

AN EVALUATION STUDY OF A CALL APPLICATION: WITH BELT OR WITHOUT BELT

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ABSTRACT

The present study tried to evaluate the 6th grade students' attitudes towards the use of a CALL program which is called BELT Success used in English language learning course in a private school, the relationship to students' attitudes to their English language proficiency level, and finally teachers' experiences and opinions towards the use of BELT Success in the classroom environment. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used for the study. The data was obtained through BELT attitude questionnaire, field notes, unstructured group interview for students and semi-structured teachers interview. Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and content analysis were used to analyze quantitative and qualitative data. The results obtained from instruments revealed encouraging evidence that 6th grade students have a moderate positive attitude towards the use of BELT Success in English language course, additionally, students' language learning skills such as listening, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary are improved by the system, students gain self-confidence, and there is no statistically significant difference between groups representing different English language proficiency levels based on attitude towards the use of BELT Success into instruction.

INTRODUCTION

It is a fact that the rapid development and enormous advancement in computer technologies have been affecting all aspects of life for more than three decades. The discipline of education is one of the most important areas that have been influenced by this huge improvement. Therefore, the educational system immediately needs the application of computer technologies in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Liaw, 2002). Scheffler and Logan (1999) indicated that "teaching no longer centers around the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student; learning comes from students inquiry, critical thinking, and problem solving based on information accessed from a variety of sources" (p.305). Hence, one of the most important constructs related to the successful implementation of computers into instruction is students' attitudes towards them.

Since the 1990s, the use of computers as a medium has increased access to information and communication especially in language teaching and the learning environment and students are using a variety of technologies more and more (Gomleksiz, 2005; Greenfield, 2003). Dudeney and Hockley (2007) explained that computer-based materials for language teaching, often called CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), including filling in the gapped texts, matching sentences, or doing multiple choice exercises on the computer screen, are being used extensively in classrooms today. Thus, the use of CALLs by language teachers is becoming ordinary part of English Language Teaching (ELT) not only in developed countries but also in a few developing countries (e.g. Tezci, 2009; Albirini, 2006; Trinder, 2002; Neumeier, 2005; Ozerol, 2009).

The integration of computer technologies through CALL programs into English language learning classrooms improves learning by providing more opportunities for interaction with numbers of engaging materials and tasks (Lim and Shen, 2006). In various studies, numerous advantages for learners related to general use of computers such as increased motivation, improvement self-concept, more student-centered learning and more active processing have been mentioned (e.g. Stepp-Greany, 2002; Lim and Shen, 2006; McGrath, 1998). Because of its reported positive effects on learning, research studies on educational technologies have been centered around the issues dealing with their effectiveness in language learning (Wiebe and Kabata, 2010). Hence, a considerable number of studies have investigated students' perceptions of CALL since the early 1990s (Sagarra and Zapata, 2008).

Most of the research studies regarding the evaluation of CALL applications have been reported to have a positive effect on learners' attitudes (e.g. Fernandez, 2003; Ayres, 2002; Klassen and Milton, 1999; Okan and Torun, 2007; Chang, 2007; Holmes, 1998). For example, one of the studies concerned with students' attitudes toward CALL is that of Klassen and Milton (1999). They evaluated the effectiveness of a multimedia-based English language learning program. The result of the study showed that learners who completed the syllabus in a multimedia-enhanced mode demonstrated significant improvement in listening skills when compared to learners who completed the same syllabus in a traditional classroom mode. The results also indicated the positive attitudinal changes for a multimedia-enhanced mode of learning.

Another important evaluation study was carried out by Jamieson, Chapelle and Preiss in 2005. This study offers an example of a context-based evaluation operationalizing criteria for CALL evaluation and administrating the instruments to three groups of stakeholders: students, a teacher and developers of the CALL program. The result showed overall positive perception in all three groups. Ayres (2002) also examined students' attitudes towards CALL. The result indicated that students do not see CALL as a worthwhile replacement for classroom-based learning but they see it as an important and extremely useful aspect of their studies.

On the other hand, a few studies showed students' negative attitudes towards CALL. For example, Stracke (2007) examined the opinions of learners of blended language learning (BLL), a combination of face to face (f2f) and CALL. The analysis demonstrated that students held negative attitudes towards the class in which BLL was provided for three reasons: lack of support and connection between f2f and CALL; a lack of usage of paper medium materials; and the rejection of the computer as a medium for language learning.

