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Enhancing English Language Communication Through Pragmatics: A Socio-Environmental Approach For Undergraduate Students

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Abstract:

Computer mediated communication has altered the way in which people converse with one another by enabling them to communicate information to one another over great distances and in real time. It does affect aspects at the pragmatic level of communication (e.g. politeness, relevance, implicature) but this is to be expected too. This paper explores the pragmatic dimensions of CMC with an emphasis on the impact of digital communication tools on discourse structure, interaction norms, and meaning production. It addresses a variety of practical issues, including how to be polite, how to wait one's turn and how to discern the implicit meaning of comments in digital conversations. In addition to these, it takes into account social-environmental issues like digital access disparity, cultural practices, and power in online communication. For example, different degrees of access to the internet, digital literacy and socio-cultural context can contribute to differences in experiencing politeness and managing turn-taking and decoding indirect meanings. This research highlights how the nature of pragmatics is changing in digital contexts using authentic case studies and recent literature, thus drawing attention to the interaction of technology, socio-environmental variables and language behaviour. The findings extracted through an experimental study illuminate the bigger picture of how CMC is influencing the way we speak to each other and contribute to solving a digital debate.

Keywords*: ICT learning, challenges, disabilities, information based learning and digital spaces*

INTRODUCTION

Digital communication technologies have revolutionized the way people talk to each other. Now, people can connect with each other instantly and easily from a distance. Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) encompasses a wide array of various digital spaces, including emails, social media, instant messaging, online forums, etc. Each of these locales has its own particular shifts to how language and the pedestrian are performed. In face-to-face communication, however, people employ body language such as gestures, intonation and facial expressions to enable others to comprehend what is being discussed. This shift has powerful implications for pragmatics, the study of how language is used in context. It obscures interactional rules, and demands a different manner of communicating. Most apparent of all pragmatic changes is how polite language acts have changed throughout the history of CMC.

Those who communicate digitally engage in emojis and punctuation and capitalization and all sorts of textual features to show tone and meaning, which gets back some of the expressiveness they can't demonstrate with a body. And because so much computer-mediated communication occurs asynchronously, it defies traditional turn-taking systems. This will redefine new way how we communicate

and interact and again it's a part of the socio-environmental system. Understanding these changes are important because they influence how people read messages, manage relationships, and interact with digital text. This paper contributes to the practical front of CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication) by exploring different features of interaction including implicate, speech acts, and discourse coherence through an experimental study. This research contributes to an emerging literature on digital pragmatics with an exploration of how people create meaning and maintain peace in online communities. It also addresses the wider impact of CMC on language use, and looks at the changes to communication taking place in a society that is becoming more reliant on computers. The findings of an experimental study presented here will thus allow us a better understanding of the impact technology has on mediating human relations and offer food for thought as to the trajectory of digital debate and communication studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociolinguistic research on CMC has been in existence since the mid-1990s. At this time, researchers turned their attention to how people are using language in digital spaces, particularly the choice of language, code-switching and influence of the surrounding socio-environment. Previous studies like Androutsopoulos and Hinnenkamp (2001), Georgakopoulou (1997) or Paolillo (1996) set the groundwork in terms of finding the potential influence of digital communication platforms on individual's linguistic practices. These early studies stressed the role of gender, social background and the medium type on the variation of language, typography and orthography in CMC. Studies have worked towards this by incorporating social-environmental notions such as inequality of digital access, cultural setting, and online power relations, and have acknowledged the ways in which these elements influence and produce online activity (Barton & Lee, 2013; Crystal, 2006). Key studies within this line of study have examined socio-environmental aspects, such as SES, culture, and access to technology, related to internet use. These works exemplify the intricate tracking of the social effects of technology on the use of language in CMC.

Computer-mediated communication research shifted from the examination of all computer-mediated talk to a more targeted number of prevalent CMC modes or genres. Herring was instrumental, in 2002, in redirecting the research with her movement away from super-ordinate categories to a framework that links the various CMC modes on the basis of scalar dimensions or facets. This strategy owes much to prior work on speech and writing, in particular to that of Collot and Belmore (1996) who referred to Biber (1988) in their comparison of language variation across different modalities of communication. The approach to prioritizing the latter shift made it possible to interpret the subtleties involved in digital communication, accepting the diversity of relationships fostered by the internet. Research on language learning through computer-mediated communication (CMC) with English as the lingua franca has dominated the field since the internet began, and the language has become the language of the World Wide Web. But even this trend has largely transformed as the internet reached a spectrum of language centres worldwide. This expansion has in part resulted in a growing literature on discourse and sociolinguistic developments in languages other than English. Danet and Herring (2007) have selected a series of papers which illustrate this shift, and show how studies of computer-mediated language have come to be located, with increasing frequency, outside the heartland of Anglophone experience. Today, there are solid traditions in countries like Germany, France and the Nordic countries and developing research in Japan, China, Spain, Italy and Greece. Comparative work has served to enrich our understanding about how people of various linguistic groups apply technology and communication. These studies have uncovered common as well as culturally-variant online language practices, highlighting the interplay between technology development and linguistic diversity (Smith, 2016; Menzel, 2018; Zhang & Li, 2020).

