

The Effects of CMC on the Affective Domain of EFL Learners in Korea and Japan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore that computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides several benefits for EFL learners in affective domains besides of language learning. 70 EFL learners in Korean university participated in CMC activity, on-line chatting, with the EFL learners of Japanese university in the spring semester, 2016. The qualitative method was used for understanding the research inquiries. Data include student journal, student survey, and interview. Based on Chen's framework (2005), this research surveyed the students' reactions on 1) cultivating learner's motivation in learning EFL, 2) learning English in low anxiety environment, 3) sharing cultural knowledge of foreign countries. The results of the survey show that most students of this study evaluated the use of CMC activities in learning English very positively. This finding implies that CMC use in English classroom can provide some benefits to EFL students' affective domain.

Keywords

Computer-mediated Communication (CMC)/Distance Learning /Non-native speakers /English Language Teaching/Online chatting /Affective Domain/Motivation

1 Introduction

The recent studies of ELT suggested a variety of benefits of CMC in many areas. Lee (2008) emphasized some benefits of the use of CMC in the field of ELT; the quantity of the language output, the quality of output and the attention to form. Lai and Zhao (2006) explained that the visual salience of text-based CMC activities increases learners' opportunities to make output modifications. Much research on the effect of CMC activities on the affective domain of EFL learners has been published recently, including the reduction in anxiety in the CMC environment (Chen, 2005; Fotos, 2004), the development of autonomy by the independent language

environment (Huh, 2011; Pasfield-Neofitou, 2011), the exposure to language variation in the form of communicative language use (Kano, 2004).

2 Research Design

2.1 Participants

The participants of this CMC activity are students from N University in Korea and W University in Japan. The course used for this research is "Intercultural Communication" which was developed to cultivate the communicative competence of English language and understand the cultural differences between foreign countries through distance learning program. The students in this course had to attend the chatting session based on the fixed schedule and talk during one hour in a week according to the fixed chatting topics and schedule.

2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected during the spring semester of 2016. The qualitative method was used for understanding the research inquiries. Data include student journal, student survey, and interview.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Cultivating learners' motivation in learning EFL

This project through CMC activities can cultivate the motivation of the students to engage in communication with their partners. The participants in this program expressed their opinions that the program was very funny and exciting and they had a very good time talking with foreigners.

- I'm so *delighted* to know Japanese friends.
- I *want to chat* with foreigners, but I don't have friends who live in abroad. In this class, I make friends who live in Japan, and they improve my English skills.

- Another foreign friend's talk to each other, that was **great**.
- It is **useful** that I was **chatting in English**

3.2 Learning English in low anxiety environment

The CMC environment in this project can provide the students with the chance to be allowed to communicate within a low anxiety. Many researchers have found that CMC can reduce the anxiety factor of using a foreign language (Chen, 2005; Fotos, 2004; Lee, 2005). Some of their responses about the low anxiety environment are like these:

- It's very meaningful to me. The reason is first it gives **self-confidence** for speaking English, and second it can make lots of foreign friends, etc.
- **At first I was reluctant** to chat with foreign students. My thoughts had passed in my head.
- What should I talk with them? What if I make a mistake in front of them? But first I start talking with them, the **fear and hesitation of chatting with foreign students were gone**.

3.3 Sharing cultural knowledge of foreign countries

The interactions between EFL learners through CMC activities can cause the students to share the cultures between the two countries.

- It is meaningful because of **new world**.
- I think the chat with other country's students give the chance to **know other culture**.
- I was happy to meet the **students in Japan**. I had a good time with them. It was a good chance to produce for speaking.

4 Conclusion

This finding implies that CMC use in English classroom can provide some benefits to EFL students' affective domain.

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