A Definition of Teacher Roles in Computer Assisted Language Learning Laboratory

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Abstract

In a Computer Assisted Language Laboratory (CALLL), a variety of methodologies by means of using mixed media are available. This feature of CALLL contributes to the raising of students' motivation (Tanabe, *et al.*, 1994), but on the other hand some confusion among the students of interpreting the aims of the teaching methods teachers use in CALLL are also reported (*ibid.*). The aim of this paper is to clarify the features of the inputs available by using the functions of CALLL in isolation or in combination in order to present a redefinition of the teacher roles in CALLL. By redefining the teacher roles in CALLL, teachers will be more effective at all times in the effective but confusing classroom. "Only teachers who are thoroughly sure of their role and the concomitant learner's role will risk departures from the security of traditional text-book oriented teaching" (Richards, *et al.*, 1983). Teachers in CALLL should be made to be aware of this.

I. Necessity of defining teacher roles in CALLL

A. Variables that effect teacher roles in CALLL are concerned

Richards *et al.*, 1986 introduced the issues that are related to teacher roles in methods: (a) the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfill, for example, that of practice director, counselor, or model; (b) the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place; (c) the degree to which the teacher is responsible for determining the content of what is taught; and (d) the interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners. These factors directly or indirectly affect the styles of inputs students receive. Taking a role of a practice director, or a model by the teacher provides students with structures, and humanistic interaction by taking a role of a counselor for (a). For (b), by the choice of the activity teacher can control the types of inputs, too. The number of activities with different expectations for language acquisition a teacher can use for his or her students

will affect the total amount of inputs that can be more effective for the group of the individual students in his or her class than a activity or activities chosen from a limited number of the students' choices. For (c), the choice of linguistic contents or topics affects students' motivation and this will control the total amount of inputs, too. In the case of a graded syllabus, the order of presenting grammatical items will affect the effectiveness of the syllabus. For (d) the negotiability of information by modifying linguistic or non-linguistic inputs will affect the comprehensibility of the inputs. We can summarize thus defining teacher roles will affect the types and amount of inputs students receive. In CALLL, another variable should be added to the Richards', which is the choices of a media or a mixture of the media that teacher can make at every moment during a class.

B. Problems of students' and teachers' disagreements on the interpretation of learning goals

By examining the students response to the CALL classes, the issues below were found to be the points of discussion in the initial period of the introduction of CALLL(Tanabe et al. 1994). In the study, students' ideas about learning with CALLL were solicited through 14 questionnaire items. The condition when the questionnaire was given was that CALLL room had been used every three weeks with the group of subjects (185 university students who were taking CALL classes at the time of the study). There had been 4 CALLL classes in total over a three-months. A questionnaire was given to the students after they had used the CALLL four times. Followings are the issues to be dealt with at the initial period of the introduction of CALLL:

1) CALLL is very much welcomed by students.

2) Variation in teaching was certainly found to be important in satisfying students' needs. The use of the computer was rated highly by students and the newness of the methodology was also given high ratings.

3) Some criticism were made concerning motivational factors: "It's not different from regular classes."(12.5% of the negative answers); "I want our English lessons to be more interesting."(33.3%); "The use of computers is insufficient,(33.3%)" and "Grammar will be learned but conversation will not improve." (30%). These comments indicate that teachers should have sufficient knowledge about the merits of CALLL and use its functions fully in order to realize ideal learning situations for their students. Sometimes teachers only use some aspects of CALLL and limit the learning opportunities of the students. Technical training for teachers is necessary.

Comments such as "I tend to play with computers," or "only computer skills are learned," are also introduced in Tanabe, *et al.* study,1994 and are examples of the misinterpretation of the optimal linguistic circumstances. Since many of these students have their learning experiences in the past, they have cultural and personal biases about how learning circumstances should be. "It depends on one's effort(*ibid.*), " might have the same origin. These show that teachers must overtly explain the expected effects of the method and teaching philosophy.

The use of computers and other facilities seemed to create situations where the foci of teaching were ambiguous for the students.

II. Teacher roles defined by the functions of CALLL

A. Possible teaching methods using CALLL

CALLL provides students opportunities to be exposed to various sources of linguistic and non-linguistic inputs. Knowledge about the features of inputs provided by the function or the combination of functions of CALLL will help teachers estimate the possible assumption for language learning or on going acquisition.