Pragmatics in connection with Socio-linguistics

Most of the research mentioned above focuses on pragmatics, but only in recent years have the pragmatic aspects of computer-mediated communication (CMC) been examined in more detail. Susan Herring, in anticipation of her keynote address at the 2007 International Pragmatics Conference, noted a significant lack of high-calibre literature specifically focused on pragmatic issues in CMC. While many existing

studies are relevant to pragmatics, they generally fall under the broader categories of discourse analysis, conversation analysis, sociolinguistics, or similar fields. Nevertheless, Herring advocated for recognizing a distinct 'pragmatics of CMC' as an independent field of study. She suggested that incorporating well-established pragmatic theories and methods could provide fresh insights into digital communication and bridge the gap between traditional communication theories and the unique aspects of digital environments (Yus, 2016; Locher & Jucker, 2017).

Herring identified three key facets of a pragmatic CMC standpoint. She first highlighted the need to investigate classic pragmatic topics like implicature, presupposition, relevance, speech act and politeness in digital environments. However, when these abstractions are understood in a digital context, they gain characteristics that cannot be communicated orally or in writing. For example, the use of politeness strategies in CMC can be strikingly different because of the lack of nonverbal information, which results in changes in users' face-want (Lakoff, 2017; Holmes, 2018). Second, with the above phenomenon and the uniqueness mentioned above," and " to unravel digital specific phenomena such as the use of emoticons, pseudonyms or on-line netspeak" Herring (2015) takes a strong stance that the digital realm offers opportunities regarding the digital, that need to be explored and are not available regarding social interaction. These aspects of CMC serve to increase emotional expression and open up new arenas for identity development and social interactions. Socio-environmentally speaking, pseudonyms or avatars are also prone to the phenomenon of socio-cultural determinism, for example, the anonymity of wanting to manage one's online identity in response to societal problems, anonymity as a digital form of management of self-identity, or anonymity as a safety concern (Baker & Sacks, 2020). Thirdly, Herring called for the examination of a wide range of CMC genres including blogs, SMS, wikis, chat rooms and other online forms of written CMC. By analysing such genres from a pragmatic point of view, it is possible to account for how context, social norms, and communicative practices influence linguistic behaviour in distinct online environments. The two genres are mediated by socio-environmental factors such as digital affordances, cultural diversity, and cyberspace-specific norms, each of them contributing to the ways in which users interact (Thurlow, 2020). Although Herring's model of the three dimensions of CMC pragmatics has been of significance for the analysis of CMC pragmatics, it has failed to distinguish basic pragmatic phenomena from discourse-pragmatic phenomena in contexts of use. Recent studies have begun to compare these two domains and to move towards an integrative view with both traditional and conversational contents for pragmatics. This integrated view is also in line with the very nature of digital communication, for which practical aspects turn out to be frequently mixed up with higher-level, discourse related phenomena. As a consequence, the majority of contemporary research on CMC employs multidisciplinary approaches, drawing (on) insights from sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and others, in order to develop an understanding of how language is used in CMC (Barton & Lee, 2013; Anderson & Marshall, 2021). For example, a related sociocultural issue that has emerged in recent research and whose effects are reflected in pragmatic language use in CMC is the digital divide. One does not have the same access to technology across all socio-economic groups, and that affects how we communicate to others on the web. People with restricted access to technology may not be able to employ CMC systems as well as people with greater access do, causing variation in discourse style and pragmatic strategies. For instance, those with less means could use more up-front basic types of communication, while those with more familiarity and affordance could take part in more subtle discussions. The cultural context of communication also mediates CMC pragmatics. Cultural variation in politeness (Firth & Wagner, 1997), turn taking (Kohn and Firth, 2020) and the processing of indirection may influence the way that users from different cultural backgrounds interact on the Internet. Besides, online spaces are deeply embedded in socio-political phenomena such as power relations, digital surveillance and control over online content, which inevitably impact how language is employed and interpreted in these environments (Papageorgiou & Tseliga, 2019). A major obstacle in providing extensive academic material in this area is the fast-developing character of CMC pragmatics. A handbook, traditionally, ought to collect long-lasting, proven knowledge. But indeed, literature on CMC pragmatics is developing fast, and this dimension of communication on the Web has only recently been recognized as a proper subject of inquiry, which makes it hard to bring them together in a reference work. As a result, a handbook of CMC

