

Extracurricular English Study through ALC NetAcademy2 and the Results

アルクネットアカデミーを利用した 英語基礎力アップの方策

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要 旨

本研究は、ALC NetAcademy2を使用する課外学習における、語彙・文法の力の伸長と全般的な英語習熟度との間の相関関係を探るものである。全8クラス開講の必修英語科目から、学部ごとに上位・中位・下位のクラスを選び出し、総数300人以上の学生を被験者とする。主として、彼らの学習方法とその動機付けとの相関関係に注目して調査を行った結果、様々な外的・内的な要因がかかわることが明らかとなる。また合わせて、CALLによる英語学習に関する様々な問題点も論じる。

キーワード：eラーニング、課外学習、語彙、文法、習熟度

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1. Introduction

“It is a common assumption that Japanese university students’ English proficiency is at its highest at the time of the entrance examination, after which it is said to decline rapidly. If this is the case, it is a serious problem for teachers of English and curriculum planners.” (Okamoto, 2007)

In Japan, the national entrance examination requires all students to have a mastery of 1,500 words, and another 900 advanced words are necessary for entering into the top universities (Kazahaya, 2003). However, after students enter university, there is neither such a national standard of vocabulary acquisition for EFL learners, nor a goal-syllabus-test system to reinforce their English proficiency. Due to an unsystematic College English program, lower-motivated students at some universities don’t study out of school; it is not rare to see that many students can’t voice their opinions well or read efficiently, it’s

even harder for them to read original professional books in English in their senior years.

What are the key steps to change this situation? What are the methods English teachers should take to solve these problems? Different universities are employing various strategies to deal with these issues. The following paper reports KBU English research team's two-year efforts by adopting ALC NetAcademy2 computer English program as an extracurricular task for part of KBU students, and examines the result of this experiment which required students to do an-hour-a-week ALC NetAcademy2 study focusing on grammar and vocabulary, to see how much improvement students achieved. The first chapter traces back the history of KBU's English program which shows a lot of changes during these 10 more years. The second chapter provides a detailed analysis and results of utilizing ALC NetAcademy2 computer English program during these two years. The third chapter deals with the history and the merits & demerits of computer-aided language learning.

Over recent two years of collaboration by utilizing this extracurricular on-line English study program, some problems and limitations are also perceived. How to help students learn more effectively, how to make them feel more motivated to practice out of school daily, and how to require the soft makers to improve their programs etc., are the issues for this research team to exam further in the next academic year.

2. History of KBU's Foreign Language Program (Nakakubo)

2.1. The developments of foreign language program

KBU was founded in 1996, and its foreign language program including six compulsory English credits started at the same time. Ten language credits were the minimum liberal arts requirements for the first 4 academic years before graduation. The foreign language classes were all set as one-year course. Before the curriculum was changed, there were English, French, Spanish and Chinese language courses. Students had to take English class once a week until the end of the third year, which made six credits in total. They had the choices of three other languages to make another four credits when they were in the second year. The titles of the English classes were as follows: English I, II & III (compulsory); English IV (elective.)

In 2000, a new semester system curriculum was developed into the following. The compulsory English classes were set to be finished for all the students within the first two years, although the required credits for English kept the same as six. However, the total required credits for foreign language were changed into twelve. In addition, the titles of language program were changed into: Communication I, II, III & IV; Reading I, II, III & IV(compulsory English language credits); Communication V & VI; Reading V & VI (elective English language credits); German I, II, III & IV(elective); French I, II, III & IV(elective); Spanish I, II, III & IV(elective); Chinese I, II, III & IV(elective.)

Anyway, the change for language curriculum was not satisfactory at all, which brought about the disastrous situation for a part of poor-English students. Good English learners kept track of their goal, while poor learners always had difficulties to follow the program. On the one hand, they challenged to attend some new foreign language classes other than English in vain in their first two years. On the other hand, they started to hunt for easier

classes among English elective classes in their senior years to graduate. In recent years, there was a gradual downward curve of English proficiency level for KBU students. They were getting deficient in their knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar.

In 2009, the foreign language curriculum was further reformed. Total compulsory credits were decreased to ten. Eight credits were required from compulsory English classes, and the other two were from any of the other foreign languages. Both newly-enrolled students and new second year students were required to take a placement test, and they were placed close to their English level. Fortunately, after this curriculum modification, the number of students who tend to hunt for language classes at random in vain has drastically decreased. The titles and numbers became as follows: English classes are Communication I, II, III & IV; Reading I, II, III & IV (compulsory English credits); Communication V & VI; Reading V & VI (elective English language credits) Other language classes are German I & II (compulsory); French I & II (compulsory); Spanish I & II (compulsory); Chinese I & II (compulsory); German III & IV (elective); French III & IV (elective); Spanish III & IV (elective); Chinese III & IV (elective.) Students have to choose one of the four languages as a compulsory I & II classes.

