

AN INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SYNCHRONOUS COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION ON LANGUAGE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAMESE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: The study explored students' evaluation of and attitudes towards synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) on language skills development after a fifteen-week semester of instruction, using quantitative and qualitative approach. One class of English level 3 of CEFR – Vietnamese standard (B1) participated in oral role plays and one class engaged in synchronous online discussions. The research participants filled out the pre- and post- questionnaires and the participants from the SCMC group were called for semi-structured interviews to obtain their evaluation and attitudes towards synchronous computer-mediated communication on language development. Analysis of the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews exposed that the fifteen-week semester English intensive course contributed to students' language skills development. They had positive attitudes towards SCMC and were contented with the activities in the computer lab. Remarkably, the SCMC group felt more confident in chatting in computer lab than the role play group. It showed that doing written online discussions would intrigue learners in their learning English. SCMC is thus shown to be a valuable addition to the foreign language classroom.

Keywords: synchronous computer-mediated communication, oral role plays, students' evaluation, attitudes, language skills development, foreign language classroom

1. Introduction

During the last decades, research on computer mediated communication (CMC) has shown an outstanding development on foreign language teaching and learning methodology using technology of which countless benefits have been proved through numerous world-wide research studies.

CMC has two modes: asynchronous computer-mediated communication

(ASCMC) and synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC). Generally, asynchronous computer-mediated communication (ASCMC) takes place in time and place independence. Typically, the instructor and students discuss, give and get information or deliver materials through course web pages, posting of forum messages, or email messages. In contrast, synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) represents real-time interactions. Usually, this means that the instructor and students meet in a text chat room, simultaneously, at a particular

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location in cyberspace or from any location that has Internet access and interact through typed statements or questions (Lavooy & Newlin, 2003). In this study, SCMC is used as synchronous online discussion or text chat or written chat interchangeably.

Previous research studies showed that there is a link between oral communication and online synchronous discussions. Online synchronous discussions not only improve written proficiency but also indirectly improve oral proficiency since writing in a computer-mediated environment resembles spoken language in terms of its interactional features (Beauvois, 1997b; Chun, 1994).

Considering the increasing use of technology in today's language classrooms in Vietnam, the current research is needed to examine students' evaluation of and attitudes towards SCMC on language skills development.

2. Literature review

2.1. CMC and language skills development

CMC's contribution to language skills development has constantly been proved since the early period in CMC's history. Various metalinguistic aspects of language development have been explored, including negotiation of meaning, sociolinguistic environment, and intercultural competence. Furthermore, numerous studies on interactionist approach as well as a sociocultural viewpoint to second language acquisition (SLA) have been conducted on negotiation of meaning and CMC (Chun, 2008). In addition, Kitade (2000)'s findings showed that CMC is a profitable environment for sociolinguistic development. This study concluded that interactional features of CMC facilitated encouraging conditions for developing positive attitudes towards

language learning: no turn-taking competition, text-based interaction, and a lack of nonverbal cues.

Additionally, increasing in linguistic competence, both quality and quantity, among learners has also been stated in the study by Kern (1995). He revealed that CMC-supported learners created more language production than their friends in the face-to-face (FTF) group. Kern found that SCMC discussions produced between two and four times more turns, more sentences, and more words than the oral discussions. The research also showed that learners' language production was at a greater level of sophistication regarding grammatical accuracy and complexity.

Finally, in terms of language skills, both written and spoken skills are enhanced through various modes of CMC in language learning projects. In fact, there is a common tendency to associate CMC with the development of specific language skills (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). The hypothesis that SCMC may improve speaking proficiency has been tested by Payne and Whitney (2002), who found that participants in a text chat room have a significantly higher oral proficiency than those just spending time in traditional oral classes.

In short, it can therefore be seen that SCMC has been used widely in developing most language areas and skills, except for listening skills which are normally supported and developed through other forms of visual and audio technology. The text-based nature of SCMC brings about many meaningful applications in language education. This medium not only amplifies students' attention to linguistic forms (Wang, 2004), but also stimulates increased written production of the target language as well as creating a less stressful and more equitable environment for discussion (Nguyen, 2010).