pragmatics should be regarded as a snapshot' of the current state of the art' in a rapidly changing field. By observing that some themes are under-researched, and some findings are at an early stage of study, this method also reflects the transient and evolving nature of digital communication (Herring, 2019; Yus 2016). In the current literature, little has been written on Web 2.0 and its manifestations including wikis, micro-blogging and social media. Although these digital genres have become very important in current communication, much research on them has so far not been forthcoming. The fact that Web 2.0 mechanisms have only recently developed means that some linguistic and pragmatic aspects have yet to be examined in detail, thus offering potential for further research. However, despite these offshoots and mutations, new types of interaction and communicative practices emerge in the context of digital environments that are fundamentally new and deserving of their own theories of the pragmatics of WhatsApp and SMS messaging (Barton & Lee, 2013; González & López, 2019). The landscape of CMC pragmatics is ever-changing as technology changes and digital communication practices evolve. Earlier work laid the groundwork for understanding language use on the internet, but later work has drawn more and more heavily on concepts from areas like pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and other disciplines. In the ever-changing internet environment and the rise of new communication tools, on-going research is crucial for a better comprehension of language in digital spaces. Future research will need to address the gaps that remain especially with respect to Web 2.0 phenomena, and further develop CMC pragmatics theoretical and methodological approaches. This will enable researchers to offer a more nuanced picture of how language changes and affects the fluid medium of online exchange (Thurlow et al., 2020; Holmes, 2018) It is in this latter context, we argue, that contemporary debates about ICTs and its implications for social interaction are being conducted. Digital interactions mediated by computers have long been referred to as "computer-mediated communication" (CMC). Yet given the lightning pace of technological changes and the introduction of more complex means of communicating, is CMC the most correct and relevant term to apply to all digital exchanges? With augmented reality, mobile and smart things including voice-enabled technology is opening up a wide range of multimedia interactivity across generations and blurring the boundaries of traditional media used only with computers. This transition has rendered the definition of CMC less clear, making scholars reconsider whether there are other names that would be more appropriate for modern digital communication (Papageorgiou & Tseliga, 2019; Zelenkauskaite & Herring, 2008). Indeed, the digital communication environment has evolved since the introduction of CMC as personal computer-mediated communication through networked forms such as e-mail, discussion boards, chat rooms, etc. In the meantime, communication is no more restricted to PC. Smartphones in particular provide effective communication by allowing for several types of interaction like texting, video calling, social media joining and instant sharing. Texting on mobile devices may remain part of CMC, but voice calls, even in their digital form, which can be carried over the internet, do not fit the CMC definition as originally conceived as a text-based platform. Also, the communication is not reduced to written or spoken communication anymore. And a new phrase is defined as "television-mediated communication", which is when one is on the telephone and is looking at a text message on the TV, and is also hearing over the telephone from the person who's sending the signal. The convergence of media adds a further complication to the classification of CMC. The progression of communication technologies indicates that the current model of CMC is insufficient. A more general framework that includes various forms of digital connection is needed to adequately characterize the wide variety of ways in which individuals communicate (Zelenkauskaite & Herring, 2008; Crystal, 2019). The convergence of multiple media modalities speaks to the necessity of new ways of thinking about the pragmatics of digital communication which must include socio-environmental variables differential access to technology, cultural backdrop, and social consequences of digital communication practices (Smith, 2016; Thurlow, 2020). As a response to the rapid evolution of digital communication in recent years, some scholars have posited alternative terminology to describe the shifting nature of mediated communication. Words such as "digital media" and "new media" are frequently used to describe the totality of electronically mediated communication. But they're always going to fizzle in some way. New media fails to place innovations in products or services in a historical context and does not appreciate the fact that technology is a moving target, such that what is new today

