Chapter 19
Enhancing Metacognitive Language Learning Strategy Use and Business Language Proficiency in Technology– Enhanced Collaborative Learning Environment

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the key issues in CALL literature concerning how to design, evaluate and examine a technology-enhanced collaborative inquiry learning environment for EFL students to enhance language learning processes and language proficiency. Participants were four intact business English classes at a Chinese university with 102 Year 1 students in a 12-week project learning in English for International Business in two different learning environments, namely computer-supported collaborative inquiry learning (CSCIL) and regular project-based learning environment (PBL). Data from multiple sources were obtained including learning strategy surveys, pre-and post- business language proficiency tests, and online interactions. Pre- and post-questionnaire surveys were administered to measure effect of the design on language learning strategy use. Positive design effect was observed on metacognitive strategy use and language proficiency development. Quantitative online discourse analyses were conducted to examine relations among online Knowledge Forum participation and language strategy use as well as business language proficiency. Theoretical and practical implications of this study were also discussed in particular relation to a theory-informed and technology-enhanced EFL business English pedagogy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid development of information technology provides great potentials to support language learning in ESL/EFL settings. Use of technology in language education at a tertiary level has been an important subject of inquiry for several decades (Chapelle, 2016; Godwin-Jones, 2016; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Earlier studies focused on technology itself and technology use to develop fundamental language skills (Chapelle, 2016; Warschauer & Healey, 1998) and autonomous learning (Reinders & White, 2016). Now there is an observed trend of constructing a theory-informed computer-enhanced collaborative language learning environment with rich affordances to promote student metacognitive and collaborative learning as well as their practical use of English for a globalized and multilingual world (Hubbard, 2013; Reinders & White, 2016).

Despite much stride made in technology-enhanced language learning, increasing research attention has recently focused on how technology-enhanced instructional models help transform conventional classroom-based teaching and learning towards the ultimate goal of enhancing student language learning processes and experiences as well as learning outcomes (Chapelle, 2016). A recent review has identified a wide array of technology adopted in classroom-based pedagogy, such as course-based management system, interactive whiteboard, blog, wiki, and other mobile devices (e.g. Golonka et al. 2013). However, the efficacy of classroom-based technology use on student metacognitive language learning as well as language proficiency development still remains to be equivocal with limited empirical evidence, particularly in EFL settings (Chapelle, 2016). Besides, although some evaluation studies have provided useful evidence of technology use utilizing quantitative measurement, not much in-depth research has examined students' actual strategy use and productive learning activities that are related to language development in the technology-mediated discourse.

To address these aforementioned gaps, this study aims to explore Chinese EFL business students' language learning strategy use in computer-enhanced collaborative learning environment and its possible relations with business English language proficiency development, and to further investigate the association between students' strategy use with online discourse activities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The computer has been used in ELT instruction since 1960s, both as an instructional and learning tool (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Due to the pedagogically different use of computer technology in ELT teaching, Warschauer et al. (1998) divides the development of computer-assisted language learning into three stages: behaviourist CALL, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL. While behaviourist CALL is based on behaviourist learning theory with a drill-and–practice approach, communicative CALL adopted cognitive/ constructivist approaches provides learners with more opportunities to construct new knowledge and language based on their existing knowledge through exploring, solving problems, and testing hypothesis of the software (Kern & Warschauer, 2000). With the development of Information and Communication technology, researchers have shifted the attention from using communicative language teaching to a socio-cognitive view which emphasized language learning and language use in an authentic and meaningful social setting (Warschauer & Healey, 1998) through interaction and collaboration. The context-based integrative CALL is aimed to combine metacognitive and social metacogntive learning as well as language development with the use of information technology.

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