In the 2013 academic year, the 8-compulsory-English-credits course started, although two more credits from other languages remained necessary for the students of Clinical Psychology Department.

However, there is still a crucial issue of KBU's language program. Students with poor learning skills do not have the academic ability to understand the basic requirements of a university. Some are not so difficult to pass their twice-a-week English classes, while others are quite reluctant to attend even one of them. It is high time to make a very decisive solution to change this serious situation! Therefore, a computer-aided language learning (CALL) program trial has been launched by our English teaching team.

2. 2. A Computer-Aided Language Learning Program

KBU English teachers launched a project titled "English Education for Diversified Needs of University Students" in the 2013 academic year. It was sponsored by the KBU Human Studies Research Institute.

In the first spring semester of the CALL project, students are asked to join the project by using, "PowerWords Course Plus" in ALC NetAcademy2. In the autumn term, they are required to begin to use another ALC NetAcademy2 program titled "Grammar Course".

Each faculty has 8 classes, and both first and second year have 8 classes. Students are settled into appropriate classes by scores of the placement test. The lowest class is Class 8, the middle is 5, and the highest is 1.

In the spring semester, we compared their home practice with the effect of their English proficiency. However, the research found students were not willing to commit to the project unless they were encouraged to start their computer by providing them with a reward. The requirements were: If they finish an assignment of "an hour's computer-aided a week", they can get 10% of the total grade of their English class.

Achievement of the 10 hours' computer-aided was learning shown from the major students. Still, it was uncertain if there was any relationship between learning time and

their English proficiency, which will be our next year's research item.

In the autumn semester, studies started up another ALC NetAcademy2 program titled "Grammar Course". However, this "Grammar Course" seemed to be more difficult to deal with. The computer-aided learning for plenty of students was not so much enjoyable.

The total analysis findings were: in spring, the higher-level classes get much better growth of their abilities, and some from the other groups even acquire a remarkable achievement. On the other hand, in autumn, the achievement difference among the three level sample classes is not so high. There are some results need to be mention here. Considerably large group from higher-grade classes acquires much better scores, though we are not sure why they become so proficient in English ability.

In the 2014 academic year, students are examined in the same three grades: advanced, middle and lowest. However, this time in the spring semester, the survey was conducted through "PowerWords Course Plus." Our target is to focus on how students are motivated or achieved according to each of the above three groups.

The students are divided into 8 grades. Class 1 is the highest, while Class 8 is the lowest. To put it more concretely, in this academic year three grades are selected as follows: Class 1, 4 & 8 among the first year of the both the Faculty of Social Relations and the Faculty of Clinical Psychology. 3 classes from the second year Social Relations consist of Class 1, 4 & 8, while Class 1, 3 & 6 are chosen from the second year Clinical Psychology. In fact, the second year Clinical Psychology has only 6 classes because the new department of Elementary School Teacher's Education course in the Faculty of Clinical Psychology is conducted owing to its own "once a week" English compulsory class.

Then how effective "Grammar Course" was for the students to improve their English proficiency? As expected, the lowest group conducted quite a little and most of them didn't make it because of less motivated learning cycle. They had difficulty in doing their 'one hour a week' performance. However, the middle and advanced group managed to do their own practice for the last one month.

Even if they were hard-working students, they had difficulty in doing their an-hour-a-week practice for their first two months. They preferred doing their performance not so soon. Generally speaking, on the basis of effectiveness, they should learn every day even if they practice only a little.

This is already the conclusion. How could they continue to do their computer work? Students receive 10% of the total grade if they finish their assignment. They have to do their computer-aided learning at least for an hour a week. Every month their practice out of school is checked, if they have not done it, they should tell the reason why they haven't done it yet. With the result of non-practicing, they lose a quarter of 10% from the final grade they are supposed to obtain. They could also cover up what they didn't do at the end of the semester if they did their assignment during the following month. That is how they could follow what they left behind.

Students have to take a "Level Check Test" and a "Completion Test" in the beginning and at the end of the semester. It is crucially necessary to take the gauge of students' achievement. The detailed data and analysis will be provided by the next chapter.

3. The Survey on the Improvement in the English Competency (Yamamoto)

Since 2013, when the survey on the effective application of ALC NetAcademy2 started, experimental pre-research was performed, as discussed in the previous chapter, and resulted in the full-scale survey in 2014. This chapter will discuss how the surveys were conducted in the spring semester of 2014 along with the results obtained and the analysis on the results. The surveys include the broad survey in which students in 12 classes participated, and a more detailed study in which students in only three classes participated. The two surveys will be discussed separately in Procedure and Result, however the discussion in Analysis will be based on both surveys.

