The use of computer mediated communication for

increasing motivation and improving acquisition of English

as a foreign language in high school/ Ahmad Amer

**Abstract** 

One major problem of foreign language instruction is the students' physical

isolation from native speakers. This dissertation is an experimental study aimed at

investigating the motivational and learning effectiveness of Computer-Mediated

Communication (CMC) as far as learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is

concerned. This study focused on the potential effect CMC tools have on the

process of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) compared to other

traditional learning methods that do not involve the use of these tools. Six research

questions were addressed in this study:

1. Does the CMC experience strengthen high school EFL students' motivation to

learn English compared to students in the traditional non-computer-assisted

English language learning?

2. Does the CMC experience improve high school EFL students' English

competence compared to students in the traditional non-computer-assisted English

language learning?

3. Is there any difference among CMC components in high school EFL students'

judgment as to what component they perceive most attractive to them to learn the

English language?

4. Do a priori identified EFL weak and good students differ in terms of the effect

the CMC experience has on their motivation to learn English compared to weak

and good students in the traditional non-computer-assisted English language

learning, respectively?

5. Do a priori identified EFL weak and good students differ in terms of the effect

the CMC experience has on their English competence compared to weak and good

students in the traditional non-computer-assisted English language learning,

respectively?

6. Which factors, measured prior to the intervention, have a correlation with finding CMC experience motivating to language learning?

The study was conducted in Israel in a predominantly Arab village; one hundred and thirty high school level Israeli Arab EFL learners participated in this study. They were randomly assigned to two treatment groups: a control group and an experimental group. The survey instruments included national proficiency tests and two surveys. A Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design was applied to the proficiency tests and the first survey. The proficiency tests examined the change in English language competence, while the first survey examined the change in motivation to learn English as a foreign language. The second survey aimed to investigate which of the five CMC variables the participants find most attractive. The students were divided into four groups: two experimental and two control. After the CMC intervention program was finished, the second survey was distributed only to the two experimental groups and referred exclusively to CMC.

Regarding the effectiveness of the interactivity dimension in language acquisition, there was one independent variable, CMC intervention, and three main dependent variables: achievement, motivation and attractiveness measurements. Previous studies explored such areas but they were often restricted to one CMC component, specifically chat communication. Other studies addressed motivation as a single variable, giving it one total score. CMC in this dissertation referred to five components: (1) synchronous audio communication, (2) synchronous video communication, (3) synchronous chat communication, (4) asynchronous email communication, and (5) asynchronous forums/newsgroups communication. In addition, the motivation variable referred to six motivational factors: (1) integrative motivation to learn English, (2) instrumental motivation to learn English, (3) motivational intensity, (4) attitudes toward learning English, (5) evaluation of the English lesson and (6) English classroom anxiety. Also, the achievement variable referred to the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The achievement variable was used to address the extent of learning due to the two treatment conditions. The motivation variable was used to address the degree of motivation enhancement toward learning EFL due to the two treatment conditions. The attractiveness variable was meant for investigating whether there is any difference among the five CMC components in high school

EFL students' judgment as to what component they perceive most attractive to

them to learn EFL.

Statistical analyses revealed significant effects of CMC on participants'

motivation to learn EFL and on improving writing, listening and speaking skills;

no significant effect on the reading skill was reported. The participants judged the

CMC email component as the most attractive to learn EFL among the five CMC

components. Further research is needed to examine whether the significant effects

manifest for years later and to examine other more immersive environments than

CMC, such as virtual reality and the influence of such immersion on foreign

language acquisition.

System No.

1123697