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Investigating the Role of Computer-Mediated Instruction in Cultivating Communication and Digital Literacy Skills in Higher Education

Shalvi Kumari
Research Scholar
Dr. Vinita.S.Gopalkrishnan
Associate Professor, Department of Education
Banasthali University, Newai,Tonk, Rajasthan
Email-Salvi.kashyap@gmail.com, Mobile- 87891 87595

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Abstract

In today's digital age, effective communication and digital literacy skills are crucial, especially in higher education. This study examines how Computer-Mediated Instruction (CMI) contributes to developing these vital skills. CMI employs digital platforms and tools, including synchronous and asynchronous methods, to facilitate learning. Through an extensive review of existing literature, this research explores CMI's impact on communication and digital literacy skill development in higher education. The findings indicate that integrating CMI strategies enhances students' communication abilities and digital literacy skills, better preparing them for the digitally-driven world.

Key words: *Computer-Mediated Instruction (CMI), Communication skills, Digital literacy, Higher education etc.*

Introduction

Advancements in technology and the expanding bandwidth of Internet access have fueled the growing popularity of computer-Mediated instruction. Beyond just time and cost savings, these approaches often surpass the effectiveness of traditional in-person education.

Digital technologies have transformed the landscape of education, expanding possibilities through various innovative tools such as smart devices, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), blockchain, and software applications (Gaol & Prasolova-Førland, 2021;OECD, 2021). This has led to increased investments in integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into education systems globally. Education agendas have been reshaped to prioritize strategies and policies surrounding ICT integration.(Fernández-Gutiérrez et al., 2020; Lawrence & Tar, 2018)

In the modern era, the need for proficient communication and digital literacy skills holds immense importance, particularly in higher education. With technology becoming ubiquitous across all aspects of society, educators face the challenge of equipping students with the necessary skills to thrive in a digital-centric environment. A promising approach to meeting this challenge is through Computer-Mediated Instruction (CMI), utilizing digital platforms and resources to enhance learning experiences.

CMI encompasses both synchronous and asynchronous methods of instruction, providing flexibility and diversity in learning experiences. Synchronous methods involve real-time interaction between instructors and students, such as live video lectures, virtual classrooms, or chat-based discussions. This immediate engagement allows for dynamic exchanges and fosters a sense of community among learners whereas, asynchronous methods enable students to engage with course materials and activities at their own pace and convenience. Examples include pre-recorded lectures, discussion boards, and self-paced modules. This flexibility accommodates diverse learning styles and schedules, empowering students to take ownership of their learning journey.

Alibakhshi, G., & Mohammadi, M. J. (2016) in his study asserts that in the past few decades, the use of multimedia tools like mobile devices, computers, and the internet has proven beneficial in language learning. While research has explored how multimedia and synchronous computer-assisted language learning (CALL) impact the acquisition of language skills and components among English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, there's still a need to delve deeper into how computer-mediated instruction using multimedia affects the learning of collocations. This study sought to fill this gap by examining whether synchronous and asynchronous multimedia components specifically, text and text supplemented with graphics—affect the learning of collocations among EFL learners. The study involved 150 male EFL learners at the pre-intermediate proficiency level, chosen through convenience sampling and divided into six

groups. The findings revealed that computer-mediated instruction was more effective than non-computerized instruction.

Nejad, N. M. and colleagues (2021) conducted a research study investigating the impact of synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) on learners' pronunciation achievement. Their aim was to assess the effectiveness of one-to-one synchronous and asynchronous voice-based CMC on EFL learners' pronunciation skills. The study employed an experimental design with a sample size of 45 participants, comprising 15 in the control group and 30 in the experimental group. Two tests, namely the lexical stress test and phonemic discrimination test, were utilized in the research. The findings indicated a positive effect of CMC-based instruction compared to face-to-face (F-F) instruction. Additionally, no significant difference was observed between the two modes of CMC instruction. However, synchronous instruction was found to be particularly effective for pronunciation learning. These results underscore the importance of technology in enhancing pronunciation acquisition.

Objectives:

1. To assess the effectiveness of computer-mediated instruction (CMI) in enhancing communication skills among higher education students.
2. To explore the role of computer-mediated instruction (CMI) in fostering digital literacy skills among higher education students.

Methodology

The study employs an extensive review of existing literature.