could become highly outdated soon (Baker 2019). Meanwhile, "digital media" is overly inclusive, including not just technologies of communication but platforms such as video games and interactive applications. We find that this broad definition does not provide the degree of specificity required for examining language and communication in digital environments (Thurlow et al., 2020). The digital discourse, was an expression introduced by Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) to emphasize the forms of linguistic communication inherent to digital media. This is where this term comes in: it names how language is used, and transformed, in digital spaces, and provides a lens to understanding digi speaks. Digital discourse Digital discourse adequately expresses the textual side of chat, but it doesn't fully capture the rise of audio-visual interactions that represent contemporary digital communication, i.e., things like video calls and voice assistants. This limitation suggests the need for terms that signify the multimodal nature of communication in the contemporary context of digital media (Barton & Lee, 2013). Jucker and Dürscheid's (2010) notion of "keyboard-to-screen communication" seeks to characterize a distinct type of digital communication that, includes the input of text through keyboards and output on screens. This is too limiting, however, as it does not cover online communication, such as telephoning and videoconferencing. In the era of voice-interactive assistants, video-conferencing, and other multi-modal communication systems, studying digital communication that relies only on keyboard-based interactions is limited (Herring, 2015). Considering that there is a plethora of communication technologies and intelligent systems, the scope of scholars should expand to cover various methods of digital communication to explain the diversity of digital interactions that occur in the contemporary-age communication context (Zhang, 2020). Defining digital communication terms is a fundamental task, yet, it is challenging to find a term that is inclusive enough to be valid for a wide array of concepts effectively overlap- ping and surrounding this emotional genre. A rapidly changing technological landscape demands flexibility in the academic lexicon, with researchers modulating terminology to accommodate developments in digital communication. While expressions such as "digital media" and "new media" appear to be common terms used in today's digital age, however, they may no longer account for the various types of communication which take place in it (Crystal, 2019; Danet, 2020). The term computer-mediated communication (CMC) is still in use because of its historical roots and popular usage in scholarly literature. Although not without its limitations, CMC provides a strong overall conceptual basis for understanding how digital technologies enable social integration. CMC has been well-documented in writing in communication studies literature; it forms part of the lexicon underpinning the study of online communication. Furthermore, CMC is relevant because it in recent years it focuses on the mediation in digital communication. Both "Technology and Mediation" and the concept of mediation are important for appreciating the ways in which technology does and does not intervene in human relations. In text/chat, voice or video communication technology mediates the message and determines the immediacy, synchronicity, multimodality, engagement etc (Papageorgiou & Tseliga, 2019). As a framework, CMC allows researchers to pursue these characteristics and to adjust to future shifts in technology. In addition, the socio-environmental context has a vital significance for digital communication. Technology accessibility, digital literacy, and socio-economic status can all play a significant role in shaping the way in which people interact with communication technologies. For example, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds may not have access to the newest communication tools, and this will affect their ability to communicate in certain digital spheres (Smith, 2016). Likewise, digital communication may also be a social practice influenced by cultural norms and social expectations which may (or may not) determine how diverse groups of users are navigating politeness ref, power relations and identity ref in digital communication platforms (González & López, 2019). The social and environmental factors of online discussion such as the digital divide, cultural setting and social inclusion are key to understanding the nature in which language develops on these platforms. These are things that researchers will want to take into account when they are thinking about what it means to talk through CMC and what that means for social life in the digital age. With the development of digital technologies changing the practices of communication, it is necessary for scholars to create new theoretical and methodological tools to study the new communication forms. The penetration of AI, AR, and VR in everyday communication defies existing definitions of CMC, and it seems that a more

elastic and comprehensive terminology is required. These new forms of interaction are not easily accommodated into traditional CMC definitions, yet are as important in affecting how people communicate online (Herring, 2019). As we move forward, it is clear that as digital communication technologies continue to evolve, scholars will forever be debating the best language to describe mediated interaction. Someday there may be a broader term that strikes a balance, offering specificity and yet room for all kinds of communicating. Until that time, CMC is a useful and historically sound term for studying digital communication, providing stability in research with potential for modification as communication technology develops.