3.1 Procedure

3.1.1 Broad Survey

The survey targeted 340 students in 12 English classes. Those 12 classes include first year students in 3 classes in each of the Social Relations (SR) and the Clinical Psychology (CP) departments as well as 6 classes of second year students, (see Table 1-1).

The first year and second year students are sorted into 8 classes¹ at Kyoto Bunkyo University according to their English competency levels so that they can study English with the students of a same or similar level. Those classes in the “High” row in table 1, for example, are the classes for students who received the best results in the placement test.

Table 1-1. The Classes and the Abbreviations

The students in the following 12 classes participated in the survey.

Level	Social Relations D.		Clinical Psychology D.	
	1 st Year	2 nd Year	1 st Year	2 nd Year
High	SR1H	SR2H	CP1H	CP2H
Middle	SR1M	SR2M	CP1M	CP2M
Low	SR1L	SR2L	CP1L	CP2L

The students first took a level check test (abbreviated as LC in the following discussion) and a completion test (abbreviated as COM) in the grammar course in April when the semester began. During the semester, students were told to study the grammar course for at least one hour each week. In some classes, students were encouraged to study 10 to 15 minutes everyday. Finally, in July, just prior to the semester ending, they took another LC and COM. Actually, 335 students took at least one of the two LCs while 277 students took both tests. 332 students took at least one of the two COMs and, among those, 285 students took both.

LC in ALC NetAcademy2 is designed to help students study the units according to their adequate level to maximize the effect of their self-study computer work with ALC NetAcademy2. Students are grouped into different levels and they are supposed to study the units at their levels. LC is, therefore, an indicator of their actual English competency.

COM, on the other hand, evaluates what students learned in ALC NetAcademy2. The units in the grammar course are grouped into 3 levels with 48 units in each level. The original purpose of COM is such that after students finish studying those 48 units, they take the completion test, which is designed to evaluate what students have acquired through the exercises.

In this survey, however, as mentioned before, students took the completion tests pre and pro their exercise in the spring semester in order to evaluate the improvement in their English competency.

Let the results of LC in April be LC(A) and that in July be LC(J), then the remainder of the two values, which will be written as LC(D) in the following discussion, is given in the following equation.

$$LC(D) = LC(J) - LC(A) \quad \dots\dots 1$$

Similarly, the test results of the two completion tests, COM(A) and COM(J), were compared and COM(D) was derived in the following equation.

$$COM(D) = COM(J) - COM(A) \quad \dots\dots 2$$

Notice that LC(D) is given in the differences of the levels, while COM(D) is the differences in test scores. The following discussion will be based on LC(D) and COM(D), which indicate how students improved throughout the semester. The actual levels or the scores, such as LC(J) or COM(A), will not be presented in this paper in order to ensure the privacy of the students.

Another variable discussed in this paper is the point average, PA, which is an indicator of the average improvement of the level check test in a given group. PA is given in the following equation.

$$PA = \sum_{i=1}^n (LC(D))_i / N \quad \dots\dots 3$$

Here, LC(D) is summed up for all the students in a given group (first year students, for example) who took both tests (LC(A) and LC(D)) and then divided by the number of the students in the group N. Therefore, PA in equation 3 shows the average of score/level improvement in a given class or group.

3.1.2 Detailed Study

More detailed study was done on three classes: SR1H, SR2M and PS2H. These three classes were taught by the same instructor and how students studied every day was tracked carefully. In these classes students were told that they would be evaluated according to some factors with emphasis on their daily activities. That is, students were graded not simply by the time spent, but how they studied everyday. Those students who studied 10 minutes every day get higher points than those who studied once a week for 1 hour and 10 minutes. The points students got were calculated by applying the following equation.

$$P = AT + N/10 + PW/2 \quad \dots\dots 4$$

Here, AT is the point students get for the average time they spend on ALC NetAcademy2 every day. Those students who spend 9~15 minutes get 5 points, and similarly, 4 points for 8~9 or 15~30 minutes, 3 points for 7~8 or 30~60 minutes, 2 points for 6~7 or 60~90 minutes, and 1 point for 5~6 or 90~120 minutes. N is the number of the days students studied, and PW is the weekly points students get for their activity. Higher P scores mean that the student studied on a daily basis rather than studying occasionally for an hour or so.

Then P scores and the overall time students studied were plotted against LC(D) and COM(D).

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Broad Survey

In this section, the results of the level check tests and completion tests will be discussed separately followed by the comparison of the results as a function of the students' study hours.

(1) The Results of LC

As shown in table 2-1, 197 students, which comprise about 72 percent of all the students, remained at the same level. Nine percent of the students ended in lower levels while 19 percent of the students ended in higher levels.

PA of the overall students was 0.1, which suggests slight improvement throughout the semester. The results of the two departments did not show much difference suggesting that the self-study program using ALC NetAcademy2 was effective to a similar extent in both departments. Although the PA of the SR students was 1.3, which was slightly higher than that of the CP students (0.8), 5 of the CP students improved by 2 levels compared to only 1 student in SR.