2.2. *Synchronous computer-mediated communication*

A wide range of potential strengths of SCMC mode have been found in previous studies. SCMC enhances learning opportunities for students according to Berge (1995). SCMC not only provides more in-depth interactions on topics; it is also convenient and useful for students living long distances from the university, travelling frequently, having family obligations (childcare responsibility) or disabilities that affect mobility as in the study by Lavooy and Newlin (2003). Candace (2004) claimed that SCMC creates more spontaneous communication going back and forth, enhances learning intertests and interpersonal relationship. She adds that students are more engaging and have more equal distribution in asking and answering questions during communication processes. Candace also proved that there is a higher percentage of socio-emotional interactions; learners asked more personal questions and revealed more about their frustration or need for help with less hesitation. The students have stronger sense of immediacy to respond to peers' questions and spend less time to send messages (Candace, 2004). In addition, Khamis (2010) stated that text scripts can be always retrieved for later reference via SCMC which is a backbone of distance learning programs. His research proved that SCMC facilitates instructor-student and student-student interactions as well as provides natural byproducts of authentic communicative activities. In Watt's study, SCMC's benefit is that it is easier to provide immediate feedback to information seekers (Watts, 2016).

Likewise, the most common benefits that were found in research studies investigating the perceptions of SCMC are: reduced anxiety, increased and equalized participation among

language students, and increased language output. Often, research studies report that these factors have an impact on one another, i.e., the reduced anxiety level that is prevalent in an SCMC environment leads to increased and equalized participation among students, which in turn leads to more language production. The question that arises is why learners experience a discussion in a computer lab so differently from an oral discussion in the classroom.

In order to capitalize these SCMC's advantages and explore its possible influences on classroom language learning, the present study investigates students' evaluation and attitudes towards SCMC on language skills development in Vietnamese institutional context.

3. Methodology

3.1. *Research Design*

In order to achieve the aim of this study, a mixed approach was chosen. The researcher collected numeric details from quantitative data and specific information from qualitative data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed to explore students' evaluation and attitudes towards synchronous computer mediated communication between two groups of EFL learners: the face-to-face role play group (oral role play) and the SCMC group using synchronous online discussion (written chat).

3.2. *Research question*

This study is guided by the following research question: What are the students' evaluation of and attitudes towards SCMC on language skills development in Vietnamese institutional context?

3.3. *Participants*

The following table shows the students' self-rating English language ability reflected relatively traditional teaching and learning

methodology. The students expressed more confidence in reading comprehension and grammar with the mean score of 3.87 than in listening and speaking with the mean score of 2.23, and 2.33 respectively in the 5-point scale with 5 indicating the strongest. Most

participants self-rated their English language proficiency at moderate level or lower in all language skills and areas: listening: 96.7%, speaking: 100%, reading: 96.7%, writing: 96.7%, grammar: 86.7%, vocabulary: 96.7% and pronunciation: 93.3%.

Table 1. Self-rated English language proficiency between the two groups

Skills	Group	n	Mean	SD.	t	p
Listening	Role play	15	2.07	.961	-1.066	.296
	SCMC	15	2.40	.737		
Speaking	Role play	15	2.47	.640	1.214	.235
	SCMC	15	2.20	.561		
Reading	Role play	15	3.87	.516	.00	1.000
	SCMC	15	3.87	.352		
Writing	Role play	15	2.53	.743	-.887	.382
	SCMC	15	2.73	.758		
Grammar	Role play	15	3.93	.594	.574	.571
	SCMC	15	3.80	.676		
Vocabulary	Role play	15	2.67	.617	.581	.566
	SCMC	15	2.53	.640		
Pronunciation	Role play	15	2.53	.834	.00	1.000
	SCMC	15	2.53	.743		

Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, there was no significant difference between the two treatment groups regarding the language skills and areas mentioned ($p > .05$). The least similarity of the perceived language proficiency between the two groups was the speaking skill with the p value at .235, still far away from the significant level of .05. In general, both groups shared a similar level of perceived language competence, which made the selection of either group to be an SCMC class and the other, a control class less challenging and later comparisons between the two groups more confident. This would ensure the reliability of the research and help the researcher control confounding factors during treatment.

