

**THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA IN ONLINE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING:
NEW ENCOUNTERS IN A NEW
ENVIRONMENT**

PhD DISSERTATION

KYI SHWIN

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF YANGON
MYANMAR**

NOVEMBER, 2006

The Use of Multimedia in Online English Language Teaching:

New Encounters in a New Environment

Abstract

There are certain advantages to learn a language online. The most important advantage can be flexibility of time and space. Students can have access to the Internet from anywhere and do exercises anytime. The facts that students have wealth of resources, that they can enjoy privacy while learning and that they can do the exercises repeatedly are among major advantages of learning online. But there are still some disadvantages. The most cited disadvantage is students' feeling of isolation. Other disadvantages are rare meeting with the teacher, distraction, inadequate feedback, and lack of speaking practice. These disadvantages stem from lack of communication with other members of the class. In my dissertation, it is argued that these disadvantages can be eliminated if the teacher manages the class with proper feedback system, has balance between synchronous and asynchronous meeting with students, keeps track of students' activities and most importantly, if the teacher can turn his classroom into a learning community where students learn collaboratively bringing social elements into the classrooms. Two groups of students are observed. The first group is called Virtual Independent Group (VIG) and another group is called Virtual Controlled Group (VCG). Both groups follow the same lessons and in the same format. Virtual Controlled Group is provided with (1) an immediate feedback system through the use of student forum, (2) Student Support Centre, and (3) collaborative activities among students. Students' log files, records from chat rooms, written works of students, scores of students from their listening-based or reading-based grammar exercises and results from students' questionnaires are observed and compared between two groups. It is found that students from Virtual Controlled Group are more interactive with the Internet and that most of the disadvantages are eliminated. And it is also found that students from both groups rarely used forums and that they did not show analytical skills in their lesson discussions through the exchanges of messages. With this observation, it is proposed that learning is enhanced if students have a sense of community and when they work collaboratively in the case of online learning. There must also be a system that can ensure proper and immediate feedbacks and technical support.