ideas (P1, P2, P6, P8)	6
	Following the technology closely (P2, P4, P11)	7
	Willingness (P1, P9)	8
	Attending in-service trainings (P7, P11)	8
	Being curious (P1)	
	Understanding the student's needs (P2)	
	Have class management skill (P6)	

As it is seen in Table 7, 64% of the participants state that teachers should have a basic level of knowledge in the use of computers, smart boards, and projector in order to implement computer assisted activities effectively. 36% of participants state that teachers need to be open to innovative ideas and 27% of them state that following technological developments closely is necessary to use computer assisted activities in their classes. 18% of them state that being willing to use is a must to benefit from computer-aided activities. 18% of them state teachers need to attend in-service trainings to learn how to make use of computer assisted activities in their classes. 9 % of them state that being curious is necessary, 9 % of them state that understanding students' needs is required, and 9 % of them state that classroom management skills are also important in order to implement computer assisted activities. Some of the participants' opinions are presented below.

*"We must be open to innovative ideas, follow closely and apply technology and the contribution that technology can provide to education, understand students' needs and use these technological tools a basic level." (P2)*

*"While young teachers follow the technology more closely, I think that older teachers do not care much about this. During the seminar periods at the beginning of the semester and mid-term holidays, teachers should be given training on using technology better. A teacher should be able to use the computer, smart board and audio devices well and adapt them to their lessons." (P7)*

*"Teachers must have a basic knowledge and skills in subjects such as computer, speaker projection and internet connection. Teachers must also be willing and interested in self-improvement in computer assisted activities." (P9)*

## **RESULT, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

In this study, it was aimed to determine English teachers' opinions regarding the use of technology supported tools such as computer and internet in foreign language education by taking into account the variables of age, gender, seniority and educational background. For this purpose, teachers were asked whether they make use of computer assisted teaching materials, if they do, in what area they use computer assisted teaching materials in foreign language education, the efficiency of computer assisted teaching materials compared to traditional education, the difficulties encountered and the skills that teachers should have in using technology. When the obtained results were examined, English teachers stated that they use computer assisted materials in their classes. They expressed their opinion that the use of educational technology in foreign language classes provides permanent learning, creates a fun educational environment, is suitable for different types of intelligence and makes the students active.

In this study, English teachers' opinions about the reasons for benefiting from computer assisted activities in their lessons are examined and it is seen that most of them use technology in education in order to attract students' attention, to add their classes fun and to make use of abundance of sources. When the studies on this subject are examined in the literature, it is seen that similar findings to the current research are obtained. Demirbilek and Yücel (2011) obtained similar results in their study. Lee (2000) emphasizes that computer assisted materials in foreign language lessons increase student motivation. In the current study, English teachers reported that computer aided materials increases the permanence of learning. Makaracı (2004) compared the permanence scores of the control group where the course was taught with the classical method to the permanence scores of experimental group using the educational technology. It was seen that the control group scores were higher. Türkoğlu (2010) emphasizes that foreign language teachers give positive opinions above the average about the use of technology-supported materials such as computers and internet in their lessons and a similar result was obtained in the current study. Nim Park and Son (2009) state that teachers see computer technology as a useful teaching tool. In this way, students are provided with various inputs in a foreign language, and students are given the opportunity to experience learning in a real and original context. Kızıllırmak (2008) found that teachers in his study stated that the use of technology in foreign language lessons will increase student interest and motivation. In the current study, it is seen that English teachers give similar opinions. Altınkaya (1998) points out that computer-assisted education offers individualized learning opportunities and learning environments suitable for the individual's knowledge and self-efficacy. Raby (2007) states that thanks to technology supported foreign language activities, students

are allowed to progress according to their own characteristics and wishes and to control their own development. Bilbauta and Herrero de Haro (2014) found in their research, where they examine the approaches of teachers about computer assisted language teaching, teachers explain the main advantages of computer assisted language teaching as providing students independence and offering them flexible learning opportunities.

