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COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATIVE DIGITAL ACTIVITIES FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS: PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC INTEGRATION IN FOCUS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore whether students perceive that the computer mediated communicative (CMC) online speaking activities support the development of their oral speaking skills, whether students consider that the out-of-class speaking activities contributed to building their level of confidence with respect to using the target structures and vocabulary in the classroom, and the advantages and/or challenges they perceive in using computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities to improve their speaking skills during the pandemic. A further aim of this study is to investigate whether the use of CMC out-of-class speaking activities supports the development of students' willingness to communicate, measured by using students' performance on different online activities. The research was conducted at the Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc with 8 participants, who were chosen among college students on a voluntary basis. The data for this research were collected via in-depth interview, which was conducted at the middle of the study. Also, the study showed that there was a significant contribution to the students' willingness to communicate in the target language as they became more confident as well as more comfortable speaking English online.

KEYWORDS- *Computer, Mediated, Communicative, Digital Activities, College Students, Personal, Social And Academic Integration*

INTRODUCTION

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is an umbrella term that encompasses various forms of human communication through networked computers, which can be synchronous or asynchronous and involve one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many exchanges of text, audio, and/or video messages.

As we progress towards the 5th industrial revolution, the use of technology for educational purposes can alter the processes and outcomes of social interaction and group processes, addressing issues such as how people express and construe self-Identity, form and manage impressions, develop and maintain relationships, build communities, collaborate at a distance and make collective decisions, mostly in contrast to non-mediated, face-to-face communication.

In a similar vein, the dichotomous view that differentiates the "real" from the "virtual" gradually was replaced by the perspective that underscores the blurring boundary and the fluid interaction between the two. At the same time, researchers have also investigated who turns to online communication as opposed to offline, face-to-face interaction, and with what consequences. Going beyond dyadic interaction between unacquainted individuals, social and psychological implications of CMC have also been examined in various contexts, such as distributed workgroups (computer-supported cooperative work: CSCW), social network sites (SNSs), and online games.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) is a generic term now commonly used for a variety of systems that enable people to communicate with other people by means of computers and networks. Well-known examples of such systems include computer conferencing, electronic mail, discussion lists, and bulletin boards. However, there are yet other possible applications of CMC, both in the work environment and in education and training.

In the work environment of United Kingdom, a common and growing phenomenon is collaborative work by individuals or groups who are separated from each other by either time or distance. This has come to be called computer supported cooperative work (CSCW) (Grief, 1988). In the education and training context, in addition to computer "conferencing," we can set up computer-mediated discussions of a more-focused nature as exemplified by the so-called virtual classroom (Hiltz, 1986, 1990), computer-mediated seminars and case study discussions (Romiszowski & DeHaas, 1989) and computer-mediated job "performance support systems" (Gery, 1991). The variety of alternative modalities is large and growing. In this chapter we shall limit our discussion to those approaches that have been implemented for a few years and have therefore generated a reasonable quantity of research on their effectiveness and operational characteristics.

In the United States of America, according to Rawson (1990) the communication process may have both synchronous and asynchronous characteristics. By synchronous communication, we understand communication between two or more people in real time, such as classroom-based, face-to-face discussion, or a telephone conversation. In asynchronous communication, the participants are not on-line at one and the same time, as in the

case of correspondence by letter or fax. The interesting aspect of using the computer as a communication medium is that it is possible to use it at will both as a synchronous communication medium like a telephone or an asynchronous communication medium like a letter writing or fax system, depending on what is ideally required by the particular. We will later explore these characteristics of synchronous and asynchronous communication in a computer-mediated environment, identifying potential benefits in different situations for each one of these modalities.