Needs to be met by the program

Since attitude affects behavior and is linked to usage, it is important for students to have a positive attitude towards CALL in English language learning, especially in countries where English language is taught as foreign language because the integration of computer technology and its applications provide students with wide range of possibilities including authentic reading and listening materials, and various kinds of grammar and vocabulary exercises to learn and practice English successfully. However, little effort was spent on investigating the attitudes and opinions of students towards the integration of CALL applications in English language learning settings in Turkey. Therefore, the present study aims to evaluate the 6th grade students' attitudes towards a software program which is called BELT used in English language learning in Istanbul, Turkey.

Evaluation Questions

There is a need to determine students' attitudes towards the use of CALL applications in English language learning environments in Turkey because a positive attitude is the main determiner for successful future computer use in the classroom. Therefore, the present study was conducted to fill in the research gap and it was aimed to answer the following research questions.

- 1) What is the general attitude of the 6th grade students towards the use of BELT Success in English language learning?
- 2) Is there a significant difference in the 6th grade students' attitude towards the use of BELT Success by English language proficiency level?
- 3) What are English language teachers' experiences and opinions about the use of BELT Success?

Evaluation Design

Although the essence of the present evaluation study is based on the naturalistic design, both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used. The data was obtained through a questionnaire, field notes, and interviews, thus the study incorporated mixed methods to analyze the data. Mixed methods analysis have generally been used by CALL researchers to strengthen and cross-check the data before conclusions are made (e.g. Lim and Shen, 2006; Trinder, 2002). As an evaluation model, the researcher chose to implement the process evaluation model of Stufflebeam's (1971) CIPP model (Context, Input, Process and Product) in the study (cited in Nunan 1992).

In the process evaluation, "the focus is on the evaluator providing on going feedback during and at the conclusion of a program, so that evaluation data may be fed back into, and thereby assist in the improvement of the program" (Nunan, 1992, p.193). Process evaluation also involves describing implementation problems of the running program, assessing how well the stakeholders address them and reporting how participants judge the quality of the process (Stufflebeam, 2002). Therefore, the process evaluation model was accepted as the best appropriate model in order to determine the attitudes towards BELT in this context.

METHOD

Evaluation Participants:

At the beginning of the study, the samples consisted of Sixty-six 6th grade students- all 6th grade students in the school- in a private school in Istanbul, Turkey. However, nine students were excluded from the study because the questionnaire that they had filled out involved some missing data. Thus, the number of the students who participated in the study dropped to fifty-seven. According to the demographic data 54% of the participants (n=31) were female and 46% of them (n= 26) were male. Moreover, samples of the research had varying degrees of English language proficiency. Demographic data indicated that 39% students (n=22) were in A level (pre-intermediate), 35% of the samples (n=20) were in B level (elementary) and 26% of the participants (n=15) were

in C level (beginner). For the teacher interview, out of eight English language teachers, 4 volunteer teachers who taught BELT course participated in the study. One male teacher had three years of experience in teaching BELT course and three female teachers had one year of experience in teaching BELT. These teachers were interviewed to understand their experiences and opinions with regard to the program implemented.

Setting

The present study was carried out in a private school, which involves 500 students from kindergarten to the 8th grade, in Istanbul, Turkey in December 2010. Although English language teaching is started in the 4th grade in public schools, it begins in kindergarten in private schools in Turkey. Besides, the weekly hours of English courses in private schools are higher than the hours in public schools. Therefore, private institutions can easily provide extra opportunities in terms of teaching English such as a native speaker or CALL applications to their students.

In the context of the present study, English courses in the 6th grades was divided as six hours for traditional English teaching with a main course book, two hours for speaking and listening with a native speaker, and one hour for CALL with BELT success software program in a week. Since the aim of the present study was to assess the attitudes towards the BELT program, other variables were not used in the study.

Evaluation Material

The BELT Study System is being used from the 2nd grade to the 6th grade for an hour a week in this school for three years. All the courses were studied in the computer language lab in which all the computers were equipped with the necessary parts to allow the use of BELT. Each BELT package involves a workbook and a smart card that is for school use only.