Scope of the Socio-Environmental Pragmatics of CMC

The pragmatics of Computer-Mediated Communication (Herring 2004) inevitably begs the question of pragmatics and its scope and nature. Because CMC is an interdisciplinary area of inquiry and debates over the boundaries of pragmatics as a branch of linguistics persist, it is important to explain why specific contributions are to be embedded. This distinction both makes clear what is meant by pragmatics in the context of CMC and allows a more subtle consideration of the role of digital technology in language use, particularly in relation to the social and environmental conditions that condition digital interactions. The above view of pragmatics is just one approach to the subject, although the more popular one among the contributors to this book. The collection does not adopt the large-scale perspective of Verschueren 1999, which tries to subsume much of linguistics under pragmatics. It is, however, a balanced one, seeking a compromise between coherence and representativeness. It understands that a pragmatic analysis needs to be sensitive to the specific modality of language use in digital contexts, where socio-environmental dimensions such as technology access, digital literacy and cultural norms are at stake (Herring, 2019, Yus, 2016). One key reason for adopting a broader view of pragmatics is that online language use is deeply intertwined with the technological features that enable communication. The way language is used in digital settings is not only a result of linguistic choices but is also influenced by the socio-environmental contexts in which these technologies operate. The strict division between pragmatics and sociolinguistics in academic categorizations hinders a complete understanding of CMC. The reality of CMC often includes linguistic features that do not fit neatly into established subfields, such as when users experience contextual collapse on social media platforms, utilize multimodal strategies in messaging applications, or engage in the performative aspects of digital identity creation (Barton & Lee, 2013). These dynamics require a perspective that transcends traditional linguistic boundaries and incorporates socio-environmental considerations, such as cultural expectations, community practices, and the digital divide (Smith, 2016; González & López, 2019).

Theoretical Perspectives in Pragmatics: Boundary-Explorers and Solution-Finders

One useful way of approach to the various trends within pragmatics the model of "border-seekers" and "problem-solvers" by Ariel (2010). These two views may shed light on the ways in which researchers define the domain of pragmatics and determine its focal concerns, particularly in the field of CMC. Border-seekers are semanticists primarily concerned with drawing the line between semantics and pragmatics. Their goal is to isolate the relevant properties of pragmatics by comparison with other linguistic levels, such as syntax or semantics. Pragmatics tends be confined to particular phenomena such as implicature, deixis, presupposition and speech acts. Such a border-seeking method is connected with the Anglo-American tradition of pragmatics, often making use of theoretical frameworks of formal language such as Gricean pragmatics, neo-Gricean pragmatics and Relevance Theory (Grice, 1975; Sperber & Wilson, 1986). Although these frameworks offer clarity as well as specificity, they fall short in capturing the complexity of CMC, as the use of language in CMC frequently transgresses the boundaries of traditional linguistics and involves social and technological interactions whose dynamics are heavily conditioned by socio-environmental variables, such as access to technology and cultural norms (Thurlow et al., 2020). Certainly, pragmatics is quite important for the reasoning; but, problem-solvers use more pervasive and flexible pragmatics. Instead of paying much attention to pigeonholing things, users try to solve the kind of linguistic problems existing frameworks of traditional grammar have difficulty accounting for. This is also adopted in European Continental tradition of the pragmatic study, which emphasizes on the context, interaction and emergence of meaning. The problem solver view is less about

us drawing a line around pragmatics and more one of us being interested in how pragmatics works in specific tools, such as different types of communication and multimodal interactions (Ariel, 2010; Holmes, 2018). This is a particularly powerful procedure in CMC research because the rules of digital communication are fluid, different communication types (text, sound, video) are employed and technological constraints very naturally shape communication and meaning (Danet, 2020). Furthermore, problem-solvers are sensitive to the socio-environmental constraints on digital exchanges of communication, and acknowledge that language in CMC emerges not only from linguistic norms, but also from some social, cultural and economic environment in which language users are situated. The socioenvironmental dimensions of CMC including the digital divide, cultural variation in communication practices, and differences in access to technology are central to an understanding of digital communication. These are factors that not only shape how individuals write online, but also how they read or engage with digital texts. It will be, therefore, also relevant to ascertain how socio-environmentally informed Pragmatics in CMC can address the complexities of language use in digital environments (Papageorgiou & Tseliga, 2019; Smith, 2016). Such perspectives on pragmatics in CMC continue to expand with the development of the digital age and the rise in prominence of socio-ecological considerations. Given that digital communication increasingly renews itself through innovations in AI, AR, VR or similar technologies, theoretical and methodological impulses are required for scholarship. A socio-environmental perspective helps us to understand how CMC works and includes cultural, social and economic factors in its account of communication in digital environments. Thus, CMC pragmatics cannot be limited within the boundaries of conventional linguistic systems and should adopt more liberal and context-based treatment so as to reflect the richness of the online communication.