In the Philippines, Aguila (2006) posited that computer mediated communication creates new opportunities for language learners to interact with each other and helps create a friendlier learning environment. He found that videoconferencing-supported negotiation of meaning may facilitate second language acquisition at a distance and has its own distinct features. Nazareno (2003) assumed that computer mediated communication would make learning English more socially interactive and reduce students' affective filters. The use of the Internet appeared to motivate students and reduce their anxiety over language production. Aguila (2006) inferred that the students felt more comfortable in an online chat. They were less concerned about any language deficiencies that might cause them to refrain from speaking in a face-to-face setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology and education are the terms that have been used together and connected to each other for a long time even in the very beginning of the methods. Teachers had the tendency to use the blackboard as the most common technological instrument previously as it was a perfect tool for them to yield one-way communication in classrooms. Later, the overhead projectors and audiotapes came into language teachers' lives with the use of language labs to facilitate learning through drills. The use of basic computer programs was the next innovation in language classrooms, and since then, with the development of new technologies, it has almost become a prerequisite for language teachers to incorporate these innovations into their teaching practice (Thanasoulas, 2020).

How these innovative technological instruments can be exploited with today's students who are eminently enthusiastic about technology is the point that is worth pondering by language educators. The use of technology has the potential to heighten students' interest and enjoyment in the learning process. It also provides a chance for learners to engage in this process in privacy at their own pace, and in a safe environment in which errors are corrected and the feedback is given (Egan, 2019). Therefore, these rapid developments of technology, specifically expanding use of computers, and the implementation of this cutting edge into classroom practice have created the need of computer-mediated communication (CMC) for language teaching and learning (Simpson, 2020).

Computer-mediated communication (CDC) can be defined as the communication through the use of two or more electronic devices, particularly computers. According to Simpson (2020), CDC is an umbrella term and is attributed to communication among people by means of computers to connect to each other. CDC is also defined as multimodal and often, but not exclusively, Internet-mediated communication (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). Thurlow, Lengel and Alic (2004) describe CMC as any human communication achieved through, or with the help of, computer technology. ''CMC is communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers'' is another definition proposed by Herring (Herring, 2019).

Technology nowadays plays a crucial role in the materials development process, not only as a means of creating them but also of delivering the content. As cited by Harwood (2010), Reinders and White (2010) claim that technology supports the learners' language-learning process and extend the opportunities outside the class. The contribution of the computerized materials for language learning and teaching is inevitable in language education; this language-learning process is named as computer assisted language learning (CALL).

These computerized materials include tasks, web sites, software, online courses and virtual learning environments. So, it is clear that there may be more CALL materials than the materials used in face-to-face education. Although these materials are similar in some ways to traditional materials as they both aid learners to develop language acquisition, the computerized materials have also distinctive features. Godwin-Jones (2005) suggests some advantages of CALL materials including computer literacy development, communicative skills development, community building, identity creation, collaborative learning, and mentoring.
Zhao (2005) identified further advantages including access to digital multimedia technologies; having authenticity with the help of the videos and the Internet; enhancing comprehensibility through learner control; opportunities for communication; providing feedback; offering computer-based grammar checkers and spell checkers; and tracking and analyzing students' errors and behaviors.

Apart from these advantages, CALL materials also have organizational and pedagogical advantages. Access is one of the biggest benefits of these materials because CALL materials can be presented to learners independent of time and place (Harwood, 2010).

This also provides learners opportunities to use the target language outside the classroom. The second organizational advantage is the storage and retrieval of learning behavior records and outcomes. The progress of language learners and their test results can be stored electronically and brought back any time, when necessary, which saves time and energy in that electronic storage lightens the teachers' and administrators' work load. In addition to access and storage, CALL materials can easily be shared and updated. These recycling of materials help developers save time as well. For the pedagogical advantages of CALL materials, authenticity may be the most outstanding one. The

reason for this is that CALL materials help developers to design more authentic materials as it allows the selection of content of the target language.
Also, Harwood (2010) suggests CALL activities can be consisted of moving objects, recording one's voice, etc., which are new types of activities in language-learning and can be enhanced in number and variety. Getting immediate feedback is another major advantage of CALL materials, and different forms of feedback can be given to the learners such as using sound, movement, visual, or a combination of all. Monitoring and recording learners' behavior and progress is another pedagogical asset. Through the computer programs, learners' progress can be recorded and monitored. Also, it allows making suggestions easily. These kinds of materials can assist learners to have metacognitive awareness and help them prioritize their learning and, therefore, they can select their own way of learning strategies.