3.4. Instruments

In order to explore students' evaluation and attitudes towards SCMC on language

development, the researcher used the following research instruments. First, the pre-treatment questionnaire was distributed to the two selected classes after the participants had been briefed on the purpose of the study, and had an opportunity to ask questions about what would be involved. The questionnaire included questions about students' demographic information and attitudes towards computer use for English learning, which helped to attain a better understanding of the students' individual, socio-cultural, and academic backgrounds prior to the treatment activities. Second, the post-treatment questionnaire was applied to explore students' attitudes towards the use of synchronous online discussions on the language development. The items on the questionnaires were adapted from surveys used in similar research studies (Kost, 2004; Nguyen, 2011) and chosen based on

the current study's purposes. Both pre- and post-treatment questionnaires were piloted on ten students for revising any ambiguous questions.

In addition, an interview for SCMC group was developed to help the researcher collect more detailed, qualitative information by, for example, giving the reasons why participants have such evaluations and attitudes. The interview design of the current study was semi-structured to invite more profound thoughts about SCMC language skills classes. The students' English proficiency was rated insufficient to understand and answer all interview questions in English. Therefore, all the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese for analysis. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for evaluating students' reflections on and attitudes towards SCMC application in language classes.

Notably, transcripts of the interviews were put into word documents and emailed to individual students to request any modifications.

3.5. Tasks in the lab

The students went to the computer lab for 4 contact hours per week to carry out the designed tasks. The researcher developed all the communicative web-based activities that the students completed in the computer lab, and sent them to the students via email. The activities usually consisted of a guided Internet-based information search, followed by an oral role play or chat depending on treatment group. The activity was preceded by an online vocabulary-reviewing exercise from the previous session to help the student revise and expand their vocabulary.

An example of a web activity is presented below:

City Break!

A brother and sister are going to spend a weekend visiting a big city with their parents. Discuss the different things they could do there and say which would be most enjoyable.

Make a list:

1. What kinds of activities do you want to do?

Look for these activities on the provided links and write down:

1. When and how do you want to do those activities?
2. Choose the most enjoyable thing you want to do and develop strong arguments to support your choice.

The most popular activities to do in a big city are: Go on a free walking tour, Explore the markets, Visit free museums and galleries, Hang out with the locals, Stroll around the park, Check out libraries, churches and cathedrals, Do window shopping, Go on a hop on hop off bus tour.

Now do oral role play/chat and discuss with your partner which activities you can do together in the city. What is the most enjoyable for you? You should both be happy with the decision!

The web activities were structured according to the same principles: two or three students worked together as a group whereby each had access to their own computer. The instructor assigned group members at their discretion; sometimes she paired students up

according to their language levels, sometimes students asked the instructor to do so for them. Students read the assignment, which gave them step-by-step instructions of how to proceed and which topics to cover in their Internet search, and then clicked on one of the

provided links. Approximately 50 minutes before the end of the lesson, the instructor asked students to engage in the assigned role plays based on the information they had found through their web search. While the SCMC group used the hangout program of Gmail to do their role plays in the time given, the oral role play group engaged in oral pair or group work and finally, they performed 2-3 role plays in front of the class at the very end of the lesson. As for the SCMC group, the instructor

created a Hangout group of the entire class and pasted students' mistakes during chatting one by one. Responding to the mistake pasted by the instructor, students sent their correct sentence to the group window. The instructor moved to another mistake only when the posted mistake had been corrected.

3.6. Research procedures

The researcher carried out the following research procedures to reach the aim of the study.