Exploring the Socio-Environmental Pragmatics of Computer-Mediated Communication: New Perspectives on Digital Interaction

A further classification of pragmatic views is that into code-tied and context-tied insights. Levinson (1983) defines pragmatics as a coding form, where the language features are encoding the context of use. This includes linguistic items such as deictic expressions, which make explicit reference to aspects of the communicative context, and conversational implicatures, which are pragmatically attached to linguistic forms. Code-based pragmatics claims that the meaning associated with expressions is fixed and pragmatic analysis is concerned with determining these meanings in a language. This view concurs with the border-seeking view, as it regards pragmatics as an area of study with its own range of subjects to be carried out systematically (Levinson, 1983; Herring, 2019). In contrast, context-oriented approaches to problem-solving consider pragmatics to be an event which is inextricably related to interpretation, discourse and communication situation. An analysis of context-based pragmatics and its application to language teaching is how meaning is expressed in language. For this type of analysis, a focus on how conversational dynamics, social interactions, and cultural norms shape language use is important since language only makes sense within a context. The socio-environmental perspective is particularly relevant to digital communication, where the use of language is shaped not only by linguistic criteria but also by wider social and technological environments (Barton & Lee, 2013; Thurlow et al., 2020).

Pragmatics in Computer-Mediated Communication: A Socio-Environmental Approach

In examining CMC, a pragmatic problem-solving approach is required since the digital context of communication brings with it new kinds of trouble that are not easily captured by traditional language categories. Features of new media, in terms of being persistent, searchable, replicable, and scalable, reshape the way pragmatic phenomena are displayed in online communication. For example, handling grounding to guarantee understanding in a conversation works differently in synchronous and asynchronous CMC. Feedback mechanisms such as nodding, eye contact, and timely response in face-to-face conversation contribute to the grounding. On the other hand, digital environments rely on different strategies, such as timestamps, message threading or reacting with emoji, to perform similar functions and to show how communication devices allow pragmatic practices to be reshaped (González & López, 2019). CMC also challenges the traditional sense of context within pragmatics. In face-to-face discourse, context tends to be relatively stable and simultaneous. But in digital spaces, context can be somewhat plastic, decontextualized and poorly understood. An interesting instance is context collapse, when

multiple audiences with varying sets of expectations are present at the same time, is on social media platforms. To address the ways in which these movements between contexts affect language, a more environmentally/social-oriented opening up to the world than what traditional paradigms offer is needed (Yus, 2016; Papageorgiou & Tseliga, 2019). A critical aspect of the pragmatics of CMC is the influence of narrative and genre on online discourse. Different digital platforms foster unique modes of storytelling and self-representation, shaping how users interpret meaning and engage with one another. For example, meme culture relies on shared pragmatic knowledge and intertextuality to create humour and commentary, while hashtags serve as indexing instruments and performative indicators that influence how discourse unfolds (Herring, 2019). The increasing prevalence of visual culture, such as images, GIFs, and videos has also changed how users derive meaning from digital texts, further complicating pragmatic analysis. These evolving practices underscore the need for a broad and flexible approach to pragmatics, one that accounts for both linguistic and socio-environmental elements of communication in the digital age (Thurlow, 2020).

Exclusions and Constraints

While this paper is representative of the range of perspectives on pragmatics, some are meant to be omitted. Applied linguistics, corpus and computational linguistics, formal semantics, cognitive and psycholinguistics, and variationist sociolinguistics are all critical areas of research for CMC, but they are beyond the pragmatic scope of this discussion. An adequate treatment of these subfields would necessitate more than one volume. The affordances of the platforms and the algorithmic mediation can hence not be separated from analyses of language use, as the practicalities of CMC are heavily mingled with sociotechnical elements. These technological constraints influence what is communicated, moulding the form that self-expression and interaction with others take when it comes to online talk (Baker, 2019; González & López, 2019).

Pragmatics in CMC is approached with a problem-solving orientation, focusing on a holistic environment where linguistic, social and environmental factors are considered. While traditional code-based pragmatics continues to be of value, the complexity of digital communication requires an analytical framework that recognises the rapidly changing norms of the space, as well as multimodal interaction and the constraints of the medium. (Danet, 2020; Holmes, 2018). The study of pragmatics in online communication, mainly in CMC, mirrors a fundamental change in how language is used and meaning created in digital environments. This study demonstrates the effect of technology on language behaviour, revealing that digital platforms mould pragmatic meaning such as politeness, coherence, turn-taking, and implicature in this context. The digital sphere and the prominence of online communication must in turn be properly comprehended in order for communication in the new spheres to be successfully engaging and meaningful. With the addition of socio-environmental considerations, researchers can better model the variations in language use in CMC, acknowledging the influence of technology access, cultural environment and social conventions upon digital discourse.

Objective (An Experimental Study)

The following experimental study probes to know how understanding and applying pragmatics enhances the English language learning experience among undergraduate students, with a specific focus on aspects like politeness, coherence, turn-taking, and implicature in communication. The study examines how socio-environmental factors, such as technological affordances, cultural norms, and social contexts, shape students' pragmatic competence in digital and real-world communication.