The last, but not the least, advantage is learners' having control over how they benefit from CALL materials. These materials can be tailored to individual needs considering the level of challenge of the input or the amount of support one needs.

In short, since technology plays a prominent role in materials development, it is inevitable to ignore the support of CALL materials in language learning process. CALL materials have a number of advantages, both organizational and pedagogical. Easy access, storage and retrieval as well as sharing and recycling materials without consuming time can be categorized under the main organizational benefits. Authenticity, interaction, situated learning, immediate feedback, monitoring and recording learners' behavior and progress and learners' control over how they make use of these materials with the help of the development of metacognitive skills can be listed as the pedagogical advantages of CALL materials.

Research Questions
As the classroom environment is not necessarily particularly well suited to facilitating natural oral communication practice, out-of-class, asynchronous speaking activities may provide the additional support students need. Therefore, the need for speaking exercises outside the class gains importance. In order to enable this out-of-class speaking practice and focus the learners' attention on the language-learning curriculum, computer-mediated communicative digital activities can be a viable alternative for students to practice the target language not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom; however, to date, few studies have examined the effect of asynchronous computer-mediated communicative out-of-class speaking activities on the development of oral skills.

Therefore, this study will help college students to become more aggressive in learning through digital platforms. Finally, this study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What advantages/challenges do students observe in using computer-mediated communicative digital activities to improve their speaking skills?
2. What are the coping strategies used by the students to surpass the challenges they encountered in using of computer-mediated communicative digital activities?
3. How do college students express their educational insights gained through the process of using computer-mediated digital activities?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design
In the next section, the specific details of the research procedures will be described, so future researchers can generalize the results from this study to other situations. Extensive and careful descriptions of the time, place, context, and culture of the study will be thoroughly discussed to develop transferability, which is the qualitative parallel to external validity in postpositivist research (Mertens, 2005). This section will: (a) discuss the interview approach; (b) explain the role of the researcher; and lastly, (c) describe the sampling method and ethical considerations.

Research Participants
All of the participants were between 18 years old and above and are teachers in selected public schools in Davao City. These participants are currently enrolled in the first semester of school year 2022-2023. A total of 10 participants are considered in this study who will join the in-depth interview and focused group discussion. Six of them will join the in-depth interview (IDI) while the remaining four will be subjected to the focus group discussion (FGD). All data gathered during IDI and FGD will be recorded and transmuted to summarize the responses of the participants in an orderly manner. Below are the inclusion criteria of the participants.

Participant 1 is a 3rd year Criminology student in one of the private educational institution in Davao City. He experienced using CMC digital activities for almost three years.
Participant 2 is a 4th year Education student major in generalist. She experienced blended learning modality with an aid of computer-mediated communicative approach for almost 3 years.
Participant 3 is a 2nd year agriculture student. She is a working student who used to engaged herself in CMC digital activities most especially in submitting assignment and other tasks.
Participant 4 is a 4th year college student under the college of business administration. She is an online seller who considered CMC as partner in engaging herself in different online platforms.

Participant 5 is a 3rd year college student taking up criminology. He is a working student and a resident in Davao City.
Participant 6 is a 4th year Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education major in English in one of the college institutions in Davao City. She experienced submitting assignments through CMC for almost 4 years.
Participant 7 is a 4th year student under the college of agriculture. She loves to engage herself in online class and used CMC as platform in submitting outputs.
Participant 8 is a 4th year Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education major in Generalist. He used quipper as official learning management system for his studies.
Participant 9 is under the college of business and management. She is a single mom and attended classes online.
Participant 10 is a 3rd year college student under the college of arts and sciences. He is a working student who attended classes online.

Research Instrument
Patton (2005) proposes researchers conduct interviews to learn the things they cannot directly observe. Qualitative interviewing is not used to get answers to questions, but to understand the experiences of the participants and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 2016). Generally, qualitative studies use unstructured, open-ended interviews, because they allow for the most flexibility and responsiveness to emerging issues for both the participants and interviewer; however, the use of semi-structured interviews is not uncommon and used when the researcher seeks to obtain specific more focused information (Schwandt, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews combine the flexibility of unstructured, open-ended interviews with directionality and an agenda to produce focused, qualitative, textual data (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 2019). This study collected data using semi-structured interviews to explore how the college students improve the computer-mediated communicative digital activities as part of their personal, social and academic experiences.