The comparison between the first year students and the second year students showed that the second year students improved more than the first year students. This is probably due to the fact that most likely all of the first year students had never used ALC NetAcademy2 before they entered Kyoto Bunkyo University while many of the second year students were already familiar with it having most likely done it last year.

Table 2-1. The Comparison of LC(D) in the two departments.

The comparison of the number of the students plotted on how they leveled up or down in the spring semester.

LC(D)	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	PA(LC)
SR	0	1	12	91	29	1	0	0.13
CP	0	0	15	106	16	5	0	0.08

Table 2-2. The Comparison of LC(D) Between the First-year Students and the Second-year Students.

The comparison of the first-year students with the second-year students on how their levels increased up or decreased down in the spring semester.

LC(D)	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	PA(LC)
1 st year	0	1	16	98	21	2	0	0.05
2 nd year	0	0	11	99	24	4	0	0.15

It is also clear that the self-study program was more effective among higher-level students. Table 2-3 compares the results of the students in 3 different categories. The first category “High” represents the students in the highest-level classes, which include SR1H, SR2H, CP1H, and CP2H. Similarly, “Middle” includes SR2M, SR2M, CP1M, and CP1M.

Although one student in a high level class dropped by two levels, which was the worst result of all students, more students showed improvement in the high-level classes compared to the middle or low-level classes, which most clearly appears in PA.

(2) The Results of COM

Students also took COM twice but of different units. First year students took unit 1-1 in April and 1-4 in July. Second year students, on the other hand, took 2-1 in April and 2-4 in July. We assigned different units since many of the second year students have already taken the completion test 1-1 when they were first year students. Notice that tests 2-1 and 2-4 are more difficult than 1-1 and 1-4 and thus this seemed to act in favor of the first year students.

Table 3-1 shows the differences in the results of COM. The scores of the first year students were 2.8 higher in average while the average score actually dropped a little more than 1 among second year students. Ninety Four of the first year students, which accounted for 62% of all first year students, improved 2 points or more in COM(J) (i.e. COM(D)2), although unit 1-4 is slightly more difficult than unit 1-1.

The comparison between the two departments shows that the students in CP outperformed SR students in COM. However, a closer examination of table 3-2 reveals that the test results were actually quite similar in both departments. The major difference lies in two sections in the table:

Table 2-3. The Comparison of LC(D) in Different Levels

The comparison of the students in three different levels on how they leveled up or down in the spring semester.

LC(D)	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	PA(LC)
High	0	1	4	73	19	5	0	0.23
Middle	0	0	11	59	13	1	0	0.04
Low	0	0	12	65	13	0	0	0.01

Table 3-1. The Comparison of COM(D) Between the First-year Students and the Second-year Students.

The comparison of the first-year students with the second-year students on how they leveled up or down in the spring semester.

Com(D)	~ -5	-4 ~ -2	-1 ~ 1	2 ~ 4	5 ~	Average
1 st year	6	21	30	50	44	2.80
2 nd year	28	32	24	26	13	-1.06

Table 3-2. The COM(D) of the Two Departments

Com(D)	~ -5	-4 ~ -2	-1 ~ 1	2 ~ 4	5 ~	Average
SR	20	26	29	29	30	0.61
CP	14	27	25	47	27	1.13

Table 3-3. The COM(D) of the Three Levels

Com(D)	~ -5	-4 ~ -2	-1 ~ 1	2 ~ 4	5 ~	Average
High	12	17	22	27	20	0.83
Middle	7	25	16	22	18	0.61
Low	15	11	16	27	19	1.16

“<-5” and “2<<4.” Fig. 3-1 illustrates this more clearly.

While the results of the SR students show an even distribution in all scores, CP students have a clear peak in “2<<4” and this shows more of a bell-curve distribution.

The comparison between the different levels showed an interesting result. Unlike the results of LC, the students in the lower-level class did best. Notice that the results in Table 2-3 do not agree with those in Table 3-3.

(3) Study Hours

The test results were also compared with the study hours. first year students spent an average of 10 hours 13 minutes studying ALC NetAcademy2 during the spring semester while second year students spent 8 hours and 10 minutes in average. Thus, first year students have studied 25% longer than the second year students.

Fig. 4-1 shows the LC(D) plotted against the time students had spent on ALC NetAcademy2 during the spring semester. The LC(D) of both first year and second year students ranged in approximately the same values both of which indicate a rather weak positive correlation with the study hours. The LC(D) of first year students peaked in the center (8~10 hours of study). Notice that the second year students spent about 8 hours on average on ALC NetAcademy2.