Table 2. Overview of the research procedures

Pre-treatment measurement instruments	
1. Pre-treatment questionnaire	
While-treatment	
Role play group in the computer lab <i>Conducted by researcher</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide topics and links via email - Assign topic, instruct, explain and answer questions relating to the topic - Provide assistance by speaking to students - Feedback on mistakes while circling around <i>Performed by students</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do web-based activities - Click on the provided links for topic-related information - Do oral role play - Correct mistakes - Present 2-3 role plays in whole group 	Chat group in the lab <i>Conducted by researcher</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide topics and links via email - Assign topic, instruct, explain and answer questions relating to the topic - Provide assistance by sending messages - Feedback on mistakes while joining Hangout group <i>Performed by students</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do web-based activities - Click on the provided links for topic-related information - Write chat messages - Read suggestions/feedback from instructor - Send correct sentences responding to posted mistakes
Post-treatment measurement instruments	
2. Post-treatment questionnaire	
3. Semi-structured interview	

3.7. Data analysis

All the items of the pre- and post-treatment questionnaires were calculated and compared with the standard of Cronbach's Alpha using SPSS system. The post-treatment sets of questionnaire were rated on a five-point Likert scale. Mean scores of students' attitudes towards oral role plays and written chats were computed by treatment group, assigning the score of 5 to the highest rating ("strongly

agree"), and the score of 1 to the lowest rating ("strongly disagree"), using SPSS system 23.0. Interview audio-recordings were transcribed and sent back to participants for clarification before analysis. The data gathered through triangulated means were then cross-analyzed in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' evaluation and attitudes towards SCMC on language skills development.

4. Findings and discussion

The post-treatment questionnaire was rated on a five-point Likert scale. Generally, most mean scores were slightly above or slightly below the “neutral” point (worth 3 points) which resulted in a very balanced picture. Interview audio-recordings were transcribed and sent back to participants for clarification before analysis in details and in depth of their attitudes towards and evaluation of SCMC on language skills development.

4.1. Students’ evaluation of oral role play and SCMC on four language skills

The first several questions of the questionnaire asked students’ evaluation of the treatment on their language skills. It was assumed that responses would point to positive effects of the oral role plays on speaking and listening skills, and to positive effects of the online discussions on reading and writing skills. The following table confirms these assumptions.

Table 3. Students’ evaluation of oral role play and SCMC on four language skills

Treatment	Item	Mean	SD	t	p*
Role play	Doing role plays improved my ability to write in English.	3.73	.961	.000	1.000
SCMC	Using written chat improved my ability to write in English.	3.73	.884		
Role play	Doing role plays improved my ability to read in English.	3.87	.640	-.543	.592
SCMC	Using written chat improved my ability to read in English.	3.73	.704		
Role play	Doing role plays improved my ability to speak in English.	4.07	.799	2.729	.012
SCMC	Using written chat improved my ability to speak in English.	3.40	.507		
Role play	Doing role plays improved my ability to listen in English.	3.80	.775	3.523	.002
SCMC	Using written chat improved my ability to listen in English.	2.67	.976		

*Significant at p<.05

Many participants of SCMC group stated that online discussions provided them with opportunities to improve writing and reading skills in English (3.73). What is far more interesting, however, is that more than three fifths of the SCMC group also agreed that the online discussions improved their ability to speak (3.40). It seems to show that the hybrid nature of synchronous online communication,

which combines the speed and informality of oral speech with written output, addresses language skills on either side of the spectrum. This finding corroborates with Chun’s (1994) and Payne and Whitney (2002)’s studies. They both claim that language skills practiced in electronic discussions can be transferred to oral skills and that synchronous chat develops the same cognitive mechanisms

as oral speech. The finding also shows that participants perceived they improved their listening skills over the course. It is obvious to learn that many participants of the role play group revealed that their listening skills were improved (3.80) because their speaking and listening skills were required during oral role plays, the CMC group also endorsed that they improved their listening skills. Participant 3127 in the post-interview uttered: “The most interesting thing during the course is listening to the instructor. I like listening to her a lot. Listening to her I can improve my listening

skill”. There were statistically significant differences between the two treatments regarding speaking and listening skills with $p = .012$ and $.002$ ($p < .05$).

4.2. Students' attitudes towards oral role play and SCMC

4.2.1. Attitudes

As the following table shows, both treatment groups seem to have positive attitudes using either oral role plays or synchronous online discussions in their English intensive class.