To ensure that the same information was collected from all the participants, an interview guide was used. The interview guide included open-ended questions and topics to help structure the interview, but when needed, the interviewer also explored, probed, and asked additional questions to clarify and expand on a particular topic. The interview guide helped make interviewing several different participants more systematic and comprehensive by defining in advance the issues to be explored (Patton, 2005). The open-ended questions were framed in a way, so the participants could represent their views and perspectives in their own words and terms, in addition to taking the questions in any direction that they chose (Patton, 1990).

Since qualitative research studies subjects in their natural setting, all interviews must be done through face-to-face or virtual interviews using google meet at a time convenient for the participants. All interview sessions were tape-recorded for purposes of transcription. When needed, the researcher used follow-up interviews after transcription to clarify meaning or explore areas in more depth.

Data Analysis
The data analysis was done in the qualitative method. To answer the first and second research questions, the researcher analyzed the interviews. Therefore, she did the content analysis of each interview, and the themes were identified. To answer the third research question, the researcher created a rubric and a checklist to determine the progress of students and the increase in the amount of their willingness to promote CMC integration for personal, social and academic endeavor. Finally, the questionnaire was used to explore the advantages and disadvantages of these interactive slides in reply to the last research question.

Qualitative data analysis begins with the process of organizing, reducing, and describing the collected data (Schwandt, 2001). Unlike quantitative analysis, there are no prescribed formulas for qualitative analysis. Marshall and Rossman (2006) remind researchers that qualitative analysis does not proceed linearly and is not neat. However, good practice and procedures enhance the credibility of qualitative research. In this last section, the data analysis procedures will be explained and the steps taken to ensure the results from this study are credible, transferable, dependable, and authentic will be thoroughly described.

To guide the data analysis, the researcher used the seven phases of data analysis described by Marshall and Rossman (2006) as a means to reduce data, create manageable pieces, allow for interpretation, and find meaning in the words of the participants. The seven phases included: (a) organizing the data; (b) immersion in the data; (c) generating categories and themes; (d) coding the data; (e) offering interpretations through analytic memos; and (f) searching for alternative understandings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Data analysis first begins with organizing the data. The organization of the data involved keeping information provided by each participant separate and in sequence with the order of the interviews. The process of organizing the data allowed it to remain manageable, easily accessible, and readily available. The digital audio files from the interviews were carefully transcribed into written form. Electronic folders were established to create an organization for the data collected from each participant.

Next, the researcher became familiar with the data through extensive reading of the interviews to gain an understanding of the content. This involved reading through the interviews at least three times. Following Hatch's

(2002) recommendations for qualitative analysis, the researcher created a sheet of notes for each participant. The summary sheets were a quick way to refer back to the original data as the data analysis continued (Hatch, 2002).
After the initial readings, Hatch (2002) recommends researchers read data through completely with one typology in mind. Patton (1990) defines typologies as classification systems made up of categories that divide some aspects of the world into parts. According to Hatch (2002), typologies are generated from the theory, common sense, or research objectives. For this study, the researcher used the typologies or themes from the literature review as the constructs through which to view the data.

After reading through the data with each construct or typology in mind, the researcher coded the data into five categories from the literature by taking excerpts of text from the data and identifying them within a particular category.

After everything was coded, the researcher read through the data again while writing analytic memos on her thoughts and insights and began the process of offering interpretations. During this stage, the researcher began to interpret the data to find significance and meaning in the teachers' instructional experiences through pulling salient themes, reoccurring ideas, and patterns of belief that resonated collectively throughout the interviews.