Hypotheses

H1: Undergraduate students who receive training in pragmatics will exhibit improved language fluency and communication skills in English, with greater contextual awareness influenced by socio-environmental factors.

H2: Pragmatic competence will positively affect students' ability to manage politeness strategies and coherence in both written and spoken English, especially in digital communication contexts.

H3: Students trained in pragmatics will show better turn-taking and understanding of implicature in group communication tasks, especially in technology-mediated interactions.
H4: Pragmatic training will result in better contextual awareness in real-world English communication situations, accounting for varying cultural norms and communication platforms.

Participants

The study involved 10 final-year undergraduate students from diverse disciplines: Electronics, Arts, Commerce, and Social Sciences. The participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group (5 students) that received pragmatic training and a control group (5 students) that continued with regular language learning. The students were selected based on their exposure to digital communication platforms and their varying levels of digital literacy, reflecting socio-environmental differences in access to technology and communication practices.

METHODOLOGY

A pre-test and post-test design was used to measure improvements in language proficiency and pragmatic knowledge. The experimental group underwent weekly pragmatic training sessions, covering politeness strategies, coherence in communication, turn-taking, and implicature. The control group received regular English instruction. Both groups participated in group discussions and collaborative tasks, with their communication behaviours recorded and analyzed.

Training in Pragmatics

The pragmatic training session covered the following key areas, with a specific focus on digital pragmatics and socio-environmental factors that influence communication in digital settings:

Politeness Strategies

- Understanding and applying politeness markers like "please," "thank you," hedging, and mitigation strategies in communication.
- Exploring different politeness strategies for requests, apologies, and refusals to maintain social harmony.
- Examining how traditional politeness strategies are challenged in online communication due to the absence of nonverbal cues, asynchronous exchanges, and the sociotechnical affordances of digital platforms.
- Analysing how emojis, punctuation, and textual modifications can be used to convey tone and intent, compensating for the lack of facial expressions and body language.
- Understanding how politeness strategies vary across different digital platforms (e.g., social media, email, messaging apps) and cultural contexts, making it a fluid and context-dependent aspect shaped by socio-environmental factors.
- **Contextual Awareness in Digital Communication**
- Teaching students how to adapt their politeness strategies depending on the platform, audience, and type of communication (formal vs. informal).
- Analysing how contextual collapse occurs in social media interactions, where multiple audiences with divergent expectations interact simultaneously, and how this challenges traditional pragmatic frameworks.
- Discussing the role of socio-environmental factors such as access to technology, digital literacy, and cultural backgrounds in shaping communication practices across platforms.

Turn-Taking in Digital Contexts

- Examining how turn-taking is reshaped in online communication due to message lag, overlapping responses, and the ability to edit or delete messages.
- Introducing strategies like explicit turn-marking (e.g., “I’ll go next”), quoting previous messages, and using thread structures to maintain clarity and coherence in digital discussions.

❖ Training on managing the flow of conversations in digital environments, considering delayed responses, interruptions, and the asynchronous nature of online communication, all influenced by the socio-environmental context.
❖ Encouraging the use of clear signposts in conversations, such as visual cues (emojis) or text markers (e.g., "please respond after this point"), to help maintain order in online dialogue.

Implicature and Social Context

❖ Exploring how implicature is used in digital communication, considering cultural and social norms that affect how indirect meaning is conveyed and interpreted.
❖ Analysing the impact of different socio-environmental factors, such as education level, cultural background, and the digital divide, on students' ability to understand and produce implicatures in online interactions.

Implications

The authors hope that practical training, including awareness of the role of socioeconomic environment in digital communication, should contribute to better communication skills in students. The experimental subjects are expected to manifest more polite strategies, more coherence in both their oral and written production, more advanced turn-taking, and an increased success in implicatures in pair work tasks. Moreover, the study seeks to illustrate the impact of socio-environmental factors, such as digital media access, cultural dissimilarities and patterns of communication, that affect language use and pragmatic proficiency.

This paper has a practical implication in that it demonstrates the significance of incorporating pragmatics into the EFL curriculum for undergraduate learners, particularly those related to digital communication. By focusing the influence of social-environmental factors that influence language use such as digital literacy, cultural norms, and platform constraints the study provides evidence of how pragmatic development can be used to prepare students to address communication needs in digital and face-to-face situations. As the communication landscape changes around the world, it is important for us to achieve a more comprehensive overview on how social environmental factors shape communication in order to better prepare students for rich and complex digital futures.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The analysis showed a noticeable enhancement in the use of politeness strategies, coherence and turn-taking among the experimental group compared with the control group. Proficiency was higher in both communicative skills and pragmatic knowledge according to post-test results. Observational analysis suggests that the experimental group use more effective communication, which was clearer and used appropriately polite markers. This implies that the pragmatic training is effective for developing English language online communication skills, especially when considering socio-environmental factors including technology access, cultural norms, and the mediation of a platform's capabilities on language use (González & López, 2019; Herring, 2019).

