

The study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) for English language teaching programme in Pakistan in distance education context. The researcher tried to find out the effectiveness of CMC in terms of students' learning, interaction, access and cost. The experimental study was done during Autumn 2007 and Autumn 2008 semesters, through pretest treatment-posttest experimental control group design. A CMC-ELT blended model was applied in two phases. In the first phase, two groups of students enrolled in Dip TEFL programme were selected from four AIOU regions and in the second phase, two groups were selected from all over the country. Online tutorial support was provided to the experimental groups. Data was collected through AIOU documents, questionnaires, tests, and focused group discussions.

The results of the study proved the effectiveness of CMC in distance education. Using a t-test for independent samples, it was found that after six months the students (n=26) who were instructed using CMC achieved significantly higher scores ($t=6.94$ and 6.29 , $p<.05$) in the tests of 'The Language Skills' and 'EFL in the Classroom' (Autumn 2007) than did the students (n=18) whose instructions did not include CMC. The experimental group also performed better ($t=2.06$ and 2.31 , $p<.05$) in the AIOU final assessment (n=25 and 66). In Autumn 2008, another experimental group of students (n=25) achieved higher scores ($t=10.92$ and 11.61 , $p<.05$) in the same courses than did the students (n=19) in control group on pre-post tests and performed better ($t=2.01$ and 1.68 , $p<.05$) in the AIOU final assessment (n=24 and 301). A substantial decrease was observed in dropout rate and cost. The dropout rate in CMC-based learning was 3.7% to nil as compared to 5.3% to 8.3% in existing distance education from 2007 to 2008. In addition, the cost per course in CMC-based learning was 29% less than of the existing distance education system.

In focused group discussion, all the participants acknowledged the effectiveness of CMC based instructions. A CMC-ELT blended model in distance education proved its effectiveness in terms of access, quality, interaction and cost-effectiveness. The study has implications for distance education institutions, course designers, tutors, students and administration at institutional, national and international level..