As shown in Fig. 4-2, the COM (D) of the first year students showed clear correlation with the time they had spent on studying ALC NetAcademy2.

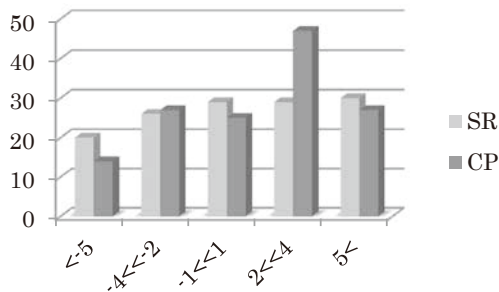


Fig. 3-1. The Comparison of the Improvement in the Completion Test Results.

The comparison of the results shows overall similarity in the results of the two departments except the section “2<<4” where students in CP outperformed those in SR.

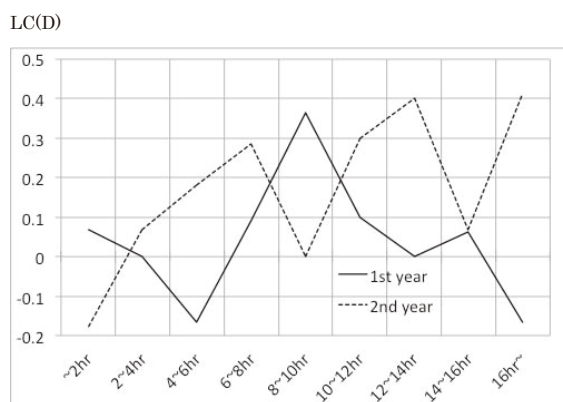


Fig. 4-1. LC(D) Plotted against Study Hours

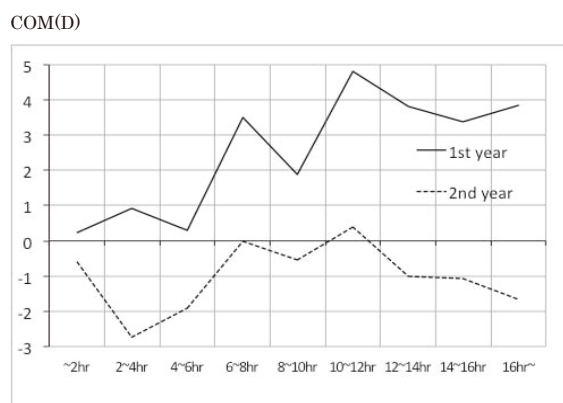


Fig. 4-2. COM(D) Plotted against Study Hours

However, among those who studied longer than 10 hours, COM(D) starts showing an inverse correlation with the time spent. The reason behind this is still unclear, but one possibility is that some students preferred to study longer in relatively short period of time to achieve their quota rather than studying evenly on a daily basis.

The results of the second year students showed a quite different tendency. There is a very weak correlation, if any, between their COM(D) and the time they spent.

3.2.2 Detailed Study

The results of the detailed study are presented in Fig. 5-1 and Fig. 5-2.

Fig. 5-1 shows that LC(D) and COM(D) are not related to the study hours in the three classes. The results are consistent with those from broad study (see also Fig. 4-1 and Fig. 4-2).

Fig. 5-2 shows that LC(D) and COM(D) have a weak relation with the P value, that is, the students who got higher P value tend to show more improvement in both LC(D) and COM(D). Note that COM(D) has a stronger correlation with the P value.

3.3. Analysis

The first question that needs to be answered is why students in the “Low” category did well in COM and not so in LC. Although the reason behind this difference is not clear yet, one possibility is that LC reflects the ability of the students to apply their knowledge rather than the effort students have paid in studying. The idea behind this is that LC is less directly connected to what students studied in ALC NetAcademy2. LC measures the general English competency of each student in contrast to COM which measures the understanding of what students actually studied in the self-study program using ALC NetAcademy2.

More productive language learners can better apply their knowledge of the target language to generate new sentences. This ability can help them answer questions asking about unfamiliar vocabulary or grammar. Such learners are expected to get better results in level check tests compared to COM.

Although there are weak but positive correlations between the time students had spent on ALC NetAcademy2 and LC(D) / Com(D), suggesting that LC(D) and COM(D) can both be good indicators of improvement, COM(D) may vary depending which unit students work on. If students work on units too difficult for them, they might end up with