One of the most dominant results was the transforming process of strategies of politeness in online-interaction. Interactions in text-based online contexts, where nonverbal cues are not available and conversations are not synchronous, need different strategies of politeness and politeness maintenance, like the use of emojis, punctuation marks, textual manipulations (Papageorgiou & Tseliga, 2019). Such strategies vary from one context to another - platform or culture, pointing to the significance of socio-environmental factors in communication (Yus, 2016). Likewise, turn-taking is reconfigured in CMC as a result of message delay and response overlap. Adaptive strategies, such as explicit turn-marking and doing so based on thread structures contrib- ute for keeping the clarity in the online discussion. Socio-environmental determinants, such as reliable internet access and digital divide impact participation in these talks with greater internet access individuals having better efficiency in turn-taking (Thurlow, 2020).

The second point relates to the complexity of implication in online communication. In digital environments, encoded by economy, short forms, and multimodal communication impact on how meaning is taken-from implied meanings. Opportunity structure and online implicature: Decoding the

shape of an online conversation Online conversations in the information age are shaped by social individuals found in the information age, and media affordances influence how effectively people decode implicature in online modes (Papageorgiou discussions (Chierichetti & Bansal, 2017 Pagel, 1993). These socio-environmental factors are key contributors to the ability for individuals to successfully navigate and engage in digital spaces (González & López, 2019). Results underscore the necessity for digital literacy in online social communication. Digital literacies are more than merely technical skills, but also understanding the social norms of each platform, assessing opinions in social media, and accommodating different styles of participatory behaviours. These skills and competencies must receive prominence in education systems if we wish to ensure that people are sufficiently prepared to engage effectively online (influenced by socio-environmental characteristics such as varied audiences and access to technology) (Yus, 2016; Herring, 2019).

Implications for Artificial Intelligence and Automated Communication

The proposed guidelines have useful applications including AI and automated text messaging. As chatbots, virtual assistants, and AI-based customer service grow in importance, knowing about pragmatics in CMC is absolutely crucial so that systems can interact in ways which are natural and contextually sensitive. They need to educate AI models to detect pragmatic elements including politeness, turn-taking and implicature for also making the experience better and fostering meaningful human-computer interaction. This result indicates that incorporating pragmatic aspects into AI does lead to more intuitive and human-like digital communication machines. The influence of socio-environmental factors, such as technology access and cultural context, also needs to be taken into account in the design of these systems to enable them to be shaped to be more inclusive and adaptable to different sets of users (Herring, 2019). The findings of this study offer valuable insight into the need for the incorporation of pragmatics in ESL teaching and learning in the digital world of undergraduate students. Through the lens of the socio-environmental aspects of language use as elicited by digital literacy, cultural expectations, and platform affordances, the study reveals how pragmatic instruction could equip students with the capacity to communicate effectively in the digital as well as the non-digital domain. The ever-changing shape of the global communication environment means that grappling with the influences of socio-environmental factors on communication is imperative in order to equip students to traverse fluid and heterogeneous digital realms.

CONCLUSION

An examination of the rhetoric of Web-based interaction shows that CMC is an often complex and open (i.e. subject to ongoing revisions and introductions stretching back even to the first writings) system of signification defined by its simultaneously sociotechnological character. With communication changes driven by technology taking place, it is imperative to understand the shifting terrain in terms of interpersonal norms, practices of meaning-making, and interactional dynamics. So, they depend not only on language phenomenal features but also on the wider social-ecological context, including digital literacies, access to technology and cultural norms. User communication on the internet is also influenced and reflects these extra-internet factors. The study emphasises the necessity of a multidimensional framework for modelling of digital pragmatics, that accounts for linguistic, technical, and socio-cultural aspects. These intersections should be further investigated in future research to enable individuals, educators, policy makers, and developers to engage with the complexities of online communication in a more informed and effective manner. Acknowledging the socio-environmental factors of digital communication may contribute to a better understanding of the interplay of language and technology in digital settings. If one can understand this, it is possible to work to make online communication less of a cesspool, asking whether one can nudge to a discussion, to talk face to face, to try and foster that sense of community, belonging and engaging in the same space that we as humans have already endeavoured to get right for thousands of years, and do a better job of supporting by our technology.

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