Based on the information collected from the official website of the BELT study system (date not provided), this product is designed and produced by Binary Logic which has worked in Greece for over 25 years. BELT is specially designed for and directly promoted to schools and educational institutions. Since BELT is not a self-study product for private use at home, it is not sold in bookshops or multimedia stores. It is specifically designed for students who learn English as a foreign or second language and it is intended to be used in schools, educational institutions, and training centers. The study system is designed separately as BELT Kindergarten, BELT Primary, and BELT Success. In the context of the present study, BELT Success is being used by 6th grade students.

BELT Success is specifically designed for teenagers and adults and it includes integrated skills reading, listening, writing, speaking, and grammar. It also involves five different levels from beginner to upper-intermediate and comprises 15 units (30 graded lessons) in each level. Each lesson is presented in the form of presentation, production and practice and communicative approach is the essence of all BELT study systems.

In the BELT course, each student has their own BELT smart card that enables students to log in their own study page. Since BELT is designed as a self-study system, each learner works on a different unit and is responsible for their own learning. At the end of each lesson, students have to do exercise parts so that the teacher can see students' achievement scores in terms of a percentage on his/her computer. Additionally, the BELT workbook helps learners to study on different exercises either in classroom or at home.

In the present study, the beginner level of BELT Success was studied by the 6th grade students for only one hour in the language computer lab a week. Although students' English language proficiency level was different- A (pre-intermediate) level, B (elementary) level and C (beginner) level- all students who had different levels participated in the same BELT class. The course was not arranged according to learners' level of proficiency. The role of the teacher in the classroom was just being an observer rather than teaching English relating to the subjects in the units of BELT. Teachers provided technical support in terms of using computers, ensuring silence in the lab, or answering students' questions about activities which were not understood.

Data Collection Method and Instruments:

In order to determine the 6th grade students' attitudes and portray their opinions towards the use of BELT in an English language teaching environment, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected for this evaluation study in December 2010. Quantitative data were obtained from fifty-seven students by using a survey instrument, which was called the "BELT Attitude Scale". (see Appendix A). After a broad study of literature, the BELT attitude scale was developed by the researcher herself for this study. The researcher made a comprehensive examination of the questioned points through related research studies, books, and theses conducted both in Turkey and abroad. Furthermore, one unstructured group interview with three students and

three hours classroom observation of students' interaction with BELT Success program were conducted so as to obtain in-depth opinions regarding the topics of concern. In other words, the main reason behind conducting interviews and observations was to determine the items of the questionnaire. During the interview, the researcher aimed to elicit the learners' general attitudes towards the use of BELT, its strengths and the weaknesses, and the learning environment. In classroom observations, the researcher tried to collect data in an informal way, on the user-friendliness of BELT Success, possible technical problems, and to get a general impression of participants' reaction to the program.

Finally, in accordance with the relevant literature, the focus group interview findings, and observation results, the researcher designed the BELT Attitude Scale. This questionnaire is a five-point Likert Type scale, each statement was labelled from "1" "completely disagree" to "5" "completely agree". This questionnaire has 21 items towards the behavioral aspects of BELT attitude. The items, 8, 10, 13, 20, and 21 in the scale were negatively worded. While analyzing the data it was reversed in order to maintain a homogenous score. A total score of the 21-item scale gave insight into general attitudes towards the use of BELT in English language learning.

In addition to the quantitative method, the qualitative part of the data was collected through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) from four volunteers English language teachers in order to supplement the data obtained from the questionnaire and to get in-depth data about teachers' experiences and opinions of the current BELT program implemented in the 6th grade. The interviewees were chosen according to their teaching experience in the BELT class. The interview schedule consisted of eight open-ended questions related to BELT Success program and each interviewee was met individually.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed by using SPSS version 16.0. In order to identify the average scores, mean and standard deviation of the participants' responses to the items in BELT Attitude Scale, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics, Kruskal-Wallis, were used. Additionally, qualitative data has been supported by analysis of qualitative data obtained from recorded semi-structured teacher interviews. After transcribing the interview data, it was grouped according to the answers given to the same question. The interview transcripts were subjected to content analysis in order to identify emerging themes and trends.

