

Pedagogical Challenges of Synchronous Communication Technologies for Business English Language Learning

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Abstract- The current research intends to examine the role of Digital tools for assisting instructors' pedagogical techniques while teaching English language learning. The increased awareness of the tools generates a need for computer-mediated communication (CMC). Researchers and practitioners need to explore, select and evaluate these tools in a variety of learning contexts. Synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) offers the opportunity for students and teachers to be present in a real-time environment and hold online conferences even if they are in distant places. This research aims to determine the synchronous communication technologies that practitioners feel are necessary to help students in synchronous learning settings. The data was taken from the English language teachers of a business school who shared their views about the role of technological tools in the development of a synchronous learning environment. They mentioned technical/operational, classroom management, communication, and design/delivery problems while using these tools in synchronous language teaching class. The researchers advised tools and approaches to improve synchronous communication to aid students in addressing challenges that may occur in a technologically dependent environment.

Keywords- Digital tools, Computer-Mediated Communication(CMC), Synchronous computer Mediated Communication(SCMC), learning settings, technologically dependent environment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication tools play a pivotal role in establishing collaboration amongst participants involved in the communication process. In recent years, scholars have attempted to demonstrate the benefits of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in fostering second language learning (Zbaracki-Richter & Latchem,2018). There are both

synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication. The most prevalent kind of synchronous communication is face-to-face interaction during video conferencing (Haydarova, 2019). This happens in the online language classroom when the teachers and students interact at a predetermined time and place.

Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC) is real-time text or video chat among Internet-connected individuals (Gilakjani, 2017). Video-based SCMC (i.e., videoconferencing) is analogous to face-to-face communication in terms of the availability of visual and spoken cues, such as tone and gestures. Text based Communication also offers the opportunity to interact in the real time setting. Both SCMC strategies are widely used to bridge cultural and language gaps in communication.

Text-based SCMC has been shown to promote egalitarian participation, language development, and complexity, as well as reduce communication anxiety caused by time restrictions or psychological strain during interaction (Taghizadeh, & Hasani Yourdshahi, 2020). Multiple studies have demonstrated the potential for SLA in text-based SCMC by examining feedback and focus-on-form activities in meaning negotiation (Gökçen, 2022, Haydarova, 2019, Zawacki-Richter & Latchem,2018). Text-based SCMC (Treem, Leonardi, & van den Hooff,2020) demonstrates that it may be used with a range of communication modalities, including text chats and visuals, to enhance engagement and ease Second Language Acquisition (SLA) processing (Hamper & Stickler, 2012). In addition, although Son (2018). found that quick meaning exchanges in text-based SCMC enhanced fluency more than accuracy because learners tended to dismiss language errors. The video based communication ensures the faster tempo of interaction among the participants .According to Lew, Walther. & Shin, (2018) the opportunities for genuine interaction in SCMC may enhance the evolution of sociolinguistic ability in addition to

language development. Given the centrality of social factors in contact (Tarone, 2010), a growing amount of SCMC research, particularly intercultural SCMC research, has examined interaction in a variety of social contexts.

Hancock, Naaman, & Levy, (2020) maintain that educational technology, delivery tactics, and practices must keep pace with students' ever-changing needs. As a result of the change to online and digital education platforms, both students and teachers may now learn in several ways. To assist students who are already proficient with technology and to enhance the digital confidence of students who are hesitant, teachers must be abreast of emerging technologies. This is a key responsibility in a world where digital literacy is essential to a student's success. In the present digital era, educators seek more direction on how to use modern technologies in current classroom environments. According to Carr, (2020), teachers often encounter problems while using multimedia technologies in synchronous contexts and Learning Management Systems (LMS) in synchronous settings. This may be because they lack information on how to educate in synchronous learning contexts, are unfamiliar of the differences between face-to-face (f2f), and synchronous environments, or lack such information (Herring, 2019). When both students and teachers are situated in different places, synchronous learning is a relatively new kind of online education. By utilizing interactive platforms like Adobe Connect, Zoom, or Blackboard and other collaborative multimedia tools like instant messaging, document sharing, or even live video conferencing and audio conferencing.

This research study intends to find out the following research questions:

Q.1 What are various forms of online teaching-learning modes for language teaching purposes?

Q.2 What are the perceptions of teachers on synchronous computer-mediated communication?

Q.3 How do English Language teachers use synchronous computer-mediated communication platforms to teach English?