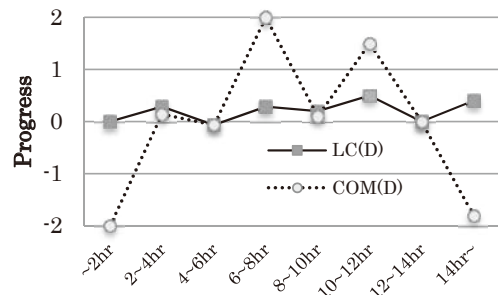


Fig. 5-1 LC(D) and COM(D) Plotted against Study Hours in Detailed Study

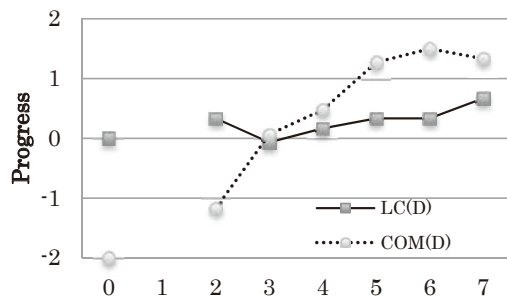


Fig. 5-2 LC(D) and COM(D) Plotted against P value in Detailed Study

lower COM(D) as was probably the case with some of the second year students.

Those students who studied longer than 10 hours in a semester showed less performance. This tendency was observed in all cases except LC(D) of the second year students which shows considerable fluctuation.

More detailed analysis on three classes revealed that continuous work, rather than the total study hours, pays off. This tendency is clearer in COM(D) but can be seen in LC(D) as well.

Through this survey, one simple result, which has long been familiar to the teachers, was obtained. Students show best performance when they work continuously on a daily basis on tasks of adequate difficulty. How long they sit in front of the desk does not count as much as how hard they try. Students did show some improvement in English but they have to take the tasks seriously.

Furthermore, the results obtained through this survey shed light on both positive and negative aspects of ALC NetAcademy2. Although it is clear that everyday study of the target language makes a difference in the students' language competency, many universities provide only a few classes every week. In the case of Kyoto Bunkyo University, students take only two English classes every week. This is why computer assisted language study counts; it provides students a chance to study everyday. It is not always easy, however, to make students work in an unsupervised condition at home. Therefore, computer assisted English education like ALC NetAcademy2 seems to be efficient and effective in improving the language competency of the students if instructors can ensure that students actually use the system adequately.

4. A review of the beginnings of CALL, evolution, issues, and current applications. (Couzens)

The curriculum at Kyoto Bunkyo University (KBU) does not permit students at two 90-minute periods a week the necessary instruction time when it comes to more effectively learning a foreign language. In addition, their major disciplines require and consume much of a student's day during any given semester. To help offset this lack of teacher student interaction classroom time, KBU invested in a Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) program – ALC NetAcademy2 around August 2004. This portion of the paper is a review of the beginnings of CALL, how it has evolved, issues, and pros and cons.

4.1 The history of computer-assisted language learning

Computers being utilized in educational settings date back to the 1950s. However, their application starts around 1943 with - Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC). A truly massive machine weighing in at 27,000 kg, construction started June 5th, 1943 and was completed February 14th, 1946. One of its first functions was to study the feasibility of the hydrogen bomb and other military applications.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ENIAC>).

There were other types of computers predating ENIAC, unfortunately, their applications were extremely limited and not cost effective at all. Programming took and

consumed huge amounts of time and energy to develop, maintenance was tremendously time consuming, and on top of that they were extremely slow. However, advancements in technology coupled with the foreseeable capabilities and possibilities demonstrated by ENIAC in the mid 50s were ensuring the future reality and expansion of computers.

The mid 50s saw the rise of computer applications basically to deal with and to ease “number crunching” for academic scientific purposes using a machine language called Formula-tran or FORTRAN. The forerunner of FORTRAN had reduced the amount of time it took to have computers do and perform laboriously tasks thus freeing programmers to pursue other computer work. Business enterprises soon saw the value of a computer program doing the labor-intensive work and COBOL (Common Business Orientated Language) machine language was developed. The 1960s saw the development of BASIC (Beginner’s All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code), PASCAL, LOGO, and in 1995 JAVA, which are still widely used today. These were and are machine languages and not language learning language programs. Nevertheless, their adaptation, application, and utilization for numerous pedagogical possibilities for Learning English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) purposes were being observed, tapped, and slowly introduced to the classroom.

At the outset for language learning purposes, three pioneering applications of CALL were termed Behavioristic CALL, Communicative CALL, and Integrated CALL (Warschauer and Healey 1998). In late 1950, Behavioristic CALL was visualized and became a reality in the in the 60s – 70s. Its principle concept was “practice makes perfect” implying the theory of more time spent on a task, the better one becomes at it (Anderson and Schooler, 1991; Ebbinghaus 1885, Newell 1990): “drill and kill” being the term more commonly used today.