According to the results reached by Zereyalp (2009); educators emphasize the benefits of computer assisted instruction in foreign language learning. Amaral and Meurers (2011) state that computer assisted teaching plays an important role in language learning and is designed to meet the needs of students. Almekhlafi (2006) states that, according to the results he obtained in his study with students between the ages of 11 and 13, the students who were applied computer assisted foreign language education had a higher level of success compared to the students studying with the classical method.

In this study, when the opinions of English teachers about the difficulties they face while using computer assisted applications were examined; access problem, lack of technical equipment, lack of proper program and expert support, classroom management are listed. Similarly, the difficulties encountered in the application of computer assisted education in the classroom in Nim Park and Son (2009) studies include time shortages, inadequate internet access and limited computer facilities, strict school curricula and lack of administrative support. Bilbauta and Herrero de Haro (2014) emphasize that managing the use of computer assisted teaching materials and learning how to use them increases the workload on teachers. Hong (2009), Johnson et al. (2013), Weikart and Marrapodi (1999) show that teachers' institutions are not supported sufficiently and teachers are not provided adequate in-service training on technology.

In this study, English teachers state that they mostly benefit from computer and technology supported activities in listening and speaking skills. When the studies on this subject in the literature are examined, it is seen that similar findings are reached with the current research. Roussel (2011) conducted a study on listening skills and he states that computer and technology supported activities have a positive effect on students' listening skills. In his study of computer-aided materials on speaking skills in a foreign language, Blake (2000) states that computer-mediated communication provides students with ease of access to reaching target language speakers outside the classroom environment and this contributes positively to the development of speaking skills. According to Chun and Plass (1996); using learning multimedia applications in addition to traditional education in vocabulary learning makes learning more permanent by providing different types of information such as pictures and videos. Kern (1995) states that students enjoy using computer assisted materials and are motivated for the lesson. He also states that it contributes to students' speaking skills in a foreign language by reducing speaking anxiety. As a result of Marzban's (2011) study, it is stated that the students who work with computer assisted teaching techniques develop their reading comprehension skills more than the students who are taught by the traditional teacher-centered method.

### **Suggestions**

- When the results obtained in the current research are examined, the use of computers and the internet in language education should be expanded, as it is emphasized that more efficient and quality education can be provided with technology supported materials in foreign language education.
- English teachers emphasized the necessity of computer assisted language education, but they stated that they face some problems in the process. In order for teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in developing technology and not to lag behind rapidly advancing technological developments, they should be given the opportunity to participate in planned in-service trainings considering the need.
- For teachers who do not have enough time at home, appropriate time and environment can be provided, except for class hours, to prepare computer-aided lesson activities in the school.
- During the lesson, computer-assisted foreign language teaching can be included in the process along with other methods and techniques, and it can also be used as a reinforcing role for the knowledge and skills desired.

- Foreign language teachers should be encouraged and supported to take advantage of technology-supported activities.
- The school administration should support teachers in the use of technology and provide the necessary support and opportunity in the process.
- The Ministry of National Education should improve the infrastructure required for teachers and students to benefit from the technological opportunities across the country and provide ease of access.
- This study is restricted to views of 11 participants as it was conducted in qualitative research design. Therefore, it is suggested for researchers to get teachers' views on computer assisted language learning with different research methodologies and variables.

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## Appendix: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Do you use computer assisted activities in your class? Please explain the reasons.
2. What are your opinions about the use of computer assisted activities as a teaching tool?

3. In which skills of English education (reading, writing, listening, speaking) is it appropriate to use computer assisted activities? Please explain the reasons.
4. Do you think that computer assisted learning is more efficient for the student than traditional education and makes students more willing to learn? Please explain the reasons.
5. What kind of difficulties do you encounter while implementing your computer assisted lesson plan? Please explain.
6. What do you think should be the knowledge and skills that teachers should have in order to implement computer assisted activities? Please explain.

