

CMC in a Japanese educational context

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1 . Introduction

Second language education is a critical element of most contemporary societies, including Japan. The quality of such education that individuals receive can have a major influence on both the types of job positions they may acquire and their earnings that they may generate. Consequently research is always on-going into how different pedagogies can enhance this second language absorption.

Many believe Computer-mediated Communication(CMC) offers an incredible opportunity to leverage technology and blend subjects to motivate second language acquisition(SLA). CMC, however, offers both opportunities and barriers to potential users. This paper will summarize these factors. Technological proficiency is the obvious issue, yet there are a number of other considerations that researchers and educators need to evaluate ; considerations that may depend upon location or even wider societal issues. With this in mind, this paper will assess CMC in a Japanese SLA context.

2 . Relevance of CMC for Language Learning

Rapid and on-going developments in computer-mediated communication(CMC) technologies increasingly facilitate opportunities for language learners, educators, and educational institutions. Unsurprisingly, these opportunities have been taken

advantage of in a variety of ways. Initially they were (and still are) used for e-learning or communicative forums through emails, websites or blogs. Recently, widespread access to Web 2.0 technologies such as VoIP telephony (Skype, Google Talk, Messenger) or 3D avatar software (Second Life, Active Worlds) has become available.

Language learning has traditionally been described in terms of location : foreign language (FL), whereby the learning is undertaken in a country where the language is not commonly used, or second language (SL) acquisition, where the learning takes place in a country in which the target language is commonly used in day-to-day transactions. Naturally SL environments provide opportunities for learners to absorb a more holistic range of target (such as paralinguistic or pragmatic) skills. In contrast, FL teachers cannot easily recreate a SL style learning environment : it is usually bound to the classroom, creating debate over the authenticity of the learning experience.

The reason CMC technologies have become so meaningful for language acquisition is because they can facilitate communication in a number of forms which together, can provide learners with more of the opportunities previously ascribed to the SL environment, despite being accessed in the FL environment.

Although CMC technologies can enable more 'authentic' language learning opportunities, their primary practical use seems mostly defined by transactional activities : getting learners to negotiate meaning through interaction. Accordingly a lot of research has focused on Telecollaboration, in which collaborative exercises are undertaken via internet telephony. As often happens however, coined phrases can lead to a range of meanings. For the purposes of this research, Telecollaboration will be defined as a project in which learners need to (with differing levels of scaffolding) work with Internet-based partners to reach a common goal. The language component may be dependent on learner proficiency and whether the

project involves a single language or language exchange (commonly referred to as e-Tandem).

Initially, approaches to CMC technologies have been primarily driven by individual instructors at institutions. Recently, as CMC financial and technological barriers become lower, educational institutions seem to be joining the bandwagon. Ensuring practical and effective strategies for incorporating these technologies are put in place, however, remains one of the biggest concerns for stakeholders. Although there is research detailing types of collaboration and their assessment, little seems to touch on the need for curricula or blended subjects (combining an academic subject with the target language).

3. Management

3.1. Blending Subjects

Subject division was a mechanism developed by philosophers in order to clearly define bodies of knowledge. Increasingly however, these boundaries are being blurred as topics of interest draw on disparate subjects to transmit knowledge. Points of convergence between these subjects have automatically led to ever growing fragmentation and specialization, evidenced by the growing number of ‘subjects’ available for study at all stages of formal education. This process has been accelerated through information technology as knowledge becomes more accessible. Although widely recognized by educators, the retention of these constructs is considered a ‘necessary evil’ however, as they provide a form of control.

To reconceptualise this within a Japanese context, English language education is typically taught in complete isolation to other subjects in the school system. English teachers rarely, if at all, teach in conjunction with instructors of other subjects. This is not to say English, or language instruction, is the exception.

Most subjects are taught in isolation. Although this may be appropriate in some situations, educators and researchers need to consider if recognizing these points of convergence in a curriculum would be more beneficial for learners. Certainly with regard to CMC telecollaboration, points of convergence would allow more instructor interaction at the curricular level, and enable time saved on avoiding repetition to be spent on other worthwhile topics.

