



**DEVELOPING THE SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS THROUGH
SYNCHRONOUS COMPUTER MEDIATED COMMUNICATION.**

Mrs. Sumangala Sivarajh,

Senior Lecturer,

Advanced Technological Institute, Jaffna.

Email: sumangalaveluppillai@gmail.com

Mr. Vallipuram Sivakumar,

Senior Lecturer,

Advanced Technological Institute, Jaffna.

Email: sivamailbox1@yahoo.com

Mr. Subramaniam Garigaraganapathy,

Senior Lecturer,

Advanced Technological Institute, Jaffna.

Email: garigaraganapathy@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper discusses research methods for a study focusing on “**Developing the second language learning process through Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication.**” The Participants of the study are the students from Advanced technological Institute- Jaffna who follow the Higher National Diploma in English. The main purpose of this study is to collaborate synchronous media in second language learning process. The objective of this study is to determine students’ practice on target language skills through synchronous computer mediated communication and to foster authentic interactive learning – centered approach to language learning through synchronous computer media in an equitable manner. It further investigates how synchronous tools are used in the Language Laboratories in the ESL courses to develop students’ skills and how does the students utilize these tools to enhance their second language learning styles in a meaningful and effective manner. It also focusses the implementation of synchronous learning environment intended to promote meaningful social interaction for authentic target language practice where the students are focused on connecting what they want and what they are interested in from real world. The real-life context equips them with practical and useful skills and address topics which are relevant and applicable.



Computer Mediated Communication, Synchronous media, authentic language learning, authentic interactive learning

Introduction

The scenario of second language teaching learning process has been gradually changing with the advancement of technology. The Computer Assisted Language Learning CALL becomes increasingly popular and also becomes an increasingly helpful and meaningful learning tool to address the very specific both individual and collaborative needs of the second language learners in terms of their language and socio-linguistic competence.

The impact of computer as an effective aid in second language teaching learning process has long been established. According to Bretram C. Bruce – the computer can be used as

- I. Tutors – they can individualize instruction, provide learning material at a controlled pace, and record students’ progress.
- II. Tool - they aid in reading, allow students to produce and format texts easily, facilitate revision of texts and check for spelling errors. They store and easily accessible from all sorts of needed information for learners from style sheet to encyclopedic data.
- III. Ways to explore language – they make regularities, the beauties and the difficulties of language that student can examine and interact with new ways.
- IV. Media – they make possible modes of communication and ‘hypertexts’ and ‘hypermedia’ – allows the intermixing of tables, graphs, pictures, charts ,sounds video and text.
- V. Environment for communication – a new social realm that permits new forms of meaningful communication and reconfigures the relationship among learners and facilitators.

There has been a rising concern in Applied Linguistics in the recent past years about the use of Computer Mediated Communication CMC in Second Language Acquisition SLA. In general CMC can be viewed both as intermediary tool and as a communication process.

When viewed as tool, CMC is examined from technological aspects that provide the medium for communication. Other aspects are revealed when CMC is perceived as a communication process, which includes the message, the sender, the receiver. It is therefore human factors with their socio-cultural, pedagogical background and the information that play significant roles during the interaction process.

It is conventional to divide CMC into two modes including Synchronous SCMC and Asynchronous ACMC. Accordingly, Warschaur (2001) defines different modes of CMC as



- I. SCMC – whereby people communicate in real time via chat or discussion software, with all participants at their computers at the same time.
- II. ACMC – whereby people communicate in a delayed fashion by computers.
- III. The reading and writing of on-line documents via the internet.

According to Lee.2001 and Sykes, 2005 SCMC allows learners to communicate similar to face to face contexts and also provides them with the opportunity to monitor their language use. At the same time Heisler and Crabill, 2006 reveals that ACMC allows learners to deliberate, review, revise or even cancel the stream of communication before sending the information to the recipient.

Though there are several researches carried out on both SCMC and ACMC individually and both have their own pros and cons. But it has been realized both are complement to each other in terms of Second Language Acquisition. Hathorn, 2004 states that ‘while synchronous discussions may be best suited for brainstorming and quickly sharing ideas during interaction, asynchronous exchanges allow more time for considered opinions and are more effective for deeper discussion of ideas’.

The study is being carried out evaluate the impact of both in an interactive process in Second Language Acquisition, an important area of skills development along with socio cultural interaction.

According to Nguyen, 2008. ‘numerous studies have been carried out to investigate the effectiveness of Computer Mediated Communication in language development. These studies take into account concepts such as

- I. Metalinguistic aspects including negotiation of meaning, sociolinguistic environment and inter cultural and intra cultural competence.
- II. Language components and areas including grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.
- III. Language skills development including writing, reading, speaking and listening.

However these three components cannot be examined individually as they all are interdependent and complement to each other while an authentic language interaction takes place. In this context those three processes are simultaneous and spontaneous.

Therefore the present study is going to be examined the language components along with skills development as the skills are considered as the base for any language development. The metalinguistic aspects are going to be analyzed in view of language socialization process through technology.



The study is expected to answer the problem statement “Do synchronous computer mediated interaction support active engagement of students to improve target language skills through an authentic – interactive language centered approach to language learning?’

Objectives

The present study is being carried out with the following objectives.

1. To determine students’ practice on target language skills through synchronous computer mediated communication.
2. To foster authentic interactive learning – centered approach to language learning through synchronous computer media in an equitable manner.