RESULT

Students' attitudes towards the use of BELT Success

In order to identify the attitudes of the 6th grade students' attitudes towards the use of the BELT Success program in English language learning environment, descriptive statistics was conducted. The attitude was assessed by 21 positively and negatively (shown in bold in Table 1) worded statements rated through 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". As can be seen in Table 1, the mean and standard deviations scores were computed for the variable. The overall mean score for all the items based on students' attitudes towards BELT Success was little above the mid-point of the scale $M= 3.48$ ($SD= .40$). Based on the scale used in the questionnaire, this mean score was somewhere between "undecided" and "agree". Therefore, according to the total general attitude score, the result of the descriptive statistics indicated that the 6th grade students who had been exposed to the BELT success program in their language learning experience held moderate attitude- quite positive- towards the use of BELT Success into English language instruction. However, certain items had noticeably higher means when compared with general attitude mean. For example, 65% of the students "completely agreed" that "the use of BELT makes English language courses more interesting" (item1), $M= 4.54$ ($SD= .75$). Similarly, for item 4, "I think the activities used in the BELT are useful" $M= 4.29$ ($SD=.70$), 44% of the participants "completely agreed" and 42% of them "agreed" in the BELT attitude scale. Additionally, 79% of the students chose completely agree and agree for item 2 "I think that BELT increases the level of my English" $M= 4.01$ ($SD=.81$).

Furthermore, the mean scores in the scale showed that students liked doing writing activities using computers and keyboards rather than using a pen and a workbook because 65% of the respondents completely agreed and 11% of them agreed that the statement "I like doing writing activities by means of keyboard" (item 18), $M= 4.12$ ($SD=1.41$). Besides, 65% of them disagreed on the item 19 that "I prefer doing writing activities in the BELT workbook", $M= 2.28$ ($SD=1.57$). There were also some items which mentioned that the BELT program improves students' listening skills in the questionnaire. For example, for item 11, 77% of the participants indicated that BELT increases their listening skills $M= 4.10$ ($SD=.97$). Moreover, the result of the descriptive analysis showed that 75% of those samples believed that the reading activities in BELT help to increase their reading skill in other English courses (item 16), $M=3.98$ ($SD=1.06$).

Table 1. Students' attitudes towards the use of BELT

Statements	Completely Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Completely Agree		Mean	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Item1	1	1.8	0	0	3	5.3	16	28.1	37	64.9	4.54	.75
Item2	0	0	3	5.3	9	15.8	29	50.9	16	28.1	4.01	.81
Item3	2	3.5	1	1.8	5	8.8	25	43.9	24	42.1	4.19	.93
Item4	0	0	0	0	8	14	24	42.1	25	43.9	4.29	.70
Item5	6	10.5	15	26.3	9	15.8	14	24.6	13	22.8	3.22	1.34
Item6	4	7	12	21.1	9	15.8	16	28.1	16	28.1	3.49	1.29
Item7	2	3.5	10	17.5	6	10.5	23	40.4	16	28.1	3.71	1.16
Item8	17	29.8	11	19.3	1	1.8	8	14	20	35.1	3.05	1.72
Item9	0	0	11	19.3	13	22.8	15	26.3	18	31.6	3.70	1.11
Item10	16	28.1	7	12.3	13	22.8	10	17.5	11	19.3	2.87	1.48
Item11	1	1.8	3	5.3	9	15.8	20	35.1	24	42.1	4.10	.97
Item12	4	7	4	7	9	15.8	16	28.1	24	42.1	3.91	1.22
Item13	19	33.3	12	21.1	7	12.3	12	21.1	7	12.3	2.57	1.45
Item14	4	7	6	10.5	12	21.1	16	28.1	19	33.3	3.70	1.23
Item15	6	10.5	2	3.5	9	15.8	12	21.1	28	49.1	3.94	1.32
Item16	2	3.5	4	7	8	14	22	38.6	21	36.8	3.98	1.06
Item17	16	28.1	12	21.1	13	22.8	8	14	8	14	2.64	1.39
Item18	7	12.3	2	3.5	5	8.8	6	10.5	37	64.9	4.12	1.41
Item19	29	50.9	8	14	5	8.8	5	8.8	10	17.5	2.28	1.57
Item20	25	43.9	15	26.3	10	17.5	5	8.8	2	3.5	2.01	1.14
Item21	11	19.3	12	21.1	18	31.6	12	21.1	4	7	2.75	1.19
Total Attitude											3.48	.40