3.2. Collaboration

It could be argued that a number of factors are leading many teachers to narrow their focus at a time when they should be scaffolding their students and setting an example in the classroom by encouraging collaborative practices. Factors that complement the narrowing of focus include more emphasis on performance measures (Gewirtz, 2002), teaching to the test, and skewing students' integrated knowledge about language (Frater, 2000), and limited time to work with others outside their specialized area of expertise (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005). With specific regard to collaborative practices, Gereluk (2005) notes that :

Collaboration requires time and effort amongst staff and a demanding curricular framework may overwhelm an already overworked teacher. The inflexibility of the curriculum may create a situation whereby teachers do not have time to collaborate or see the need to collaborate when every detail has been laid out.

3.3. Curricular development

Curriculum has come to represent different concepts to different people. Whether it is transmitted, a product, a process or praxis, curricula seldom makes all stakeholders happy. Furthermore, it could be argued, curricular theory can distract

teachers from the art of teaching : learning too often occurs in spite of, rather than because of, instruction. Nevertheless, for learning environments typically provided by institutions, a curriculum remains the framework through which potential value can be appraised by stakeholders.

Around the world, curricula have become a mechanism for the transmission of social values. This then, can be seen as a cultural construction. Teachers attempting to establish a telecollaborative venture need to ameliorate their different educational (or cultural) systems to facilitate common goals.

3.4. Competencies

Hauck (2010) outlines what she describes as the ‘interdependence of multimodal and intercultural communicative competencies’. Using Internet-based telephony to collaborate interculturally requires intercultural communicative skills as well as technological skills. They are dependent on each other, and checking and scaffolding learner knowledge of them needs to be considered fundamental if they are to be effectively used pedagogically.

3.5. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

A number of researchers in various fields have addressed the need for ICC. However, with regard to language learning in conjunction with ICC, Byram (1997) developed the seminal model. Specifically, Byram (1997) considered language use to be a manifestation of culture (Thorne and Lantolf, 2007). In other words, he argued that language could not be separated from culture. To describe this in more detail, Byram outlined five types (or *savoirs*) of competencies that language users employ in variable quantities at different times : Attitudes, Knowledge, Discovery and interaction, Interpreting and relating, and Critical cultural awareness – all of which are constructs that have been well defined. Furthermore, he outlined more

than 20 specific classroom objectives, most of which are performance-based. These objectives have ensured that Byram's model is particularly useful for institutions (which tend to be objective-based). Furthermore the model is grounded in student-centered literature, and focuses on concepts of language mastery.

Conversely, Deardorff's (2006) study, based on interviews with a group of educational administrators and a group of ICC 'experts', found that although specific ICC objectives were favoured by the administrators, the experts leant toward a more generalistic set of benchmarks. Nevertheless, the experts in Deardorff's study were able to reach a consensus on certain attributes that could define ICC; attributes that focused on cognitive and interactional dispositions. They could not reach consensus on what role language had to play in the acquisition or performance of ICC however, although it was recognized as being critical (*my own italics*). Regardless, what was significant in terms of cross study reliability is that Deardorff reached similar conclusions in comparison to a study by Fantini (2006) in which Fantini noted that "a complex of abilities [is] needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself".

3.6. Assessment literacy

Although, at first, assessment appears to have been largely overlooked in CMC and language acquisition literature, it seems to be moving to the forefront of the debate on how to best evaluate telecollaborative practices. Lamy and Hampel (2007) cast this oversight in terms of development. The focus appears to have been, until recently, mostly on task design, media type, and philosophical frameworks: understandable, considering the relative novelty of the technology being incorporated.

However, Levy and Stockwell (2006) point out educators have failed to

incorporate assessment methodologies that reflect the changing nature of course design. They claim that many educators are still using exams and tests at the completion of courses focused on telecollaborative designs. If blended learning is to be an integral part of language teaching, then it follows that assessment practices need to accurately reflect this pedagogical shift. Conceivably, there may be negative ramifications for course designers in which the learners themselves would start to question the legitimacy of assessment. O'Dowd(2006) highlights this issue in a timely article, where he states ;

If educators believe that foreign language education in our modern 'globalised' society should involve the ability to learn, work and communicate in online contexts with members of other cultures, then it is to be expected that assessment procedures and criteria should take this new learning context into account (p. 338).

As O'Dowd goes on to point out, there are a range of complex issues connected to assessing the skills and competencies of language learners in a CMC-related course. Issues such as ; Intercultural Communicative Competence(ICC), multimodalities and multiliteracies(Lamy and Hampel, 2007), as well as interpretive skills and dialogue sensitivity(Schneider and von der Emde, 2006).