Table 4. Students' attitudes towards oral role play and SCMC in language skills classes

Treatment	Item	Mean	SD	t	p*
Role play	Doing role plays in the computer lab was a positive addition to English intensive class.	3.37	.516	1.043	.310
SCMC	Using chat in the computer lab was a positive addition to English intensive class.	3.83	1.125		
Role play	The role plays were too short.	3.07	.704	1.437	.162
SCMC	The chat sessions were too short.	3.67	.816		
Role play	I felt more confident participating in the role plays than in the regular class.	3.13	.915	1.538	.136
SCMC	I felt more confident participating in the chat than in the regular class.	3.60	.737		
Role play	I would have preferred to do an online chat instead of an oral role play.	3.13	1.125	1.381	.178
SCMC	I would have preferred to do an oral role play instead of the chat.	2.60	.986		
Role play	The time we spent on the role plays could have been used more productively as regular class time.	3.33	.900	.435	.667
SCMC	The time we spent on the chat could have been used more productively as regular class time.	3.20	.775		
Role play	I would have liked to do more role plays in small groups (instead of just with my partner).	3.20	.775	.215	.831
SCMC	I would have liked to chat more often in small groups (instead of just with my partner).	3.13	.915		
Role play	I enjoy written assignments more than role plays because they allow me to monitor my use of grammar and vocabulary, and to be creative and play around with the language.	3.53	.915	1.342	.190
SCMC	I enjoy oral role plays more than written assignments (e.g., essays), because they allow me to be creative and play around with the language.	2.93	.704		
Role play	Networked computers have positive contribution to language learning.	4.20	.676	.983	.334
SCMC		4.87	1.125		

The SCMC and role play groups evaluated the addition of chat and role play in computer lab as beneficial (3.83 vs. 3.37). Either group was quite content with the activities they did in the computer lab when asked about the time for doing role plays or chats as their mean scores were just a bit higher than neutral point. The SCMC group seemed to enjoy their chat sessions as they wished they could have more time to chat (3.67) compared to oral role play group (3.07). A comparison to the pre-treatment questionnaire furthermore supported these findings: The SCMC group felt more confident in chatting in computer lab than the role play group (3.60 vs. 3.13). Far more interesting when asked whether they would have preferred the other treatment, only 2.60 SCMC group preferred to do an oral role play instead of the chat, while 3.13

oral role play group preferred to chat instead of role play. It showed doing written online discussions would intrigue learners in their learning English. The majority of SCMC group emphasized the great contribution of networked computers to language learning (4.87). As observed in Table 4, the other items displayed a balanced picture between the two groups.

4.2.2. Anxiety

All participants experienced a high level of comfort in their classes. They did not feel very stressed when they had to perform oral role plays in the regular class or answer the questions, and they did not let pronunciation hinder their expressing themselves. At the same time, however, the students wished they had more time to “compose good English”.

Table 5. Students’ anxiety during oral role play and written chat

Treatment	Item	Mean	SD	t	p*
Role play	I often feel “put on the spot” when doing role plays in English and wish I had more time to compose “good English” when asked to do a role play.	3.07	1.033	-.650	.521
SCMC		3.40	1.242		
Role play	I usually do not feel stressed when answering a question or doing role plays in the regular class.	3.33	.976	.784	.439
SCMC		3.07	.884		
Role play	Having to worry about pronunciation made me feel a lot less comfortable in the role plays.	3.53	1.060	.000	1.000
SCMC	Not having to worry about pronunciation made me feel a lot more comfortable in the online discussions.	3.63	.990		

While the mean scores showed a good comfort level and little anxiety for both groups, it was interesting to note that the CMC group considered it slightly more helpful (3.63) not to have to pay attention to pronunciation when engaging in their online discussions. This response corroborated findings from other research studies (Abrams, 2003; Kost, 2004) where participants commented on the benefits of online discussions in which pronunciation

was not an issue, thus freeing up cognitive energy for other aspects of the conversation. The role play group felt equally comfortable and not worried about pronunciation, which might be due to a low level of anxiety in the classes. Participant 3129 uttered in the interview: “I don’t worry at all. When I see my friends’ text on the screen, I reply. If I don’t understand it, I ask again. It is just a practice hour, so I feel free to write what I want or wait for my friends to give their ideas”.