Students' attitudes according to English language proficiency levels

In order to identify whether there is a difference between the 6th grade students' attitudes towards the use of BELT success into instruction in terms of English language proficiency levels, Inferential statistics was conducted for the study. Since the number of the students participated in the study was not enough to have normal distribution and to use parametric tests, a nonparametric test which was called "Kruskal-Wallis test" was conducted. Students' levels of proficiency were identified as A level (pre-intermediate), B level (elementary), and C level (beginner). The Table 2 shows the mean scores of students based on their proficiency levels. According to Table 3, the result of Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that there is no statistically significant difference between the groups representing different English language proficiency levels based on attitude towards the use of BELT Success into instruction (sig(two-tailed)= ,24 ; p< 0,05). It seems that the attitude towards the use of the BELT program does not depend on students' English language proficiency levels in the present study.

Table 2. Mean scores according to levels of proficiency

		Ranks	
Level of Proficiency		N	Mean Rank
General Attitude	A	22	29.93
	B	20	24.42
	C	15	33.73
	Total	57	

Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis test result according to levels of proficiency

Test Statistics

	General Attitude
Chi-Square	2.818
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.244

Teachers' experiences and opinions towards BELT Success program

The semi-structured interview, including eight questions, was administered to four teachers, who had experience in teaching the BELT program, to reveal their experiences and opinions towards the use of BELT in their English language teaching. The interview questions addressed teachers' experience using BELT in their teaching, their views about how the BELT program influences instruction, their attitudes towards its use, the factors that affect BELT integration, the kinds of technical problems during the application, and teachers' suggestions in terms of improving the quality of the BELT application. The qualitative data obtained from the questions was presented through narrative sentences. Additionally, some answers from the participants were outlined below by means of quotes to support the quantitative findings.

According to interview data all teachers believed that not only the 6th grade students but also the students in other grades like using the BELT program in English Language courses. The teachers indicated that since the new generation like spending time in front of computers and the Internet, software programs designed for language teaching attract students' attention a lot. Students saw English language teaching programs as computer games. Teachers also reported that this kind of learning environment was especially enjoyable because of the medium, which provided variety and interactivity. Therefore, students unconsciously learnt English as they played games. The following quotations from the teachers illustrate these beliefs:

"If you want to learn something, first you have to like it. The subject that you are going to learn must attract your attention. Otherwise you cannot learn easily. BELT helps students to attract their attention on learning English. This is what we want it."

All teachers also believed that the use of BELT program helped students to learn and improve their English more effectively and they stated that students sometimes could use vocabulary or an expression learnt in a BELT class in other English classes. One of the informants' statements shows this belief:

"One day, one of my students used a word that was not taught in the classroom before. When I asked him where he learnt it, he said that in the BELT class. So, this made me very happy."

Furthermore, all teachers stated that the BELT program provided different authentic listening activities, which improved students' listening abilities because they believed that students listened to the passage based on their own pace. The following comments explain the reasons why teachers think like that:

"In the BELT class, students can listen to the passages over and over again, until they understand them. It depends on the students and their learning pace. However, in regular classrooms, teachers play the tape most of the time twice. So, students sometimes do not understand what they hear or they may miss important points."

Teachers who taught in BELT classes also informed that students improve their writing abilities through typing because using a keyboard was as easy as using a pen for new generations. Most of dictation activities provided students with opportunities to type on the screen or to write on the activity book. Therefore, all teachers believed that students had positive attitudes towards using BELT in English courses. Besides, they never wanted to miss the class due to any activities arranged by the school. The following sentences illustrate this belief:

"One day an entertainment show was arranged for the students in the conference hall. This show started at the time of my BELT class. All of the students begged me not to go there to see the show because they preferred working on BELT"

All teachers thought that BELT was a student-centered program rather than teacher-centered because teachers did not involve themselves and participate in any activities during the BELT course. All students worked alone and were responsible for their learning. Therefore, teachers mentioned that this kind of involvement increased

students' self-confidence. Teachers were only guides that helped students to solve any problems that either arose from the computer itself or related to activities and exercises.