1. Special circumstances of CALLL surrounding students and teachers

In the traditional methods of TEFL and TESL, the role of teachers could have been defined in a unitary fashion. In CALLL, where potentially almost all the functions of perception could be activated during the classes, knowing the appropriate behavior as a teacher according to the methods operated at the moment will be necessary. Teacher roles will change accordingly in response to the functions of CALLL teachers and students use as well as the ongoing activities. Table 1. shows the function or the combination of functions which characterizes the styles of inputs.

a) A single function used in CALLL and teacher roles

i) Functions used stand alone
In Language laboratory with the traditional functions and seats position, expected merits of the functions are mainly for listening comprehension and practicing pronunciations or structures.
The style of learning expected mainly in this is of behavioristic one. Teachers expect that by providing their students the more opportunities to practice usually isolated linguistic items repeatedly the more firmly they formulate good linguistic habits. In this circumstance, teachers can grade the materials, test and evaluate their students' performance to eliminate "bad habits".

ii)Functions networked

Under the circumstances where computers or LL functions in student booths are networked, the nature of inputs change in terms of their comprehensibility. In the behavioral approach, the target items of structures are fixed, and should always be grammatically correct. In the case of learning which is expected to take place under the circumstances where negotiation of meaning by the interlocutors is possible, linguistic inputs are modified and are not always correct in form.

In these circumstances, if a teacher forces to the students to focus on the use of correct forms rather than communication, the communication will not be activated. By activating communication, the functions networked are fully put to use.

b) Combination of functions used in CALLL and teacher roles

In this situation, linguistic inputs and visual inputs are available and both of the inputs compensate for each other if the isolated information is not enough to convey meaning correctly. This helps linguistic inputs become comprehensible with or without reducing their forms or meanings. In the case of a networked computer or a networked LL alone -in the case of "(a)" above-, inputs are more often modified or transformed by the speaker or the sender of the messages for the comprehension of the listeners or the receivers. With the use of visual information such as written languages and figures, charts, tables, etc., compensating linguistic information, both linguistically correct forms and comprehension will be expected for the students by the teacher.

c) Functions used in face to face position of the booths and teacher roles

Socio-linguistic competence can be the purpose of the course in these conditions. Paralinguistic features such as tone of voice, non -verbal information such as facial expressions, and visual information mentioned above, and linguistic information are available by using all the functions of "Humanistic CALLL (Tanabe et al., 1995)". Thus table 1. shows less necessity of linguistic modification either in written messages on the shared screen or spoken language through LL head sets. Either of the visual information or non-verbal or one kind of verbal information complements the lacking or incorrect linguistic information, and meanings can be negotiated without modifying or transforming all the linguistic information.

Table 1. Inputs in CALLL

functions	nature of inputs	main skill	interactiveness*	possibility of negotiation*	necessity of modification in face to face position**
video					
screen	audio-visual	listening	✕	✕	✕
individual monitor	audio-visual	listening	✕	✕	✕
LL					
networked	audio	listening/ speaking	△	○	○
stand-alone	audio	listening/ practicing	✕	✕	✕
computer					
networked	audio-visual	4 skills practicing	△	△	○
stand-alone	audio-visual	listening/ writing/ reading/ practicing	✕	✕	✕
combination of sources					
video & LL					
networked LL	audio-visual	listening/ speaking/ discussion	△	○	○
stand-alone	audio-visual	listening	✕	✕	✕
video & computer					
networked computer	audio-visual	4 skills/ practicing/ discussion on a shared screen	△	△	○
stand alone	audio-visual	listening/ reading/ writing/	✕	✕	✕
Computer & LL					
networked LL & stand-alone computer.	audio-visual	4 skills/ practicing/ group-discussion	△	△	○
networked LL & networked computer	audio-visual	4 skills/ practicing group-discussion/ group-discussion over a shared monitor	△	○	✕
stand-alone LL & networked computer	audio-visual	listening/ reading/ writing/ discussion on a shared screen	△	○	○
stand-alone LL & stand-alone computer	audio-visual	listening/ reading/ writing/ practicing	✕	✕	✕

*Interactiveness is fulfilled if verbal, non-verbal, and para-linguistic information are fully available.**This column deals with the necessity of "linguistic" modification for comprehension. ○=positive, △=could be positive, ✕=negative

In this situation, teachers are required to be aware of what is going on in their classroom. By being aware of the learning probably taking place in their students by these conditions, teachers have a chance to facilitate it and thus become able to be more effective.