4.2.3. Monitoring mistakes

A very interesting aspect of language practice was monitoring and noticing of mistakes. According to the participants' self-reported answers, students in the SCMC

group reported their own monitoring the use of grammar and vocabulary (3.33) and noticing of other students' mistakes (3.53) when they conversed in the synchronous online discussions.

Table 6. Students' monitoring mistakes via oral role play and written chat

Treatment	Item	Mean	SD	t	p*
Role play	I monitored my use of grammar and vocabulary in the oral role plays in the lab more than I usually do in the classroom.	3.27	.704	-.196	.846
SCMC	I monitored my use of grammar and vocabulary in the chat messages more than I usually do in oral communication.	3.33	1.113		
Role play	I noticed other students' mistakes more when they presented their oral role plays in the lab than in oral communication in the regular class.	3.27	.884	-.772	.476
SCMC	I noticed other students' mistakes more when conversing in the chat than in oral communication in the regular class.	3.53	1.125		

As can be observed in Table 6, the oral role plays challenged students to monitor their own use of grammar or vocabulary and to notice other students' mistakes when they presented their role plays but with lower tendency (3.27). Participant 3121 said, "It is much easier for me to correct my friends' and my mistakes when looking at the text on the screen than speaking to friends. I also noticed my friends' wrong spellings. I like the correct part at the end of the session". Considering the fact that the online discussions lasted for only about 50 minutes per week, the positive reaction of the students seemed to point to a great but hardly exploited potential of SCMC discussions.

In general, both treatment groups had positive attitudes towards the use of synchronous computer-mediated communication on language skills development. The SCMC and role play groups evaluated the addition of written chat and oral role play in computer

lab as beneficial. They were quite contented with the activities they did in the computer lab. Remarkably, the SCMC group felt more confident in chatting in computer lab than the role play group. It showed doing written online discussions would intrigue learners in their learning English. In addition, all participants experienced a high level of comfort in their classes. Finally, according to the participants' self-reported answers, students in the SCMC group reported their own monitoring the use of grammar and vocabulary and noticing of other students' mistakes when they conversed in the synchronous online discussions.

5. Limitations of the study and future research

This study investigated the students' evaluation and attitudes towards the use of synchronous computer-mediated communication on language development. The actual treatment including 4 contact hours in the computer-assisted classroom per

week was too short to gain more conclusive results. Due to institutional constraints, a longer treatment phase was not possible for this study. However, in order to find more support for the indicated tendency, it would be necessary to replicate this study with a treatment which distinguishes the two groups more clearly, i.e., expanding the chat sessions to two or more lessons per week. A more longitudinal study, over two or more semesters, would also lend support to a clearer understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Obviously, it is also difficult to draw conclusions about students' attitudes towards the use of SCMC in language classes based on only 30 participants whose language data were examined in this study. In order to obtain a more thorough representation, it is necessary to investigate the language data from a larger sample of learners, and not just 30 participants.

Based on the data collected from the questionnaire, it seems obvious that students enjoyed the chat sessions. For future research purposes, it would be important to follow up on these issues, for example by investigating the effect of synchronous online discussion on students' language skills development, or designing a more qualitatively oriented survey to investigate students' motivation and their attitudes towards the use of technology in a language class. Furthermore, it would also be interesting to explore these aspects in a larger context and to see how their attitudes and motivation levels would influence their learning of the foreign language. Additionally, the population of 30 participants is too limited to validate the quantitative data and to make the sample representative for the entire population. Future research is advised to collect data from a larger sample.

6. Conclusion

The goal of this study was to provide more insight into SCMC application in language skills classes. The result proved SCMC had great contribution to language development. The students had positive attitudes towards the use of technology in their language classes.

However, in order to shed further light on this issue, more studies investigating learners' language skills development with the use of SCMC are needed.