Contrary to the strengths of the BELT program teachers also mentioned the weaknesses of it. For example, the interview data revealed that the company that produced BELT never provided any in-service training or short term seminars that explained the use of BELT or other kind of technical problems to the teachers before the beginning of the academic term. Second, teachers suggested that the parents should also be informed about the strength of BELT by the producer because, according to the teachers, parents spent lots of money each year and wanted to know whether it was worth it or not. Third, one teacher suggested that the BELT program should have been used both in schools and at home under parental guidance because one hour was not enough to follow the BELT syllabus. She indicated that these kinds of software programs always created some problems and she was always fixing either card readers, or head phones, or keyboards most of the time. Students could at least do their exercises related to the workbook at home. Fourth, all teachers complained that the syllabus of BELT sometimes did not act in accordance with the syllabus followed in the school. Teachers said that, therefore, they sometimes did not let students go on to the next unit in the BELT program until they had finished it in other English language courses. Finally, all teachers wanted a program evaluation, which would have to be carried out by the designer of BELT. They stated that they had lots of things to say either positive or negative, to the program designers because they never asked teachers' opinions about updating the program according to the current needs. One teacher's sentences nicely illustrate this issue.

“In our school BELT has been used for three years, but one of our schools for ten years. From ten years the BELT has never changed, even the characters. I think it should be updated because many things used ten years ago are not used right now or vice versa.”

Regarding being a teacher in a BELT class, half of the teachers were not happy to be involved in BELT course as a teacher. They thought that since they did not teach anything related directly to the English language itself, they felt useless as a teacher in this kind of class. They believed that any Information technology teacher who knew a little English could do better than English teachers did in that class because English teachers generally dealt with technical problems related to computers rather than English in the BELT class. They said that most of the time English teachers felt themselves insufficient in technical issues, and asked for help to fix these kinds of problems all the time. One of the comments given clarifies viewpoint of the teachers

“It is nonsense to put English teachers into this kind of CALL course, because I am just an observer or useless technician rather than a teacher. I do not perform anything related to English. Students do everything. It is time consuming for me. I have lots of other things to do.”

On the other hand, half of the teachers were happy to be in the BELT class as a teacher because they said that they could have free time during the class. They could do their other duties such as writing their lesson plans or reading the quizzes when students worked on BELT. As a result, they stated that one hour of BELT- not more - was enough for teachers.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the present study, the 6th grade students' attitudes towards the use of BELT in the English language learning environment, the relationship to their attitudes to a selected independent variable, English language proficiency level, and finally teachers' experiences and opinions towards the use of BELT in the classroom environment were evaluated. It is obvious that students are the main component of the successful integration of CALL applications into instructions. Therefore, their attitudes towards them are an essential part of the integration process. Based on the findings of the study, it can be extrapolated that students in general have moderate positive attitudes towards the use of BELT in the English language course and these attitudes do not change according to the participants' level of proficiency. This finding is in agreement with other studies reporting a positive perception and attitudes towards CALL applications in second and foreign language learning environments (e.g. Sagarra and Zapata, 2005; Ayres, 2002; Bulut and AbuSeileek, 2009; Jamieson, Chapelle and Preiss, 2005; Lim and Shen, 2006; Fernandez, 2005; Holmes, 1998).

This result is also supported by the findings of the teachers' interview because all teachers put forward that the BELT application increases students' attention to English language learning and attitudes towards it. Thus, it is worth considering the effects of the use of the BELT program on improving the learners' confidence in their abilities as independent learners. The result is in accordance with Okan and Torun's study (2007) and Stepp-Greany's (2002) that the findings of the unstructured group interviews with students and the questionnaire

indicates that a majority of the students gain self-confidence in their ability to use technology successfully through the BELT program.

