

Using Computer-Mediated Communication in Secondary Business English: A Systematic Review.

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Abstract

Business English courses focus on communicative activities that simulate the intended work environment of the student. Computer-mediated communication (CMC), which is defined as primarily text-based human-human interaction mediated by the Internet and mobile technologies and includes e-mail, discussion forums, blogs, social networking, and so on, has been exploited on commercial and business courses to simulate a range of workplace activities, including: retail transactions, hotel management, and international communication and negotiation. In this talk, the use of such simulations in secondary business English is discussed. Having presented some examples which might be appropriated for use in business English classes, the impact of using CMC in English as a foreign language (EFL) is considered. The latter discussion is based on evidence from our recent systematic review of research on the use of new technologies in primary and secondary EFL which asks what impact technologies have on pedagogy and the acquisition of EFL skills.

Bio

Dr Zöe Handley is a researcher in the Applied Linguistics Group at the University of Oxford. She is currently working on an Oxford University Press funded project investigating the use of new technologies in primary and secondary EFL. The first phase of this project comprised a systematic review of empirical research on the use of new technologies in primary and secondary English as a Foreign language. The second comprised an investigation of the use of interactive whiteboards in Spanish schools.



Potential applications of CMC in business English

Yankee Donut Company

Vice President (Chris' boss)	High	Informational
Request for Chris to put together a short PowerPoint presentation (3-5 slides) that overviews Chris' strategy for recruiting on college campuses. The presentation needs to be completed in the next 30 minutes for a board meeting.		
Customer	Low	Interpersonal
A loyal customer obtained Chris' e-mail address from the Web site and is sending Chris an e-mail because she broke the promotional cup she received a few years ago. She would like Chris to send her a new cup.		
Manager Store A (Chris's direct report)	High	Decisional
Manager A has a staffing crises and will need to close the store in the next 3 hours if she doesn't find someone to manage the store when she has jury duty.		
Manager Store B	Low	Informational
Manager B sends Chris an overdue status report concerning financials, staffing and store incidents. There are many problems with the report and it is clear the manager is not very effective. Embedded in the e-mail is an offer for concert tickets that Chris needs to respond to immediately.		
Vice President, public relations	Medium	Interpersonal
A reminder about the new store opening that afternoon. The Vice President needs to know what Chris is planning to say in order to prepare press materials. The VP also needs the Yankee Donut costume.		
Manager Store C	Medium	Decisional
Manager C is missing a shipment of coffee cups and is concerned the store will run out by the afternoon.		
Assistant manager, Store B	Medium	Interpersonal
Assistant manager B is very unhappy and wants to speak with Chris before deciding whether to give his notice this afternoon. The assistant manager used to work for Chris and considers Chris his mentor.		
Manager Store D	Low	Decisional
Manager D received an extra shipment of coffee cups and doesn't have space for the cups.		
Customer	Low	Interpersonal
The customer wants confirmation that her e-mail was received. She also wants to know if she can still receive a refill discount with her new cup.		

What is a Systematic Review?

Systematic reviews attempt to reduce the subjective bias characteristic of many traditional literature reviews through the use of a transparent and explicit protocol, exhaustive database searches, explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria, and quality assurance measures, i.e. hand searches to validate database searches and double blind reviews of individual studies

The EPPI (<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms>) approach to systematic review is summarised in the following figure:

Keyword Map

1. Establish broad review question
2. Establish inclusion/exclusion criteria
3. Establish search strategy
4. Conduct exhaustive database searches
5. Apply inclusion/exclusion criteria
6. Key word and map the identified studies

In-Depth Review

1. Establish in-depth review questions
2. Establish inclusion/exclusion criteria
3. Apply inclusion/exclusion criteria
4. Assess weight of evidence of identified studies through double blind reviews
5. Synthesise the findings of identified studies