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NGHIÊN CỨU SỰ ĐÁNH GIÁ VÀ THÁI ĐỘ CỦA SINH VIÊN VỀ GIAO TIẾP ĐỒNG THỜI QUA TRUNG GIAN MÁY TÍNH ĐỐI VỚI VIỆC PHÁT TRIỂN KỸ NĂNG NGÔN NGỮ TRONG BỐI CẢNH GIÁO DỤC VIỆT NAM

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Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này điều tra thái độ và đánh giá của sinh viên về giao tiếp đồng thời qua trung gian máy tính đối với việc phát triển kỹ năng ngôn ngữ sau một học kỳ gồm 15 tuần, sử dụng phương pháp định lượng và định tính. Một lớp tiếng Anh bậc 3 (B1) tham gia đóng vai nói trực tiếp và một lớp tham gia thảo luận trực tuyến đồng thời. Đối tượng nghiên cứu hoàn thành phiếu điều tra đầu kỳ và cuối kỳ. Ngoài ra, người nghiên cứu cũng phỏng vấn nhóm thảo luận qua máy tính để điều tra thái độ và đánh giá về giao tiếp đồng thời qua trung gian máy tính đối với việc phát triển kỹ năng ngôn ngữ. Phân tích phiếu điều tra và phỏng vấn cho thấy khóa học tiếng Anh 15 tuần góp phần phát triển kỹ năng ngôn ngữ của sinh viên. Sinh viên có thái độ tích cực đối với việc sử dụng giao tiếp đồng thời qua trung gian máy tính và họ hài lòng với các hoạt động trong phòng máy. Nhóm thảo luận qua máy tính tự tin hơn nhóm đóng vai nói trực tiếp. Điều này cho thấy thảo luận trực tuyến đồng thời sẽ thúc đẩy sinh viên học tiếng Anh. Vì vậy, thảo luận trực tuyến đồng thời cho thấy nó có đóng góp có giá trị vào lớp học ngoại ngữ.

Từ khóa: thảo luận trực tuyến đồng thời, đóng vai nói trực tiếp, đánh giá, thái độ của sinh viên, kỹ năng ngôn ngữ, lớp học ngoại ngữ

APPENDIX A

PRE-TREATMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

You are participating in a research study investigating students' evaluation and attitudes towards synchronous computer-mediated communication on language skills development. By filling out this questionnaire, you grant consent for use of the information.

Please fully fill out the following questionnaire.

A. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION						
A1. Gender	Male		Female			
A2. Apart from native language, do you use other languages:	1. English		2. Chinese			
	3. French		4. Others, specify:			
A3. Enrollment area:	1. Area 1		2. Area 2			
	3. Rural area 2		4. Area 3			
A4. You started learning English at:	1. Grade 3		2. Grade 6			
	3. Grade 10		4. Others, specify:.....			
A5. How would you rate your English skills and areas. Please circle: 1. Weakest; 2. Weak; 3. Moderate; 4. Strong; 5. Strongest.		Weakest	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Strongest
	Listening	1	2	3	4	5
	Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
	Reading	1	2	3	4	5
	Writing	1	2	3	4	5
	Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
	Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
	Pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
B. ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMPUTER USE FOR ENGLISH LEARNING						
B1. Which purposes would you use computers for? <i>(more than 1 option is possible)</i>	1. Chatting					
	2. Email					
	3. Web surfing					
	4. English learning					
	5. Others, specify:					
B2. Have you used chat in other English classes you have taken (apart from this class)?	1. Yes					
	2. No					
B3. How often do you use chat rooms to communicate English with other people?	1. Always		4. Usually			
	2. Sometimes		5. Rarely			
	3. Never					
B4. The use of Internet-connected computers can improve your English ability in: Please circle the best answer: 1. Strongly disagree (SD); 2. Disagree (D); 3. Neutral (N); 4. Agree (A); 5. Strongly agree (SA)		SD	D	N	A	SA
	Listening	1	2	3	4	5
	Speaking	1	2	3	4	5
	Reading	1	2	3	4	5
	Writing	1	2	3	4	5
	Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
	Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
	Pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
	Others, specify:					

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX B

POST-TREATMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (ROLE PLAY GROUP)

Please answer the following questions honestly. The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide the researcher of this project with background information concerning your evaluation of and attitude towards the use of technology in a foreign language class.

