Communication Interaction Using Information and Communication Technology

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The greatest problem in communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished. George Bernard Shaw

Abstract. Lately e-learning has become a fast-moving discipline online because the Internet offers a diversity of activities for learners in particular. Since e-mail has proved to be the most important and unique method for communication all over the world, pedagogical benefits of using e-mail in teaching and learning a foreign language include extension of learning time and place beyond the classroom, real life communication and asynchronous interaction, promotion of autonomous learning, and learner collaboration. This report presents theoretical analysis of scientific literature on e-mail communication for learning purposes, collaboration in learning, students learning experiences while learning online; a research into an ICT collaborative project between two groups of e-key partners who studied English for Specific Purposes at tertiary level. The project aimed at placing students in authentic professional situations. Learners were expected to perform a series of negotiation tasks with e-partners they have never met face to face. The exchange of e-mails constructed a continuous interaction chain, from requests, replies to requests, suggestions, and responses to suggestions, negotiations, taking decisions, making adjustments, and finalizing tasks. The research was conducted into learning outcomes, analysis of language styles in messages, gender differences on error points in messages, self- and peer-assessment of task completion. Learning effects were estimated by analyzing students’ performance such as the ability to get the message across at the first attempt and avoiding erroneous attempts or reformulations. Two types of statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data on e-mail language style and errors between female and male students. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the central tendency and to show the dispersion around the centre. Inferential statistical processing of quantitative data was employed and statistical significance was calculated. Double statistical processing proves that the findings could be generalized in spite of the small size of the investigated sample.