The offering of interpretations began following the emergence of themes in the data. Marshall and Rossman (2006) believe this part of the data analysis brings meaning to the themes and categories and allows the researcher to develop links between the interviews. The researcher began to interpret the data to find significance and meaning in the teachers' instructional experiences. Rossman and Marshall (2006) remind researchers there will always be alternate explanations existing within the data. Before moving forward, the researcher stopped and evaluated the findings for other plausible explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter highlights the findings of the study. It also presents the implications which were based on the significant findings of the study. Further, relevant future directions were offered that might help the conditions of the College students and Teachers in their respective classes during the pandemic as they revealed their values, beliefs and insights on their computer-mediated communication as medium of instruction during and after lockdowns.

In addition, this study examined the extent the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities' positively impact on students' speaking abilities. Finally, the participants' perceptions towards online digital speaking activities in their oral communication subject have been investigated through in-depth interviews. The results of this exploratory study have pedagogical implications for language learners, teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, school administrations, material designers, and course book writers.

Implications

First of all, the participants' perceptions gathered via the in-depth interviews and focused group discussion revealed that the digitalized online speaking activities positively impacted students' oral skill performances. Each and every participant was content with the activities in the study as they believed these activities helped them improve their language skills, particularly speaking skills. To be more specific, the participants portrayed a very positive attitude towards these online activities in terms of implementation and improvement in language skills. Some of them found using computer for speaking practice difficult at the outset. Yet they got accustomed to it in time, and they stated in the interviews that they found the implementation different, enjoyable and educational most especially during their online class in oral communication subject.

As Kukulska-Hulme (2019) stated, this kind of mobile learning has positive attributes to learners and increase the potential of personalized, situated, authentic and informal learning. Moreover, all participants stated these activities helped them develop lexical use as well as oral skills. Also owing to the fact that they evaluated their recordings insufficient or realized their mistakes and wanted make better recordings, each participant deleted one or more of their own.

As a second implication, the study presented the increase in willingness to engage in the second language. The performances of each participant were evaluated via the criteria specifically developed for this aim. The results revealed that they started to use both simple and complex sentences towards the end of the minor structural problems. In addition, the learners started to record and send longer tracts of talk when they got accustomed to the process. These attempts were also evidence to the increase in motivation, self-confidence and the desire to communicate.

Another major pedagogical implication of the study derives from the final interviews in order to elicit participants' overall considerations about these digital online speaking activities. Five categorizations were attained: psychological, pedagogical, interactional, technical and administrative considerations. When the psychological aspects were considered, five main considerations stood out. These were: increase in the amount of willingness to speak, increase in self-confidence, overcoming the shyness, becoming more fluent and improvement in oral skills. When the participants' responses to the interview questions were addressed pedagogically, self-correction, improvement in language skills and using different sources were conspicuous. For interactional considerations, all of the participants stated that it was much easier to talk to the screen as they had the opportunity to correct their

mistakes by changing their recording. For the technical considerations, since the delivery of the online lesson necessitated technology, the participants were both satisfied and dissatisfied with this situation.

Finally, the current study provided important implications for teacher trainers and technology units at RMC. The results of the student interviews showed that using technology as a part of language learning and teaching is a crucial step to promote language learning not only in class but also outside the class. The students had the chance to do the activities on their own pace, and were flexible in time and place. Therefore, language instructors play a crucial role in using technological platforms in their classes, and in supporting their students to make use of it outside the school borders. As a result, students will enhance their language abilities, especially the speaking abilities, if they are given the chance to express their thoughts in an online platform.

Future Directions

As a result of the findings and limitations of the present study, there may be several suggestions for further research. To start with, a follow-up study can be conducted on the students who participated in this study to explore possible long-term effects of the implementation on their academic lives. The main purpose of the study was to understand the impact of the use of digitalized online activities on their speaking skills and the participants' perceptions about whether the use of these out-of-class speaking activities promotes their speaking abilities. The effects of such implementation on language skills, such as listening and pronunciation can be investigated in future research studies, as well.

Second, the results may be extended to other similar cases. That is to say, a similar study can be conducted at different senior high preparatory schools or with the students who take oral communication classes.

Third, the study can be conducted as an experimental study with a control and an experimental group. Therefore, the researcher will have the chance to compare the effects of these online activities on two different groups, and discuss the results more quantitatively.

Finally, a study, which includes the participants' oral test performances, may reveal some other significant information about students' language use.

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