Q.4 In what ways does synchronous technology facilitate the acquisition of English language skills?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pakistan has put a greater focus on e-learning in recent years. The government of Pakistan lacks the financial and personnel resources necessary to create an effective online education system. According to Warsi, (2021)., the external factors that contribute to the effectiveness of e-learning include integrating technology into the classroom, obtaining and installing the appropriate equipment, and developing course materials. The lockdown during COVID-19 has revealed various shortcomings in our web-based teaching method that would generally

need more expertise. The absence of technology in the education sector is only one of the many problems that exist (Noreen, & Malik, 2020). Costs associated with acquiring and installing equipment, as well as maintaining and repairing infrastructure, are of considerable significance (Abdel Latif, 2021). Teachers must be tech-savvy and adept with ICT technologies to effectively organise their online classes through computer mediated communication (CMC) (Herring, 2019).

Information technology has a vital influence on how we teach and learn in the modern world. According to Chunrao (2016), before the advent of e-learning, people used the chalk-and-talk method. Teachers were the primary source of education for the majority of people (Larsen-Freeman, 2018). As information and communication technology (ICT) becomes more integrated into different professions, teaching styles are expanding to give students with alternative possibilities (Nowak, & Fox, 2018). People are attracted to e-learning because of its benefits. However, they are concerned and worried by the shift from in-person to online learning (Pokrivčáková, 2019). Concerns over teachers' knowledge of technology and degree of comfort with it, the installation of the needed equipment, students' motivation, and their grasp of ICT are among the risks associated with integrating technology into education in Pakistan (Abdel Latif, 2021).

Teachers are the major source of preparation and planning for online courses in developing countries (Kebritchi, Lipschuetz, & Santiago, 2017). Teachers must plan and prepare in advance for the lessons they will teach. It is, therefore, needed to adapt the curriculum to offer online courses in different degree programs at University level (Gökçen, 2022). The majority of instructors are either unfamiliar with platforms such as Moodle, Vedamo, and Zoom, or they lack experience transitioning from traditional to online courses (Haydarova, 2019). Teachers are not alone in this process, as they need to learn how to maintain students' attention in online classes so that they may fully grasp their assignments where teachers and students employ multimedia technology in numerous places (Larsen-Freeman, 2018).

Synchronous learning occurs when both teacher and learners participate in virtual synchronous environment (Gilakjani, 2017). Students may engage in virtual classroom activities, discussions, lectures, and learning experiences from the comfort of their own homes due to synchronous learning. Teachers find it difficult to use LMS tools and synchronous platforms (Taghizadeh, & Hasani Yourdshahi, 2020). As a consequence of learner-centered collaborative education, strategies like role-playing, discussions, breakout groups, and online quizzes and assignments, the teacher's role in synchronous environments has shifted from active

instructor to the facilitator of synchronous learning where they use cutting-edge learning technologies, manage the learning environment, and connect with students in a way that promotes their success (Haydarova, 2019).

III. METHODOLOGY

This research used convenience sampling, often known as purposeful, deliberate, or subjective sampling. It refers to the nonprobability sampling approach, which focuses on the techniques used to choose the sample population, based on the ease and accessibility for the researcher (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). To carry out this research, Interviews have been taken with English language teachers of a business school. Ten teachers took part in this study by giving their interviews. An interview is a controlled conversation in which the interviewer asks a series of questions to elicit information from the interviewee.

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

English as a second language teachers is increasingly using multimedia technology. According to the respondents, ICT may be used to educate and learn throughout the teaching and learning process. In synchronous mode teachers used PowerPoint presentations, documentary films, videos, audio clips, audio-visual materials, and relevant online material from educational websites during lectures.

Table 1.1: Synchronous Communication Tools, Usability, and Limitations

Synchronous Communication Tools	Accessibility	Limitations/ Restrictions
Video Conferencing	Interactions in real-time through videoconferencing Seeing the person with whom you are communicating may give essential visual signals. Improves listening /speaking and reading /writing skills	Quality is influenced by the bandwidth There may be some delay between speaking and receiving a response, which might disrupt the natural flow of a conversation. The presenter's camera is required for documents and presentation sharing.
Web-Based Conference	Real-time communication Permits sharing of presentations, papers, and application demos.	Quality is influenced by the bandwidth There may be some delay between speaking and receiving a response, which might disrupt the