2. Teacher roles in traditional approaches and methods applicable to CALLL

Understanding the philosophy of major approaches and methods will provide teachers' basic capacities to manage the language learning environment for their students, and these traditional approaches and methods can define syllabi for CALLL in the same manner as regular classes. Identifying teacher roles in those approaches and methods will be a basis for discussing teacher roles in CALLL. Followings are the summaries of teacher roles suggested by Richards (*ibid.*)

a) The Grammar Translation Method

i) no emphasis on speaking or listening, ii) use of grammar translation texts, iii) accuracy is emphasized, iv) grammar is taught deductively, v) students' native language is used as the medium of instruction.

b) The Audiolingual Method(Brooks 1964 in Richards 1983)

i) introducing, sustain, and harmonizing the learning of the four skills in this order: hearing, speaking, reading, and writing, ii) use-and not use-English in the language classroom, iii) modeling the various types of language behavior, iv) teaching spoken language in dialogue form, v) directing choral response by all or parts of class, vi) teaching the use of structure through pattern practice, vii) guiding the students in choosing and learning vocabulary, viii) showing how words relate to meaning in the target language, ix) getting the individual student to talk, x) rewording trials by the student in such a way that learning is reinforced, xi) teaching a short story and other literary forms, xii) establishing and maintaining a cultural island, xiii) formalizing on the first day the rules according to which the language class is to be conducted

c) The Natural Approach

i) the primary source of comprehensible inputs in the target language, ii) creating a classroom atmosphere that is interesting, friendly, and in which there is a low affective filter for learning. This is achieved in part through such Natural Approach techniques as not demanding speech from the students before they are ready for it, not correcting student errors, and providing subject matter of high

interest to students, iii) choosing and orchestrating a rich mix of classroom activities, involving a variety of group sizes, content, and contexts

d) Community Language Learning as an example of Humanistic Approach

i) supporting students in earlier stages by providing translations and models, ii) monitoring learner utterances and provide assistance, iii) intervening to correct deviant utterances and supply linguistic information, iv) as the students grows in ability teachers position becomes dependent upon the learner, v) the teacher's position is likened to that of nurturing parent

III. Conclusion

Teacher roles in CALLL are defined:

A. according to the on going approaches and methods used in the classroom.

What is specific in using the traditional approaches and methods in CALLL is that in CALLL, various approaches and methods are available at a time or in sequence. This is because teachers can use audio, visual facilities, and computers in order to present materials, texts, models, etc., or give the students opportunities for practicing or watching movies, etc. This convenience, though, could be confusing for the students and sometimes for the teacher for him or herself. In order to avoid this and to keep his or her classroom under control, the teacher should know what approaches or methods are going on at the moment and play an appropriate role for the situation.

B. by the use of the functions of CALLL.

According to the choice of a function or the combination of functions of CALLL, the features of inputs varies as shown in table 1. In the case of the Natural Approach used in regular classrooms, inputs are often modified by the sender for the receiver of the message for the comprehension of the meaning. By fully functioning networked computers and networked LL, students interacting can share visual information or linguistic information on the shared screen and audio information through LL head set at the same time. In this case, for example, the visual information can be a list of correct English sentences or paragraphs, and audio information can be modified which sometimes are incorrect or reduced in terms of grammar. This can also be done in the regular classroom of course, but in CALLL this can easily be done with its functions. The second

role that is specifically required in CALLL is to know the features of inputs provided by each facility or combination of facilities and prepare the appropriate environment for the students to learn or acquire the linguistic inputs.

To summarize these conclusions, teacher roles required in CALLL are listed:

1. Knowledge about teacher roles in the traditional approaches and methods which define CALLL classroom

2. Awareness on the on going activities, methods and approaches in CALLL at the moment and the appropriate behavior

3. Knowing features of inputs available in CALLL and preparing the appropriate conditions for language learning.

References

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