Assessing these issues is problematic. Although O'Dowd(2010) makes some effort to describe current attitudes to, and methods for, assessing CMC courses, he describes aspects of (yet fails to focus on) what may be the main point of assessment : involving learners in the assessment process. Incorporating learners in the development of assessment rubrics as well as course design is an interconnected process. By getting learners to describe criteria for assessment, it can be inferred that they are undergoing learning of the key constructs and components of the

course. Negotiating what construes what requires interlocutors (viz: learners and their instructors) to come to a common understanding and agreement before the assessment can be undertaken. Furthermore, it would be logical to undergo this process prior to the development of the material to be assessed.

3. 6. 1. Stakeholders

The main driving force behind co-operation and particularly, collaboration, is for stakeholders to help each other achieve objectives and this interaction is reciprocal in nature. In education however, it is recognized that instructors and students, although sharing certain objectives, do not usually share collegial and equitable control in their relationship. This control over the relationship usually becomes more defined the earlier the stage of education: elementary school students are usually told what to do, while graduate students often help their professors attain mutually beneficial objectives.

3. 6. 2. Methods

Most research seems to be focused on one or a mix of three methodologies: ethnological, discourse analysis or conversation analysis.

We need to consider what constitutes research data for either developing intercultural competence or language learning: output or interaction (Dooley, 2011b). Although ethnographies, for example, provide rich detail of actual learning experiences, analysis of the data can suffer from segmentation that has implications for the validity and reliability of the research. One response to this conundrum has been to sidestep the perspective that knowledge should be tested and measured at the completion of a program and instead, focus on trying to capture and trace the emergence and evolution of students' learning moments throughout a course. This ethnographical approach has been labelled Activity Relevant Episodes (ARE) and

was published in 2001 by Barab, Hay and Yamagata-Lynch(2001). The essence of this approach is to avoid preconceived ideas of what constitutes learning. One problem remains the same however, as Dooley(2011b) concludes ARE still lacks cross study validity.

Consequently some researchers try to focus on data that can provide cross study reliability. Discourse Analysis(DA) provides an obvious opportunity. It enables researchers to focus on a variety of language in any form produced by any number of users ranging from specific language types to corpus analysis. The fact that most language production in CMC environments is captured means DA is an ideal tool to analyze communication in empirical terms(Herring, 2004). Initial efforts to apply DA used asynchronous tools, looking primarily at word counts and numbers of postings, but then moved toward a more semantic-based analysis of content (Fitzpatrick and Donnelly, 2010), a reflection of both the ever growing multimodality of CMCs, as well as a move from cognitive analyses to SCT. Van Leeuwen(2008) argues that for DA to be effectively applied, researchers will need to move from a linguistic analysis to a more socio-semantic one, and not be shy of incorporating additional cultural theories to augment and inform DA.

One component of DA is Conversation Analysis(CA) which focuses on turn-taking, adjacency, and repair between interlocutors. CA was originally developed as a tool to analyze social interaction rather than language acquisition(Egbert et. al., 2004 ; Hauser, 2005 ; He, 2004) although this has been challenged of late for use in conjunction with sociocultural and activity theories, situated learning theory, and longitudinal studies(González-Lloret, 2011). Consequently for language acquisition, there are only a few studies (Kitade, 2000 ; 2005 ; Negretti, 1999 ; Thorne, 2000 ; González-Lloret, 2007 ; 2008 ; 2009) that analyze learners' foreign language acquisition. González-Lloret(2011) believes that for CA to demonstrate learning, expanding the definition of learning may be necessary, so that SLA is not

limited only to linguistic features but also includes the social context and sequential development of interactions. In particular, the use of CA for the study of multimodal synchronous CMC is still relatively new (Jenks, 2009). As interactional software becomes more sophisticated and internet connections become faster and more powerful, the use of video in connection with audio and text is becoming more common (González-Lloret, 2011).

The value of being able to use CA and DA lies within the fact that authentic language is measurable in a classroom, as compared to traditional sources which have tended to be outside the classroom (González-Lloret, 2011). Furthermore, being able to describe perceived changes in SL proficiency ensures that these methods provide valued insights for educational institutions as well as researchers.

