

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

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Abstract:*The use of computer-mediated communication in an ESL teacher education course is examined in this paper. The idea that community building and student participation in the formation of knowledge and understanding play key roles in the training of language instructors led to the creation of a course listserv in order to enable enhanced contact between students. The paper examines how electronic negotiation of understanding boosted prospects for professional development as students exchanged and commented on issues of interest.*

Keywords: *computer-mediated communication, Facebook, teaching.*

Introduction

While computers, cellphones, and tablets are now commonly utilized worldwide for communication, especially with internet access across various platforms, computer-mediated communication (CMC) has emerged as the most prevalent way of communication. Yet, despite their widespread use, computer-mediated communication methods and tools were mostly employed for amusement. This study aims to look into Facebook usage as a setting for vocabulary development. Moreover, it attempts to foster among Facebook users potential vocabulary learning techniques that would improve their acquisition of English vocabulary.[1:21]

Due to this, two study instruments were employed with a group of Facebook users: a questionnaire and an experiment in which a Facebook group called "Teaching English Acquisition" was formed to be involved in certain vocabulary acquisition procedures. The results of this experiment's impact on the acquisition of English vocabulary were assessed using a pretest and a posttest. The outcomes showed that using Facebook greatly enhanced the vocabulary learning of the participants in the study. Moreover, specific instruction in some tactics has had a significant impact on vocabulary learning. Facebook therefore proved to be an effective informal learning tool for English vocabulary, as well as a source of enjoyment.[2:43]

English, as an international language, plays an increasingly crucial role in the world today. Simultaneously, there is a growing spread of technology and internet use amid most people- young, adults, and even old. In recent years, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) especially Facebook, has been widely accepted as an alternative to face to face communications. According to Herring (2014), Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) was originally designed in the United States in the late 1960's

to facilitate the transfer of computer programs and information between users via the networks. CMC spread was facilitated by the commercial Internet service providers in the 1990's; "Communication has become easier than ever with a high-speed internet connection and other mobile technologies". The internet has overcome problems of distance communication by providing different types of communication method. The mid to late 1990s was described as the "golden age" [3:55]

Nesrine, Sara, Belhadi: Computer Mediated Communication and Vocabulary Learning: The Case of Facebook 100 of words and their usage in the right contexts. Ellis suggests that the knowledge aspect requires the employment of conscious mechanisms of learning while the skill aspect involves implicit learning. Besides, the learner must establish relationships between form, meaning, and function, both in utterances and intexts; they must establish the elaborate knowledge about individual words so they can be used communicatively; and they must establish an associational network of words . He adds that in the case of the English language, it is necessary for the learner to know the meaning of the isolated words (free morphemes) and bound ones. In view of the literature on vocabulary acquisition, three important processes may lead to a word being remembered.[4:76] These comprise noticing, retrieval and creative or generative use. First, as Nation explains that in the noticing process, attention is given to an item. This means that learners need to notice the word and to be aware of it as a useful language item. This process also occurs when learners look up a word in a dictionary, study a word, guess from context, and been explained to them. Second, the retrieval process may lead a word to be remembered. According to, "A word may be noticed and its meaning comprehended in the textual input to the task. If that word is subsequently retrieved during the task, then, the memory of that word will be strengthened". He explains that retrieval can be receptive or productive. Receptive retrieval involves perceiving the form and having to retrieve its meaning when the word is met, in listening or reading. Productive retrieval involves wishing to communicate the meaning of the word and having to retrieve its spoken or written form. As far as repetition is concerned, clarifies that "It is not simply repetition which is important, but the repeated opportunity to retrieve the item which is to be learned". Then, sees generative use as the third major process in word remembering. Certain studies, show that generative processing is an important factor in language vocabulary learning. Nation states that "Generative processing occurs when previously met words are subsequently met or used in ways that differ from the previous meeting with the word". Then, the generative uses of vocabulary are those where meeting the word in new context forces learners to reconceptualise the meaning that they previously had for that word.[5:31]

Task-based language teaching principles were taken as basis in preparation of the teaching materials in the study, in which text and voice chat applications among the Computer-Mediated Communication Technologies were used. During the applications data were collected in several ways, participants' perspectives regarding their changing experiences and the types of tasks used were investigated through the use of open-ended questionnaires after each session. A general insight was obtained into the students' experiences with close-ended questionnaires given at the end of the study, and the use of the target language in communications among students were determined by investigating

the text communication logs. From a user-oriented perspective, the results of the study shed light on the strategies that can be used in computer-mediated communication technologies valuing the experiences and perceptions of the learners. The basis for synchronous and asynchronous communication technologies in computer-mediated foreign language education is found in the interactionist theory among second language acquisition (SLA) theories and in communicative approach to foreign language teaching. Communicative approach values time spent on learner talk and supports the use of a variety of functions of language. Zimmerman who claims that it offers learners a sense of control over the language they are learning, emphasizes the importance of acquiring vocabulary. According to him, ineffective communication results from a lack of lexical knowledge. Schmitt divided vocabulary acquisition techniques into six major categories, totaling 58 distinct techniques:

1. Discovery determination Strategies: analyze part of speech, affixes and roots, check for L1 cognate, analyze pictures and gestures, guess from textual context, bilingual dictionary, monolingual dictionary, word lists, flashcards.