	Improves listening /speaking and reading /writing skills	natural flow of a conversation
Audio conferencing	Real-time communication A certain number of participant collaborative discussions Improves listening /speaking	Quality is influenced by the bandwidth There may be some delay between speaking and receiving a response, which might disrupt the natural flow of a conversation. Lacks utilization of visual learning
Text-Chat	Real-time communication in real-time chat For information transfer with modest complexity, text and picture capabilities are provided. Includes a record of student engagement. Predominantly text-based, which slows down communication. Expressions have the potential to be misunderstood. Improves reading /writing skills	Predominantly text-based, which slows down communication. Expressions have the potential to be misunderstood.
Whiteboard Interaction	Real-time Whiteboard Interaction Co-creation of ideas and their presentation Improves listening /speaking and reading /writing skills	The effectiveness of audio conferencing depends on the available bandwidth
Application Sharing	Integration of programs Real-time communication Co-creation of papers/assignments and their presentation	The effectiveness of audio conferencing depends on the available effective internet connection

The results from the table 1.1 show that technology may benefit learners in their pursuit of learning content and enhancing language learning skills simultaneously. This indicates that learners can

accomplish and learn several skills integrated with one well-planned synchronous lesson. In this synchronous scenario, students watch, focus, reflect, take notes, synthesize, and compose in a fully integrated lesson to practice both the receptive and productive skills of English language.

Teachers were of the view that multimedia technology may be used to aid users in improving their reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. The results of the interviews indicate that incorporating ICT into teaching and learning helps students become more proficient readers. Students may use the internet to search for English-language books and articles. This is because students may download subject-specific information which includes international magazines, periodicals, essays, papers, and e-books. Using technology to teach and study a language may assist students in increasing their listening abilities (Pokrivčáková, 2019). Interview data illustrate how technology may be used to enhance speech. Using technology, students may record a portion of their English conversations with one another.

English Language teachers need to implement a technology plan that includes strategies for integrating technology into the classroom. In addition to facilitating online collaboration, CMC encourages participation by allowing for more equal engagement and a less stressful setting than face-to-face interaction (Gökçen, 2022, Haydarova, 2019, Zawacki-Richter & Latchem, 2018). Because CMC is a text-based course, students have sufficient time to assimilate material, monitor output, and evaluate results (Li, 2018). The student concurrently focuses on certain conversational excerpts that display on the screen (Zawacki-Richter & Latchem, 2018). In turn, this may cause individuals to concentrate more closely on criticism or self-correction than they would during face-to-face discussions. Lastly, the CMC's decrease in instructor speaking promotes students to utilize the target language two or three times more often (Loewen, & Sato, 2018). According to Li (2018), online written speech is characterized by short, uncomplicated phrases rather than lengthy, complex ones. Overall, online engagement enhances foreign language acquisition and helps negotiating for meaning during synchronous language classes (Treem, Leonardi, & van den Hooff, 2020).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the current research findings, following are the recommendations for effective use of technological tools for English language learning.

1. Teachers must develop a technology strategy to thoroughly coincide with curricular requirements.

2. Instructors should learn the optimal pedagogical technique for integrating technology into the classroom.
3. Computer technology is a crucial component of the skill-building-oriented learning activity.
4. Teachers of languages should encourage students to utilize technology to enhance their language abilities as Computer technology is a crucial component of the skill-building-oriented learning activity.
5. Universities should see technology as an integral component of their curriculum for teaching and learning.
6. Teachers who use technology in the classroom should get additional support from technology experts.
7. Teachers should evaluate how technology might assist them in concentrating on the learners as opposed to teacher-centered learning.
8. Teachers must comprehend their responsibilities as guides and facilitators of their students' learning.
9. Teachers should solicit feedback from their peers to enhance their teaching by technological means.
10. Teachers should encourage students to use technology to enhance their language skills.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this research demonstrated that technology facilitates communication between teachers and students, provides clear input and output, contributes to the development of students' critical thinking skills, and makes learning and teaching more student-centered. Language learners should use technology to improve their language skills since it stimulates creativity and offers them fascinating, engaging, and intriguing ways to study the language. The study indicates that ICT may be advantageous for effective language learning. The outcomes of the interview indicate that English teachers have made every effort to engage their students using technology. Because using technology in language teaching and study keeps the classroom up-to-date and makes it more entertaining. There are several possibilities for engaging students with technological tools to teach the English language. In addition, technology is used to teach in a variety of circumstances, so that students are not just exposed to the content provided in textbooks. Students get the chance to learn English with the use of technology while simultaneously earning experience in the classroom.

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