4. Issues of CMC

It is easy to be caught up in the novelty of using technological innovations to communicate with others. Ever changing fads and quirks mushroom in the information technology sector, with various conferences and expositions given the kind of attention previously afforded to Cannes and Hollywood. Educators are no different, and with good reason. Technological innovations offer a variety of methods to facilitate language learning. But, as Warschauer (1996) warned, technology itself does not improve language learning, but rather, it is the manner in which it is utilized. There are a number of technologically related issues that would need to be ameliorated for a truly successful CMC project to eventuate.

4.1. Multimodal literacy

Just like literacy defines ability to read and write language, multimodal literacy signifies the ability to understand and utilize a range of technologically-modified

communicative modes appropriately.

Despite technology fast becoming an integral part of most people's lives, exposure can elicit a range of abilities, and not all users are proficient; or rather, proficient at some, but inadequate at others. Furthermore, as the penetration of technology in our society continues, the emergence of multi-modal skills in CMC use is becoming increasingly important, not only for the learner, but also for the instructor in the classroom.

Multimodal literacy, defined by Pegrum(2009) as 'understanding and interpreting the relationship and interaction between different formats of digital media', is both gateway and barrier to language learning - in the classroom at least (Guth & Helm, 2010). In a study of task-based language teaching (TBLT) course design reflection, Hauck(2010) explored the interrelationship between multimodal literacy and online communication and concluded that educators need to be teachers of the technology, not just facilitators, if their learners are going to be able to fully partake of the opportunities for language learning and intercultural development (Hauck, 2010). In other words, if teachers are going to expect their students to use technological applications (viz. CMC) it would be appropriate to ensure that all students can utilize them effectively. Common sense maybe, but nevertheless literature suggests that it remains a significant hurdle.

4.2. Appropriacy

In a world that seems to rapidly churn out all manners of technological marvels and innovations, teachers need to be able to cherry pick the most relevant options for their classroom: options that enhance, rather than distract from, the learning process for their students.

In choosing a collaborative technology, instructors should determine how much, and what type, of student interaction is needed to complete group assignments and

facilitate learning[8]. As referred to previously, functionality can be exciting, but it is only one part of the selection criteria. Timmerman & Kruepke(2006) point out that more features are not necessarily better. Function availability doesn't equate to student usage. Having too many tools - or tools with a steep learning curve - can impede, rather than facilitate, student learning(Falowo, 2007). Otherwise, as Loveless, Devoogd, & Bohlin(2001) point out, effective learning through integrated use of Internet Communicative Technologies(ICT) is likely to occur despite, and not because of, the role of the teacher. One example of this distractive quality is the recent usage of avatar-based CMC (such as in Second Life or Active Worlds), after which some students concluded that they had been side-tracked by the novelty and that they might have gotten better return by just sticking to simplified chat forums(Deutschmann, Panichi and Molka-Danielsen, 2009).

4.3. Accessibility

Despite the recent ubiquity of CMC, accessibility remains an issue. Accessibility hinges on a number of aspects, such as ; age, location, and time.

Learners are of all ages, and accordingly CMC may be utilized at all age levels. However, younger learners often need more teacher-centred pedagogy to participate productively in class, while older participants may feel marginalized with regard to technology. What this means is that age may affect how accessible the CMC is perceived by learners. Perception can be a powerful psychosomatic realization despite environmental factors that may indicate otherwise.

Parker & Ingram(2011) posit that there are a variety of micro or macro issues that may affect participatory rates. Classroom ambience and social dynamics can affect the development of class community – an important factor for teachers to take into account considering their focus on collaborative tasks.

...if technology is truly experienced differently by different users, then the effects may vary by user as well, and studying its effects at multiple levels of analysis is a necessity. [One option] may be to examine how instructors can best move students beyond learning the chosen technologies to learning how to use their functions to collaborate effectively, no matter what technology is used. Parker & Ingram (2011 : 12)

Some telecollaboration involves different time zones. Students in a Japanese secondary school have little chance to communicate live with peers, for example at a North American school, forcing them to fall back on delayed methods of telecollaboration. Class scheduling can exacerbate this issue.

Many students' access to CMC is restricted outside the classroom for a variety of reasons : bandwidth, hardware, parental concerns. Consequently, accessibility through either bandwidth or portal outside the classroom can often be problematic.