The foreseeable Behavioristic CALL applications here were seemingly endless, implying if a machine teacher can ease the teacher’s burden by helping with language learning instruction, then such utilization of computers, ideas, and programs look extremely attractive. Dhaif (1989) clearly points out, computers can never replace the ‘live’ teacher, especially in language teaching, where the emphasis is on mutual communication between people. The major point here is the computer is a teacher’s aid and not a replacement for a teacher. The advantages of computers were seen as never becoming tired or exhausted with repetition. Computers don’t tire at laborious, repetitive tasks, nor complain where an instructor might. This allows language learners to work individually at their own speed whenever they liked when time was available. The advantages of CALL look promising to say the least. A down side later pointed out according to Warschauer & Healey: The computer was seen a mechanical tutor who never allowed students work at an individual pace, which hindered motivation. However, today’s software has been greatly improved since the 1980s and 1990s in an effort to be more pedagogical and significantly more humanistic.

Communicative CALL was replacing Behavioristic Call as the former drill and practice approach was seen as not to be developing cognitive learning skills. Proponents stress

that language learners need to think for themselves and be able to manipulate a second language as they do with their native language naturally. Communicative CALL, late 1970 and early 1980s, was seen –

as using forms than on the forms themselves, teach grammar implicitly rather than explicitly, allow and encourage a student to generate original utterances rather than just manipulating prefabricated language, and use the target language predominantly or even exclusively (Jones & Fortescue, 1987; Phillips, 1987; Underwood, 1984).

As good as Communicative CALL seemed to appear, at the end of the 80s and early 90s it was also starting to be scrutinized. Research associated with learning theory and language development was changing the way language teachers approached language teaching.

--- critics pointed out that the computer was still being used in an ad hoc and disconnected fashion and thus finds itself making a greater contribution to marginal rather than central elements of the language learning process (Kenning & Kenning. 1990).

The pedagogical trend was moving toward Integrative CALL, a social or socio-cognitive view, which placed greater emphasis on language use in authentic social contexts. A more holistic approach was therefore needed regarding the role of technology and language learning. It is:

A perspective which seeks both to integrate various skills (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and also integrate technology more fully into the language learning process. In interactive approaches, students learn to use a variety of technological tools as an ongoing process of language learning and use, rather than visiting the computer lab on a once a week basis for isolated exercises (whether the exercises be behaviouristic or communicative). (Warschauer, 1996b)

4.2 The merits and demerits of computer-aided English study

Warschauer's comments expose other issues that need addressing. The traditional teacher and technology was and is evolving quite rapidly and the teacher's role is moving to more that of a facilitator. This brings with it a shift in the standard educational paradigm where a teacher uses a blackboard and chalk and gives a one way flow of information stored in their heads to responsive and willing students. Reinders and Hubbard point out that:

reality has proven to be far more complicated. Although technology undoubtedly does support learner in a myriad of ways, it is also true that without adequate preparation, practice, feedback and support, many learners are unable to make effective use of technology's affordances, and

indeed may suffer from using technology inadequately (for example and overreliance on machine translation). Reinders and Hubbard. (2013)

Others also weigh in for the limited practical impact of computer-based language instruction. In Farzad Ehsani and Eva Knodt (1998) paper:

Salaberry (1996) demands nothing short of a system capable of simulating the complex socio-communicative competence of a live tutor—in other words, the linguistic intelligence of a human—only to conclude that the attempt to create and “intelligent language tutoring system is a fallacy” (p11). Because speech technology isn’t perfect, it is of no use at all. If it “cannot account for the full complexity of human language,” why even bother modeling more constrained aspects of language use (Higgins, 1988, p. vii)? This sort of all-or-nothing reasoning seems to symptomatic of much of the latest pedagogical literature on CALL. The quest for a theoretical grounding of CALL system design and evaluation (Chapell, 1997) tends to lead to exaggerated expectations as to what the technology ought to accomplish. When combined with little or no knowledge of the underlying technology, the inevitable result is disappointment.

Additional problems with early CALL was the software.

The major issue with software and pedagogy during this period was the frequent disconnect between what teachers wanted software to do what they could do with it. There were two major factors involved. First, early software in general was written either by programmers who knew little or nothing about pedagogy, or by teachers who knew very little about programming. Second, lack of teacher training in CALL meant that most teachers used drills because they understood what drills were supposed to do. Sadly not many teachers were as adept a creating learning spaces for students, using simulations, games, and text reconstruction programs and encouraging student autonomy. (Healey D. 2010)

There is sufficiently more to CALL than just being a computer program with language assistant capabilities. If CALL were a straightforward and workable answer to language teaching, then language teachers and teaching would have been replaced. That hasn’t happened and isn’t going to happen any time soon. There are still a huge number of insurmountable problems to overcome. An extremely brief rundown of the issues facing the teacher and CALL are listed here and are rather exhausting to say the least.

1. The role of learner autonomy in language leaning and teaching.
2. Technology and learner autonomy.
3. The affordances of Call for learner autonomy.

4. Access.
5. Storage and retrieval.
6. Cost efficiency.
7. Authenticity.
9. Interaction.
10. Situated learning.
11. Multimedia.
12. New types of activities.
13. Non-linearity.
14. Feedback.
15. Control.
16. Empowerment.
17. The constraints of CALL for learner autonomy.

