

## The Significance of Shyness on Computer-Based Training in EFL Learners Regarding their Gender

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**Abstract:** It is worth mentioning that one of the psychological variables in language learning and teaching is shyness. This study aims to demonstrate the impact of CALL technology which in here refers to the use of computers to produce, store, convey and process communications on EFL learners regarding their level of shyness. In fact, this study investigated the relationship between shyness and communication ability of EFL learners regarding their gender. To meet the aim, 68 EFL learners who studied English language as foreign language were invited. They were studying English language in one of English language institution in Arak. In the very initial stage, a standardized proficiency test (PET) was administered to 68 male and female Learners which 55 male and female learners were selected as participants of this study. Revised cheek and buss shyness scale (RCBS) administered for determining level of shyness in subjects. Then they received Computer-Mediated Communication as one of CALL types. After checking student's ? performance in communication, the results indicated that there was not any significant difference between male and female learners in their level of shyness. On the other hand, male outperformed female in communication ability.

**Key words:** CALL technology • Shyness • Communication ability • *Computer-Based Training (CBT)*

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### INTRODUCTION

At first, there would be some ideas and discussion about CALL technology by many researchers which some of them mentioned by present researcher as follow:

[1] said that "CALL theory and practice has a fifty-year history now in which it has struggled to keep pace with new technologies." Also, the idea of CALL related to technology which foundation of producing more academic approach as some researchers such as [2,3,4] mentioned, particularly an approach that is well-established in second language acquisition (SLA) theories [5-7].

Recently, CALL is main part of Japanese university language curricula. But, it is frequently supposed that students lack the necessary abilities to deal with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) [8].

According to [9] *computer-Based Training (CBT)* belongs to courses that computer has been utilized as the primary delivery method of instruction and also there isn't any need for using textbook. It may be a self-controlled

interactive order on a CD, self-paced or instruction due to e-mail and conferences with small group computer by accompanying other students. The term CBT can be replaced by CALL.

On the other hand, shyness was explained as a prevalent phenomenon in the early research of Zimbardo and his colleagues. They pointed that great part of the people feels shy, so for many of them, social inhibition is an individual problem [10, 11].

[12] pointed that the meaning of shyness is described as "an enduring trait characterized by tension, discomfort and inhibition in the presence of other people" (Wadman, Durkin and Conti-Ramsden, 2008, cited in Tong, Ting and McBride-Chang, 2011, p. 30).

Some researchers such as [13] noted that " EFL learners often utter a feeling of stress or anxiety while learning to speak English Language and argue to have, a 'mental block' in opposition to learning English."

Some researchers reviewed that interest in the application of computers and technology has been increasing in educational contexts [14-18].

[19] claimed that Iranian EFL teachers had positive perceptions about the use of computers in EFL courses. The participants reflected their positive perceptions about CALL both in questionnaires and interviews.

As previously has been mentioned, shyness is one of the psychological variables in language learning and academic achievement. Some researchers such as [20] argued that shyness may be defined experientially as excessive self-focus characterized by negative self-evaluation that creates discomfort and/or inhibition in social situations and interferes with pursuing one's interpersonal or professional goals.

Several empirical investigations by researchers [21-29] have focused on the etiology, measurement, behavioral characteristics, social impact and treatment alternatives for shyness. In addition, with those research attempts, great advances were achieved toward understanding how and why experience of shyness has made such a large impact on many individuals' lives [30].

Regarding above discussions, the aim of this study was finding the relationship between shyness and communication ability in EFL learners. There are two hypotheses which were formulated by researcher:

**H1:** There is significant difference between male and female learners in level of shyness.

**H2:** Female learners outperform male learners in the process of learning English language by *computer-Based Training*.

**Method:** This study tried to determine if there is any relationship between *computer-Based Training and level of shyness in EFL learners in Arak*.

**Participants:** The initial sample in this study was 68 male and female learners in one of English Language Institution in Arak. After administering English proficiency test, final number of subjects was 55 EFL learners.

**Instruments:** The following instruments were used in this study:

**Language Proficiency Test (PET):** In order to make sure of the homogeneity of both groups in terms of their English language knowledge, PET test of proficiency was employed. The time allotted was 45 minutes.

**A Background Questionnaire:** In order to elicit subjective information about participants, a background questionnaire was developed by the investigator. It covered issues such as the subjects' age, gender, their parents' socio educational background.

**Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale (RCBS):** *Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale* (RCBS) is one of the most commonly employed measures of dispositional shyness [31]. The original Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale [25] contained 9 items. The development of the revised form aimed at improving the psychometric properties of the original scale.

**Computer-Based Training (CBT):** It refers to courses that use the computer as the primary delivery method of instruction.

**Procedure:** The following procedures were adopted in order to meet the objective of this study.

**Phase 1:** The Background questionnaire was given to the subjects to fill them out. It consisted of some information such as: subjects' age, gender, their parents' socio educational background.

**Phase 2:** The PET test was given to 68 female high school students. Two groups of High and Low language proficiency levels were identified, that is, those whose scores were 1SD below the mean were taken as Low and those whose scores were 1SD above the mean as High level, making 57 students in total.

**Phase 3:** Revised cheek and buss shyness scale (RCBS) was given to both male and female students in order to determining shyness level of them. The shyness scale was the 13-item Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale (Cheek, 1983;  $\alpha=.90$ , test retest reliability=.88). The items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale items are written so as to tap into affective and behavioral aspects of shyness without referring to the desire to seek out or avoid social interactions ( $r=-.30$ ) [28]. Scores on the RCBS range from 13 to 65. Cheek proposed that participants scoring over 49 should be considered very shy and those scoring over 39 be considered shy. A cutoff score of 39 was used for this study to differentiate the shy from the non-shy.