5 . CMC usage in Japan

Formal education differs in every country as it is driven by a combination of cultural mores and bureaucratic directives. In order to better incorporate CMC in language education in Japan, there are a number of issues that would need to be considered. They include ;

- A. Public/Private Schools (curriculum, financing)
- B. Internal school support (teachers, students and their families, school management)
- C. Foreign/Partner school (relationship development)
- D. Scheduling (synchronous communication, school breaks)
- E. Student-focus (students internalize the objectives)

Developing a CMC course, as already detailed, would require all stakeholders to be fully involved. In Japan, teachers seldom have the latitude to develop such programs independently from their colleagues; many departments and syllabi require lockstep pedagogy. Therefore CMC course development needs the support of the department, and by extension, the school administrators. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the education system in Japan, a large proportion of school time and student time is geared toward test preparation. Split secondary schools (three years Junior High School(JHS), and three years High School(HS)) suffer in this regard, as opposed to an integrated six-year secondary school, as the syllabus in Year Three devotes a significant proportion of time to test preparation for HS. Furthermore, a high proportion of students frequent cram schools at night to prepare for these high stakes exams. This results in many teachers (and students) considering pedagogy that does not focus on test preparation to be extraneous, and arguably, morally wrong.

Which raises the issue of the perceived utility of second language productive (speaking and writing) skills. As already intimated, productive skill pedagogy suffers in comparison to receptive (listening and reading) skills. SLA high stake tests in Japan challenge mostly receptive skills. Consequently many stakeholders consider CMC courses to be a high cost-low return pedagogy in this regard. A lot of expense to indulge pedagogy that cannot be easily quantified, some may argue, despite on-going research that indicates otherwise. Why try a new method when an existing process is considered mostly reliable? Better to stick to rote memorization and grammar study. Changing both colleagues' and administrators' perceptions can easily become seen as insurmountable by educators, particularly in Japan where consensus is considered a cornerstone of society. Particularly when most educators represent learners that have excelled at the traditional memorization SLA pedagogy in Japan.

One could even argue that developing productive skills requires two aspects that are not encouraged at secondary school in Japan ; learner-centred pedagogy, and secondly, the notion of making mistakes (and learning from them) being a critical function of the learning process. Perhaps the concept of learner-centeredness in an education system is somewhat of an oxymoron pretty much anywhere in the world, but the point is that in Japan it is both difficult for teachers to instigate this pedagogy, and for learners to appreciate and take advantage of it. Certainly, with the preoccupation by stakeholders on proficiency-ranking, it means that repetitious testing ensures learner mistakes are faux pas that need to be eradicated. To illustrate this, most Japanese learners physically erase their mistakes rather than underline and keep them for future reference.

Switching gears, it is important to remember that CMC may be undertaken by various partner schools to target different objectives ; intercultural understanding, tandem learning (one language Japanese, the other English, for example), or conflict resolution, to name a few. Seldom are CMC undertaken for identical purposes. If we consider, for example, that Japanese schools may focus on intercultural understanding for the obvious reason that most of them are extremely mono-cultural, and that an urban school in New Zealand often has up to 100 different nationalities (plus the fact that society is increasingly multicultural), then clearly the level of intercultural awareness by both is at a completely different level. This then requires partner schools to develop a course – viz. activities - that benefit learners from both sides, rather than just one. Easier said than done !

Although a number of schools have participated in what is known as Tandem learning ; whereby one school may focus on learning English, the other on Japanese ; this can easily become one-sided, as each set of participants will naturally negotiate in which language they choose to explain linguistic items in. Although this in itself is a fascinating area of research – just how useful is it for learners

restricted by a curriculum that rewards remembering discrete language items rather than negotiating meaning in two languages? Furthermore, how can educators keep participants on task when often the off-topic activity may well represent the motivating factor behind the SLA for the participants themselves? And should they? As already noted, for Japanese educators, this learner-centeredness can become a major hurdle for persuading their colleagues and other stakeholders of CMC utility.

Furthermore, despite the ubiquity of Internet-connected devices in Japan and certain countries abroad, various restrictions may well apply in the classroom. Often Japanese classrooms have 40 students, whilst in New Zealand, for example, many class sizes range from 25-30. How can the educator ensure all learners are getting equal opportunity to participate? Should learners be in groups, or should foreign learners have multiple individual partners? Can all learners have simultaneous access to these devices in a Japanese classroom? And if so, how can the Japanese educator keep tabs on the multiple exchanges? As real-time monitoring is impossible with multiple pairings, the educator would be forced to either record and review communication - time intensive, or randomly monitor different groupings. A learner may need technological or language assistance at any time - if another pairing also need help at the same time, the time window may well be wasted if the target is synchronous communication, and the learners cannot use the time to process the CMC task due to such hindrances.