Netspeak

‘We “write” e-mails, not “speak” them. But chatgroups are for “chat”, and people certainly “speak” to each other there – as do people involved in virtual worlds’ (Crystal, 2001: 29)

Text messages destroying our language

“I knew this was coming from the first time one of my friends sent me the message ‘I’ve got 2 go, talk to U later,’ I knew the end was near. The English language as we once new it is out the window, and replacing it is this hip and cool slang-induced language, obsessed with taking the vowels out of words and spelling fonetikally.” (Washington Post, May 2007)

I h8 txt msgs: How texting is wrecking out language

“Vandals who are doing to our language what Ghengis Khan did to his neighbours eight hundred years ago. They are destroying it: pillaging our punctuation; savaging our sentences; raping our vocabulary. And they must be stopped.” (John Humphrys, Daily Mail, 2007)

Mobile phone warning

“Examiners yesterday issued a new warning on text messaging, saying that abbreviated phone texting and street slang are to blame for deteriorating levels of spelling and grammar.

Even bright pupils were making “almost unforgivable” mistakes with simple words” (Scotsman.com)

Keyword map of studies reviewed in-depth

Note/Key:

NI The information was 'not indicated' in the paper.

Sex of learners M = Male; F = Female; Mix = Mixed; NI = Not indicated

L1 Where the first language of the participants was not indicated in the paper, either the country from which the participants originated or the country in which the study was conducted is indicated in the 'first language' column in capital letters.

Method Quant = Quantitative; Qual = Qualitative; Mixed = Mixed methods

Author	Date	Language areas and skills	Technology	Country	Sex	L1	L2
Chandrasegaran & Kong	2006	Writing	CMC, Discussion forums	Singapore	Mix	Mandarin, Malay, Tamil	English
Chen and Li	2010	Vocabulary	Mobile, Context-aware	Taiwan	Mix	TAIWAN	English
Chen et al.	2010	Reading	Web 2.0, Social tagging, CSCL	Taiwan	NI	TAIWAN	English

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Author	Date	Language areas and skills	Technology	Country	Sex	L1	L2
Coniam & Wong	2004	Grammar, Autonomy	CMC, Chat	China	F	Cantonese	English
Liu	2009	Listening, Speaking	Mobile, Augmented reality	Taiwan	NI	TAIWAN	English
Liu & Chu	2010	Listening, Speaking	Mobile, Augmented reality	Taiwan	NI	TAIWAN	English
Lu	2008	Vocabulary	Mobile, Text messaging	Taiwan	Mix	TAIWAN	English
Lund	2008	Writing	Web 2.0, Wikis	Norway	NI	Norwegian	English
Lund & Rasmussen	2008	Writing	CSCL, Web 2.0, Wikis	Norway	Mix	Norwegian	English
Mak & Coniam	2008	Writing	Web 2.0, Wikis	China	Mix	HONG KONG	English
Sasaki and Takeuchi	2010	Vocabulary	CMC, E-mail	Japan	Male	Japanese	English
Satar & Ozdener	2008	Speaking, Anxiety, Attitudes	CMC, Chat	Turkey	F	Turkish	English

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Author	Date	Language areas and skills	Technology	Country	Sex	L1	L2
Soares	2008	Reading, Writing	Web 2.0, Blogs	Brazil	NI	BRAZIL	English
Tan <i>et al.</i>	2009	Writing	CMC, Chat, Discussion forums, Web 2.0, Blogs	Malaysia	Male	MALAYSIA	English
Young	2003	Reading, Writing	Web, Web publishing, CMC, Chat, Discussion forums, E-mail, Newsgroups, Virtual worlds	Taiwan	Mix	TAIWAN	English
Young <i>et al.</i>	2010	Speaking, Attitudes	NLP, ASR, Robots	Taiwan	Mix	TAIWAN	English
Zhang <i>et al.</i>	2007	Reading, Writing, Grammar, Vocabulary, In-class discussion, Critical thinking	CMC, Discussion forums	China	NI	CHINA	English

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