**Phase 4:** After measuring level of shyness in EFL learners, they exposed to *computer-Based training as a medium of instruction*. First the researcher suggested a topic for discussion. So, learners communicated by their e-mail with other partners. 29 female students had communication with each other and 26 male students had discussion by using their email. There were not any text book. After checking their performance in communication by researcher, the process of scoring to each students has done by researcher.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Independent t-test was employed for measuring the difference the level of shyness in male and female learners. Statistical representation of the analyzed data is given in Table 1.

Regarding the data, for comparing means of two groups, first the researcher examined the normal level of hypothesis by employing k-s test. The result indicated that test distribution was Normal.

In this part, two independent sample t-test was employed for determining level of shyness between two groups. Statistical analysis has shown that there was significant difference between score of learners, because  $p < 0/05$ . So the first hypothesis (There is significant difference between male and female learners in level of shyness) was accepted. As indicated in table 2.

The result of one research by [26] indicated that a sample of 741 university students completed the Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness scale. Item analysis showed that the scale has sound psychometric properties. There was no gender difference in total shyness scores although there were differences on two of the 14 items. A series of confirmatory factor analyses tested the fit of several models of the factor structure of the scale and showed

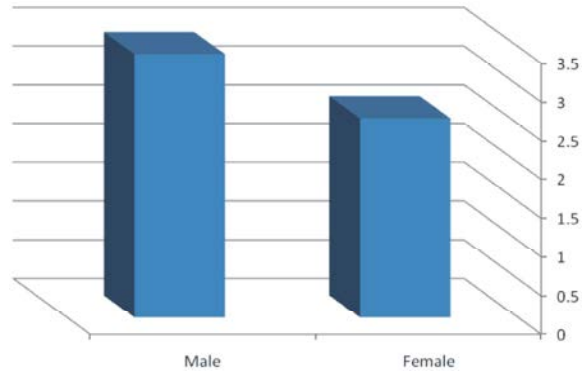


Fig. 1: Independent Samples Test for analyzing differences in shyness level of male and female learners

that a two-factor model taking into account differences in the direction of item wording provided a satisfactory and parsimonious fit to the data.

Other study such as [32] revealed that no other gender differences on shyness exist among 300 undergraduate students.

As it is clear, the level of shyness are different in male and female.

For analyzing second hypothesis, independent samples ‘t’ test and repeated measure ANOVA were employed to compare the mean scores of data.

As indicated in table 2 and figure 2, there is a significant difference between male and female learners in communication ability by *computer-Based Training (CBT)*.  $p < 0/05$ .

Regarding obtained mean, there is meaningful difference between male and female students in their communication ability. ( $p < 0/05$ ). Obtained mean which belong to these data have shown that males are better females in (CBT). So, the second hypothesis Female out performed male in the process of learning

Table 1: The result of t-test in revised cheek and buss shyness scale in male and female learners

Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean	K-S. Z= .937
male	26	3.04	1.24	0.128	Sig=0.000
female	29	2.57	1.06	0.107	

Table 2: Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on (CBT)test on male and female learners

Group	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean	P value
male	26	5.0714	2.10693	.39817	007/0
female	29	6.2759	2.11958	.39360	

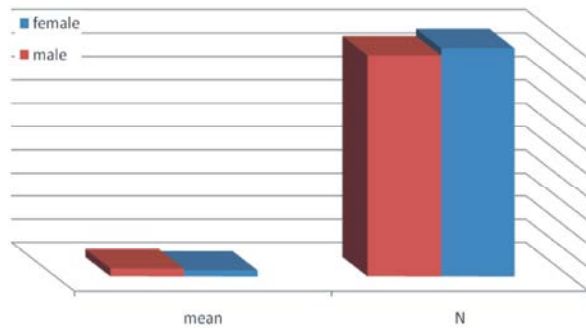


Fig. 3: Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on (CBT) test on male and female learners. N=55 Female=29 Male=26

English language by computer-Based Training) was rejected, because males outperformed females in computer-Based Training test.

The result of study by [34] clearly indicated that a great access to CALL resources could help the use of technology in EFL instruction. However, the study also shows that providing EFL female faculty members with technology alone is not sufficient for good technology integration. If CALL technology is to be integrated into EFL instruction, a continuous type training has to be conducted on an ongoing basis throughout the year to provide the female faculty members with the necessary competencies so that they will be able to use the technology independently.

### CONCLUSION

The main aim of the current study was discovering the relationship between shyness and communication ability of learners by using Computer-Based Training as a kind of CALL technology. As it was mentioned, in first hypothesis the level of shyness had salient effect in communication ability of learners. So this hypothesis was rejected. Regarding statistical analysis, male outperformed than female in communication ability, so the second hypothesis was rejected, again.

[34] concluded in their paper about the effect of self esteem on CALL that As the ubiquitous language learning or CALL evolves, it necessitates a comprehensive study on the psychological factors of learners in this context. All these factors when put together insinuate the importance of self-esteem in second language learning with the emphasis on CALL environments. Additionally, in order to offer efficient instructions, teachers should

learn to identify and comprehend significant individual differences of their students.

[9] has mentioned that teaching with technology does not cancel the teacher's role. It poses new challenges and requires enthusiasm, some training and perseverance. In CALL, the teacher serves as a facilitator. He/she has to provide the students with technical support, train them, respond to individual students' needs, comments and requests, look for relevant websites, post questions, discussion topics and online activities, write model responses, send public and private messages and design exercises and quizzes every week.

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