

The Title: NEGOTIATION OF MEANING THROUGH CMC: PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR EFL UNIVERSITY LEARNERS.

Domains of Research: Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL)

The Problematic: SLA research suggests that negotiation of meaning can help learners to make their input comprehensible and modify their own output. The nature of the EFL classroom environments at the university level, however, show a quasi inexistent communicative environments, where both the nature and the quality of interactions are subject to debate.

Nonetheless, with the increasing flow of Information and Computer Technology tools, many technological solutions are turning to promising teaching and learning applications, among them Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

In fact, according to recent literature in Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) may stand as effective educational device mainly in the enhancement of the communicative skills of EFL learners who can experience a broader range of interactions (with natives and non-natives) without restriction of neither time or place, offering by this way a favourable environment to genuine communication to occur.

The Hypotheses: In this study we propose two hypotheses:

The first one supports the idea that SCMC, by virtue of its interactive characteristics and quasi authentic environment can stand as a good pedagogical tool that meets the needs of contemporary education that sees learning to be situated, discursive, interactive and constructed, and then bridges the gap of the communicative classroom that suffers from a lack of exposure to authentic context of language use as well as an acute need of interpersonal communication.

The second hypothesis that we put forward suggests that SCMC can help to enhance some of the communicative skills of EFL learners through negotiation of meaning, collaboration and problem solving strategies.

The Methodology : The research covers two parts: a first investigation takes place within the EFL University classroom and a second in a CMC environment in the first part we will go over the theoretical foundations that will constitute the premises of our research work, then we will expose the results of our investigation that encompass survey outcomes, interview summaries and the observation sessions comments. In the second part we will focus on the study *per se*. The study explores in a qualitative way CMC interactions by intermediate EFL learners to see what type of negotiation of meaning occurs in these kinds of web-based interactions and what are the communicative strategies that are used in CMC discussions. This will help us clarify to what extent CMC may actually be considered as an effective bridge to oral interaction and then as a useful educational facility for foreign language learning.

Our First Results: The results that we obtained at this stage of analysis support prior claims that SCMC may enhance their communicative skills, by allowing students to engage in meaningful and genuine interactions.

In the next stage of our investigation we will focus our attention on CMC discussion *per se* and we will attempt to examine the discussion threads in depth so as to capture the type of turns and negotiation that takes place and which may contribute to the enhancement of the communication skills as reviewed in the literature.

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