2. Discovery social Strategies: ask teacher for L1 translation, ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of new word, ask teacher for a sentence including new word, ask classmates for meaning, discover new meaning through group work activity.

3. Consolidating social strategies: study and practice meaning in a group, teacher checks students' flashcards or word lists for accuracy, interact with native speakers.

4. Consolidating social strategies: study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning, image word's meaning, connect word to a personal experience, associate the word with its coordinates, connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms, use semantic maps, use 'scales' for gradable adjectives, peg word method, loci method, group words together: to study them spatially on page, use new word in sentences, group words together within a storyline, study word spelling, study sound of word, say word aloud, image of word form, underline initial letter, configuration, use keyword method, affixes and roots/parts of speech, paraphrase word meaning, use cognates in study, learn words of an idiom together, use physical action, use semantic feature grids.

5. Consolidating cognitive strategies: verbal/written repetition, word lists, flash cards, note-taking, use vocabulary section in textbooks, listen to tape of word lists, put L2 labels on physical objects, keep vocabulary notebook.

6. Consolidating metacognitive strategies use L2 media, testing oneself with word tests, use spaced word practice, skip/pass new word, and continue to study word over time.

Research Aims This research aims at developing, within Facebook users, the possible vocabulary learning strategies that would enhance their English vocabulary learning. Furthermore, the research seeks to makeshift in Facebook use from only an entertainment tool to an educational one.

The test has compromised different types of activities as explained in the section of test description; the time allocated for the test was 45 minutes. The vocabulary strategies used that were tested in acquiring certain items were: the cognitive, metacognitive, determination, memory, and social strategies. The total score of all the participants in the pre-test was 144/400, that represented 36%. It further indicated that no participant

was able to take the full mark in any activity, their best performance was in the third activity, that employed the memory strategy, their total score was 51/100 which represented 35,4% of all the correct responses. However, their worst reply was in the fourth activity, that employed the social strategy, with the score 15/60 that represented 10% of all the correct responses. In the first activity that depends on the cognitive strategy, namely the translation technique, only one participant (5%) got the best mark (2.25/3), 11 of them (55%) get (1 – 1.5/3), and 8 (40%) of the participants scored (0 – 0.5/3). The total scores of this first activity were 17, 25/60 (12%), and its means was 0.9.

Conclusion

The present study investigates the effect of Facebook on learning English vocabulary mediated by vocabulary learning strategies (five are identified) through the Facebook platform. In order to investigate the inquiry of the research two tools were employed a questionnaire that gives the needed information to prepare the experimental study with pre and post tests. According to the analysis of questionnaire and tests, nearly all five strategies except the “Determination strategy” are favored by the twenty participants. It further showed that participants improved the vocabulary performance and acquisition after being exposed to vocabulary via Facebook. As a consequence, the two hypotheses were confirmed. Hence, the Facebook could be used as a suplumentary learning environment.

To evaluate the students' success in picking up the new vocabulary using certain chosen tactics, the identical pre-test from the beginning of the research was used as a post-test. The purpose of the post-test was to evaluate how the teaching tactics (vocabulary acquisition strategies) affected the performance of the students.

Computer-mediated communication offers the affordance of online socializing and networking. This means that the technology enables or creates the opportunity to foster socialization. However, computer-mediated communication will not, in itself, create social interaction. A sensitive and appropriate conference design and the tutor’s intervention provide the reason and impetus for socializing. It is important to foster in participants the feeling of community and shared responsibility, i.e. “we are working together at common tasks”. The most important consideration in achieving best practice is the distinction between delivering static content and creating interactivity and connectivity Foreign language education requires a new orientation

for teaching. In order to find appropriate ways of teaching online, one needs to review the research dealing with collaborative learning and group development. Firstly, teachers should enhance the learners’ social and learning skills. The role of the language teacher becomes that of a language educator. In addition to the knowledge of the foreign language, the teacher should have a command of such basic skills and qualities as the following:

a flexible and wide repertory of different learning and teaching methods; the ability to encounter and collaborate with individuals, different groups of people and communities; the responsibility and willingness to develop awareness of all human life including the broadening of one’s views and conceptions through understanding different patterns of thought, cultures and societies. Secondly, it is important to note that personality and motivational factors are bidirectional and need to be considered in the learning process.

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