Taken from (Thomas, M., Reinders, H., Warschauer, M (Eds.) (2013).

4.3 The problems regarding the CALL system

Any in depth reading and study of the above listed 17 points reveals an overwhelming need for knowledge and expertise beyond that of most ESL/EFL teachers. Dr. Charles Browne writes from his experiences in the late 80s when working at Sony Corporation in Japan and visiting their language labs installations at junior and senior high schools. “Imagine my surprise when I discovered that in almost every school I visited, the rooms were empty and the machines were covered in dust!” He continues noting that the downfall was attributed to that where teachers and students were unfamiliar and intimidated with the technology. Huge capital outlay had been spent on equipment but there was no training for teachers or students and no support staff. Later in the early 90s when working at Aoyama Gakuen University he was asked to help implement a “several million dollar” CALL center. He wanted a part of the budget to be utilized for hiring CALL staff to support teachers, teacher training, and training for students. His request was refused and the result, “A brand new high-tech CALL center that went almost as unused and gathered almost as much dust as the Sony language laboratories!” (Browne, C, 2012).

It is abundantly clear that the implantation of a real effective CALL system to help teachers takes a thorough understanding of education learning theory and philosophy in addition to a significant amount of computer knowledge, computer skill, program ability, and in addition - total computer lab support personnel. All of this takes time which most teachers don't have and isn't cheap by any means. ALC NetAcademy2 costs KBU 10,000,000 yen a year but is the cost worth it?

4.4 The issues with ALC NetAcademy2

My experience with ALC's Net Academy2 isn't very positive. Students have to be constantly reminded to do ten to fifteen minutes a day. Most complain they don't have time. I would imagine the program isn't captivating enough to draw students into investing more practice time. This is probably due to students not having enough real English

language instruction classroom time to motivate them into diligently investing in outside study. I feel a similar problem at KBU to that of Dr. Charles Browne where there is no training or support for ALC NetAcademy2. This in turn complicates the teachers' efforts to run the program smoothly. Warschauer's comments above are so true implying that technological tools are to help rather than "visiting the computer lab on a once a week basis for isolated exercises." Another drawback I feel is, though it is an English language-learning tool, the complete program is in Japanese, which defeats additional realistic language leaning purposes.

5. Conclusion

"Practice makes perfect" and "Where there is a will, there is a way" are the two most important proverbs among many, and indispensable mottos for any foreign language learners. In any language learning, there is no short cut or magical trick; practicing again and again is the only way.

To sum up, this paper focuses on KBU English researching team's two-year endeavor and efforts of utilizing computer assisted language learning—ALC NetAcademy2, to improve KBU students' English proficiency. By tracing back the developments of KBU's language program in accordance to the changes and decline of students' English level, the necessity of exploring an extracurricular study program came into being. With systematic data-collecting and detailed result analysis of learning through ALC NetAcademy2, it obviously shows the following three correlations: first, between the students' English achievements and their practicing techniques on target goals; second, between appropriate realization of their own weakness and finding their own way to practice effectively; third, between the continuous daily practice and good performance, it proves that more productive language learners can better apply their knowledge of the target language to generate new sentences. This paper also points out some demerits of the CALL system being unable to replace a face-to-face communicative education, as well as some of this ALC NetAcademy2's shortcomings, being so hard to know how much effort students made, and which part is appropriate for each student to practice.

In order to improve students' ability of using English and to enable them to become as proficient as possible, vocabulary and grammar training is just one of many other strategies for EFL learners. It is still a critical problem for many students with poor vocabulary and grammar capabilities to deal with classroom performance in communication, reading and presentation. With the improvements of extracurricular on-line English study programs, and teachers and students continuous efforts, it is sure that this on-line extra study tool will play an important role in English education.

Besides, if the national guidelines and a well-designed curriculum could be decided, and appropriate graded textbooks and certain criteria for English achievement could be established, College English Education in Japan might see a marvelous change which could enable Japanese students to compete successfully in the international competition and globalized business.

(Endnotes)

- 1 The second year students in the department of clinical psychology are sorted into 6 classes instead of 8.

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Abstract

Extracurricular English Study through ALC NetAcademy2 and the Results

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This survey research was undertaken to clarify the relationships between the online study of English vocabulary, grammar as an extracurricular task and the progress of students' English level. Over 300 university EFL learners participated in this research project where questionnaires asking about learning strategies and motivations were administered. The results show several types of external and internal motivational influences. In addition, the progress between the adequate application of learning strategy and time utilization were illustrated according to the data from different levels of students. Based on these findings, some implications for on-line English study are proposed.

Key Words : e-learning, self-study, vocabulary, grammar, English proficiency

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