Please put a cross (X) in the most appropriate cell, which corresponds to the five-level scale given below.

SD = Strongly disagree **D** = Disagree **N** = Neutral **A** = Agree **SA** = Strongly agree

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
A. Students' self-evaluation of technology application on language skills development via role play						
A1.	Doing role plays improved my ability to write in English.					
A2.	Doing role plays improved my ability to read in English.					
A3.	Doing role plays improved my ability to speak in English.					
A4.	Doing role plays improved my ability to listen in English.					
B. Students' attitudes towards using technology via oral role play						
B1.	Doing role plays in the computer lab was a positive addition to English intensive class.					
B2.	The role plays were too short.					
B3.	I felt more confident participating in the role plays than in the regular class.					
B4.	I would have preferred to do an online chat instead of an oral role play.					
B5.	The time we spent on the role plays could have been used more productively as regular class time.					
B6.	I would have liked to do more role plays in small groups (instead of just with my partner).					
B7.	I enjoy written assignments more than role plays because they allow me to monitor my use of grammar and vocabulary, and to be creative and play around with the language.					
B8.	Networked computers have positive contribution to language learning.					
B9.	I often feel "put on the spot" when doing role plays in English and wish I had more time to compose "good English" when asked to do a role play.					
B10.	I usually do not feel stressed when answering a question or doing role plays in the regular class.					
B11.	Having to worry about pronunciation made me feel a lot less comfortable in the role plays.					
B12.	I monitored my use of grammar and vocabulary in the oral role plays in the computer lab more than I usually do in the classroom.					
B13.	I noticed other students' mistakes more when they presented their oral role plays in the lab than in oral communication in the regular class.					

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX C

POST-TREATMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (SCMC GROUP)

Please answer the following questions honestly. The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide the researcher of this project with background information concerning your evaluation of and attitude towards the use of technology in a foreign language class.

Please put a cross (X) in the most appropriate cell, which corresponds to the five-level scale given below.

SD = Strongly disagree **D** = Disagree **N** = Neutral **A** = Agree **SA** = Strongly agree

No.	Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
A. Students' self-evaluation of technology application on language skills development via written chat						
A1.	Using chat improved my ability to write in English.					
A2.	Using chat improved my ability to read in English.					
A3.	Using chat improved my ability to speak in English.					
A4.	Using chat improved my ability to listen in English.					
B. Students' attitudes towards using technology via written chat						
B1.	Using chat in the computer lab was a positive addition to English intensive class.					
B2.	The chat sessions were too short.					
B3.	I felt more confident participating in the chat than in the regular class.					
B4.	I would have preferred to do an oral role play instead of the chat.					
B5.	The time we spent on the chat could have been used more productively as regular class time.					
B6.	I would have liked to chat more often in small groups (instead of just with my partner).					
B7.	I enjoy oral role plays more than written assignments (e.g., essays), because they allow me to be creative and play around with the language.					
B8.	Networked computers have positive contribution to language learning.					
B9.	I often feel "put on the spot" when doing role plays in English and wish I had more time to compose "good English" when asked to do a role play.					
B10.	I usually do not feel stressed when answering a question or doing role plays in the regular class.					
B11.	Not having to worry about pronunciation made me feel a lot more comfortable in the online discussions.					
B12.	I monitored my use of grammar and vocabulary in the chat messages more than I usually do in oral communication.					
B13.	I noticed other students' mistakes more when conversing in the chat than in oral communication in the regular class.					

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX D**POST-TREATMENT INTERVIEW (SCMC GROUP)**

1. How would you describe the course? What are your feelings about the course?
2. Which language skills (speaking, writing, reading, listening) do you think you improved most during the course? How and Why?
3. What do you think about monitoring the use of grammar and vocabulary during chat sessions?
4. What do you think about noticing other students' mistakes during chat sessions? What did you do with found mistakes?
5. What do you think about writing text chat on language development?
6. What major changes do you perceive after the course?
7. Which would you prefer learning English: online chat or attend regular class? Why?
8. What do you think you will do to improve your English after this course?

Thank you for your cooperation!