Discussion

Effectiveness of computer-mediated instruction (CMI) in enhancing communication:

Computer-mediated instruction (CMI) has been widely studied for its effectiveness in enhancing communication skills among higher education students. Several factors contribute to its effectiveness such as:

- **Interactive Learning Environment:** CMI platforms often provide interactive features such as discussion forums, chat rooms, and virtual classrooms, allowing students to engage actively in communication activities. These platforms simulate real-life communication scenarios, facilitating the development of communication skills.
- **Flexible Learning:** CMI offers flexibility in terms of time and location, allowing students to access learning materials and participate in communication activities at their convenience. This flexibility accommodates diverse learning styles and schedules, enhancing student engagement and participation.
- **Access to Multimedia Resources:** CMI platforms can integrate various multimedia resources such as videos, audio recordings, and interactive simulations, providing students with diverse learning experiences. These resources complement traditional textual materials and facilitate the development of multiple communication skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- **Immediate Feedback:** CMI platforms often include features for providing immediate feedback on students' communication performance. Automated feedback mechanisms, peer review, and instructor feedback help students identify strengths and areas for improvement in their communication skills, fostering continuous learning and skill development.
- **Individualized Learning Experience:** CMI platforms can adapt to individual students' learning needs and preferences through personalized learning paths, adaptive assessments, and tailored feedback. This individualization enhances the effectiveness of communication skill development by addressing students' specific strengths, weaknesses, and learning objectives.
- **Collaborative Learning Opportunities:** CMI facilitates collaboration among students through group projects, online discussions, and collaborative activities. By engaging in collaborative communication tasks, students learn to work effectively in teams, negotiate meaning, and communicate ideas coherently and persuasively, thereby enhancing their communication skills.
- **Integration of Technology Skills:** CMI exposes students to various digital communication tools and technologies, equipping them with essential technology skills relevant to today's digital workplace. By mastering these tools and technologies, students not only enhance their communication skills but also become more proficient in using technology for academic and professional purposes.

Role of computer-mediated instruction (CMI) in fostering digital literacy skills among higher education students

Computer-mediated instruction (CMI) plays a vital role in fostering digital literacy skills among higher education students. Digital literacy encompasses a range of skills and competencies necessary for effectively navigating and utilizing digital technologies. Here's how CMI contributes to this:

- **Access to Information:** CMI provides students with access to vast amounts of information available online. Through platforms such as learning management systems (LMS), students can access course materials, academic journals, eBooks, and other digital resources. Learning how to effectively search for, evaluate, and use digital information is a critical aspect of digital literacy.
- **Technology Proficiency:** Engaging with CMI platforms and tools helps students develop proficiency in using various digital technologies. This includes skills such as navigating software interfaces, using productivity tools, collaborating online, and troubleshooting technical issues. These skills are essential for success in both academic and professional contexts.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** CMI often involves interactive elements such as quizzes, discussions, and simulations, which encourage critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students learn to analyse information, evaluate different perspectives, and apply knowledge to real-world scenarios, all of which are important components of digital literacy.
- **Communication Skills:** Communication in digital environments differs from face-to-face interaction, requiring students to adapt their communication style and etiquette. Through online discussions, group projects, and multimedia presentations facilitated by CMI, students develop effective written communication skills, digital etiquette, and the ability to collaborate virtually.
- **Media Literacy:** CMI exposes students to various forms of digital media, including text, images, videos, and interactive multimedia. By engaging with and

creating digital content, students develop media literacy skills, such as understanding how media messages are constructed, interpreting visual information critically, and recognizing bias and misinformation online.

- **Ethical and Responsible Technology Use:** With the proliferation of digital technologies, it's crucial for students to understand ethical and responsible use of technology. CMI can incorporate discussions on topics such as digital citizenship, online privacy, copyright, and cybersecurity, empowering students to navigate digital environments ethically and responsibly.
- **Lifelong Learning Skills:** In an era of rapid technological advancement, digital literacy is not a static skill but a continuous learning process. By engaging with CMI, students cultivate a mindset of lifelong learning and adaptability, equipping them with the skills to navigate and thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Conclusion

This research paper explores how using computers to teach can help students communicate better and become more skilled with digital tools. By looking at lots of studies, we found that computer-based learning can create interactive classrooms, offer flexible learning options, and provide access to various learning materials like videos and quizzes. It also helps students learn how to use technology effectively, think critically, and communicate well in digital environments. However, it's important to note that our study has some limitations, such as not being able to apply to all situations and not considering the latest trends. Still, it's clear that using computers in education can greatly benefit students and prepare them for the modern world.

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