Furthermore, in teacher interviews, all the respondents believed that the involvement of the BELT program improved students' language skills, including listening, writing, grammar, and vocabulary and created more self-directed learners. Several research studies such as Bulut and AbuSeileek, (2009); Okan and Torun, (2007); Klassen and Milton, (1999); Chang (2007), and Stepp-Greany's (2002) support the findings of the present study that CALL activities seem to help students mostly in improving their listening skills. The result also shows that students agree that their writing and reading skills improve in English as a result of the BELT activities. These perceptions of improved writing and reading skills with technology lend support to findings of improved reading skills reported by Stepp-Greany's (2002) and learners' perception of improved writing skills reported by Bulut and AbuSeileek, (2009) and Stepp-Greany's (2002). However, Okan and Torun, (2007) concludes that there is apparently a negative response on the contribution of CALL to the writing skills of students because of the lack of writing activities within the CALL curriculum in the term that the study was conducted. Although the findings of the questionnaire in this study show that BELT increases the students' perceptions on writing, this result must be evaluated cautiously, because it contradicts the result of informal classroom observation and student interviews. During the observations and student interviews, it was seen that most of the students complained about writing activities in the BELT program because any typo made by the students resulted in the program assessing the whole sentence as incorrect. Therefore, students paid more attention to not making any spelling mistakes than thinking about what they wrote.

Additionally, the result of the study reports that students increase their grammar and vocabulary knowledge through the use of BELT and they use them in other English classes. It corroborates another study that the majority of the participants praise the online materials as essential in advancing their second language grammatical and lexical knowledge (Sagarra and Zapata, 2008).

The present study indicates that students' and teachers' attitudes towards the use of BELT program do not always match. There seems to be some resistance to the employment of the program in terms of teachers' perspective. One of the most important negative feelings teachers have towards computer integration into instruction is the role of teachers in a CALL environment. It is obvious that new computer technologies force a different point of view on the role of the instructors in the process of language program design and classroom instruction. Teachers are a facilitator and a co-learner rather than a knowledge transmitter and information provider (Lim and Shen, 2006; Stepp-Greany, 2002). Therefore, necessary pedagogical and technical skills required by the CALL applications should be provided to teachers for the successful integration of the technological materials into the classroom. School administrators and program designers can arrange an in-service training which includes skills necessary for teachers to function appropriately in the CALL classroom before the academic term begins. Thus, familiarization with the CALL application helps teachers to integrate the program into the instruction properly and fruitfully.

The design of the computer-based language course is also an important issue to be addressed. Although there is no difference between students' attitudes towards the use of BELT in terms of English language proficiency level in the present study, this type of course should be carefully planned and graded. Thus, coherence between students can be easily provided. Furthermore, it was revealed in the observation process that unevaluated language activities encourage students not to pay attention to the exercises and to produce insignificant work during the BELT class. The multimedia-based exercises should be measured and implemented in the activities done in the regular English courses so that students attribute relevancy and educational benefits to technology enhanced instruction (Stepp-Greany, 2002).

Finally, it is obvious that few technology integration projects have been implemented by the ministry of national education not only in private schools but also in public schools in Turkey and the integration of computer technologies into instruction is always welcomed and supported by the parents in these schools. However, the parents in private schools want to know if it is worth spending so much money on software programs especially for language learning. Like many language course books, softwares designed for language learning are imported from either the UK or USA to Turkey and each year parents in private schools have to spend \$ 300 an average per student for English language learning materials. Therefore, parents as one of the members of the stakeholders should be informed about the properties of CALL applications used in schools.

CONCLUSION

According to the data collected from students and teachers, BELT Success exhibited desirable qualities which were appropriate for the 6th grade students in the private school in which the present study was conducted.

Additionally, 6th grade students showed moderate positive attitudes towards the use of BELT Success in the English language learning environment. Learning in the CALL-based English class provides several benefits such as engaging different kinds of authentic and interactive tasks, enhancing language skills through multimedia applications, and increasing self-confidence, for the students in the language classroom. However it is clear that measuring students' attitudes towards the use of CALL applications under the computer medium is a complex process and results depend on many personal factors. Thus, the long-term effects of CALL applications on English language learning, focusing particularly on students' learning styles and language skills, could be investigated by further studies.

There are a few limitations in the present study. Although the results of the research revealed important findings, the relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the results in this study. Moreover, factors that may influence students' attitudes including their prior computer experiences, their language learning styles, their differing levels of intelligence were not taken into consideration in the present study. Furthermore, since there were not many 6th grade students, the reliability and the validity of the BELT Attitude Scale were not studied by the researcher but at least the scale had been piloted before conducting the study. On the other hand, the present study provides valuable information about how CALL programs are perceived by Turkish students because little research focuses on students' attitudes towards CALL applications in English language learning environments in Turkey.

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