6. Considerations

Ideally, incorporating CMC within language education in Japan would need two components; curricular change and a re-evaluation of what goals learners in Japanese education are expected to achieve. Both of these may well seem pie in the

sky to the reader familiar with Japanese education, yet need not be. In some cases these changes are already occurring.

At elementary school, learners already get exposed to subjects that have blurred divisions; in a sense they are blended. Preparatory CMC focusing on group project work (combining any combination of social studies, history, geography, science, to name a few) would mean learners become conversant with subject material that they can then post in an asynchronous form for their partner school abroad. Target vocabulary that underpin practical communication would reinforce the practicality of language learning, rather than the theoretical abstract impression it too often imparts at present. Reviewing the communication could help learners understand weak points, and furthermore help them to reflect on the vagaries of such communication.

Secondary school presents many more difficulties; subject pedagogy becomes more discrete, and learners embark on the multi-test ranking cycle that pigeon holes them. Nevertheless, by Year 3, learners would have enough vocabulary and grammar sense to be able to string together some meaningful synchronous communication. This could be prepared for: certain vocabulary and grammar targets that could be reviewed post-CMC—to determine better options and why communication broke down or seemed unsuccessful. Rather than focusing on perfect sentences, learners could start to appreciate the pragmatic nature of communication, along with the ellipses and other strategies speakers use. If communication was tandem, learners could review the cultural features that enhance or block successful intercultural communication. In a nutshell, learners would move from memorizing language features to understanding SLA at a deeper level. Learning through mistakes and errors, they could conceivably internalize language features through contextualization.

Projects in conjunction with other subjects seem a natural extension of both the

proposed elementary school learning experience, and a way to incorporate multi-subject learning, as well as providing context to language. To learners, a second language would then be seen to be a tool rather than just a subject. Blending subjects provides opportunity to measure knowledge of various subjects together. Transcripts of communication would provide evidence of subject knowledge.

Years 4 and 5 would provide opportunity for learners to utilize increasingly idiomatic language—and also, to think critically, they would need more complex grammar and an increase of lower frequency target words. Communication could become increasingly synchronous, with speed of knowledge transmission becoming more important.

University-based SLA provides the opportunity for learners to work with other common second language learners from different countries. A case in point could be learners from China, Korea, Japan and the Philippines working in a group to resolve a certain task in their second language. This may well require economic, ethical or scientific knowledge to successfully complete. Naturally, transcripts of how members resolved issues in the target language could provide support to output review to provide both meaningful assessment as well as avenues for the learners to improve their skills.

All in all, it becomes clear that SLA education in Japan could really benefit from incorporating CMC within its curriculum. Naturally, different participants require different types of CMC and also different support. Younger, less proficient, learners are likely to require more online support, and substantial contact preparation. Arguably, younger learners may well need asynchronous CMC to allow language processing time, whilst relatively more proficient learners may well better handle synchronous versions.

7. Further Research

Research needs to be undertaken that could review the assertions in this article over the utility of blending subjects and adjusting the curriculum. This would require the participation of all stakeholders of a school, particularly the management. Elementary school offers the least resistance to this proposal, as there are few curricular restrictions or subject divisions like at secondary school.

University classes could also easily incorporate international communication for similar reasons. The biggest challenge, of course, would be to decide on the formality of arrangement; either an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) or a more casual tacit understanding between colleagues at different institutions.

Secondary school appears to provide the greatest challenge, with the relatively rigid curriculum and high-stakes testing process. It would likely need to be at a 6-year programme, with all stakeholders agreeing to any proposal to avoid negative washback. Possibly a private school would provide the flexibility that a prefectural or national university-attached school could not.

There are challenges to utilizing CMC in Japanese education, but the speed with which this pedagogy has been adopted around the world, along with the increasing ease of access to Internet devices, means that it will be sooner, rather than later, that these sorts of experiences will be enjoyed by young Japanese in their quest to develop second language proficiency.

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