In the present study on developing the second language learning process through Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication is discussed as they are related to each other in language learning. Moreover, many of CALL studies discuss individual learning, the teachers’ role and collaboration between students with synchronous tools in enhancing the second language learning process especially on Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. In this study these three aspects are brought together.

Methodology

Having reviewed the available literature to the problem in hand, selected an appropriate mixed method and design using primary and secondary data: develops a questionnaire and an achievement Assessments on four skills synchronously and also adapt an openionaire for measuring variables under study. The present study is explanatory in nature and analyses data both quantitative and qualitative.

The participants of this study comprised of computer acquainted students studying at selected Advanced technological Institutes: the students of Higher National Diploma in English.

Two groups are subjected to the treatment randomly. One of these groups are treated as experimental group I (Synchronous Mediated Interaction) they are the first years after joining three months for Higher National Diploma in 2020 who are in synchronous learning environment due to pandemic situation and the other is experimental group II (normal class room instruction) they were the first years in 2019. The groups are selected based on questionnaire and openionaire. And the course unit contains the synchronous classroom activities in listening , speaking, reading and writing.



Limitations

Following are the delimits of the present study;

1. The interaction among different student groups, individual learner differences, language background , guidance outside, socio-economic status, environment of different students are ignored.

Literature Review

Synchronous virtual classrooms are commonly known as web-conferencing or e-conferencing systems (Rockinson-Szapkiw & Walker,2009). These types of classrooms allow the students a real time communication where several users can simultaneously interact with each other through internet and also can conduct meeting , seminars, have discussions, make presentations and demonstrations, etc. the synchronous virtual classroom uses the features ,audio, video, text chat, interactive whiteboard, application sharing, instant polling, emoticons.

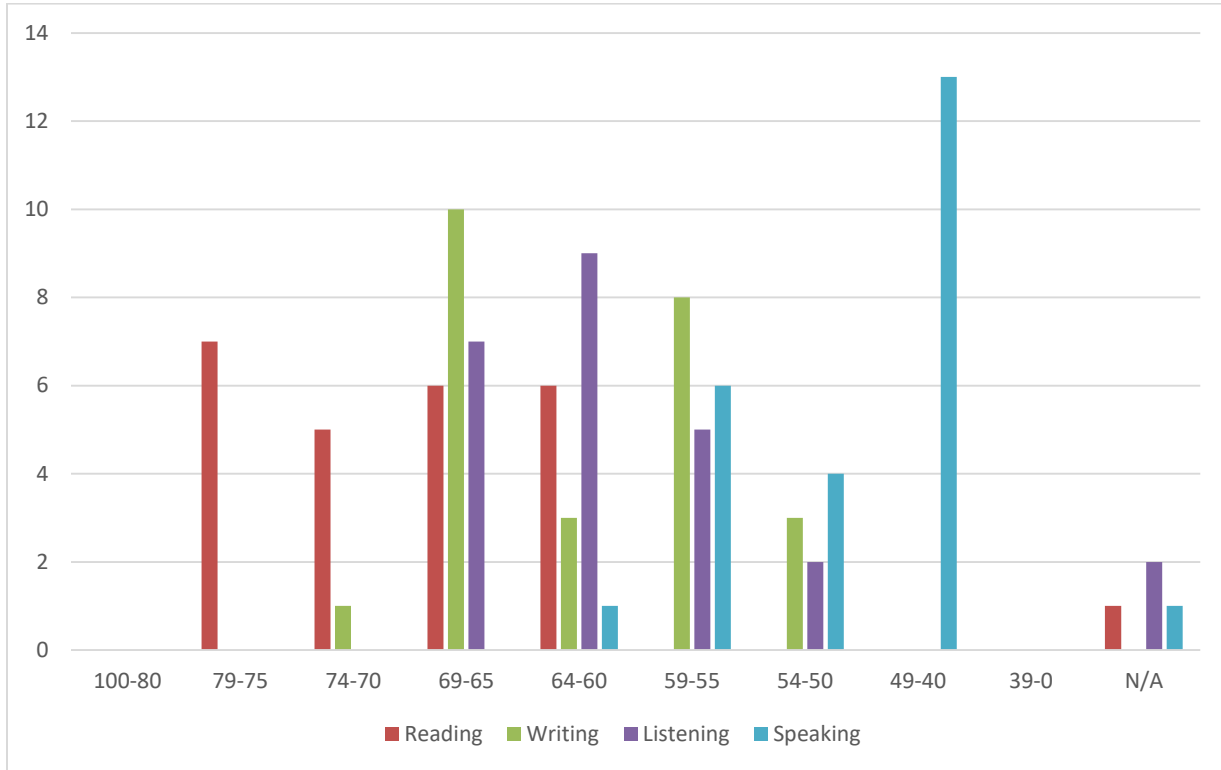
Cook et al. (2011) supported the use of synchronous audio chat and text chat. In some instances, text chat is recommended over audio chat for student learning. Text chat and audio chat are helpful for students to receive immediate feedback from the instructor and their classmates. LaPointe et al.(2004) found that audio and visual technology in synchronous virtual classroom systems bridged cultural differences created communities of practice. Pattillo (2007) found that synchronous audio conferencing increased communication between instructor and students. Studies have also reported that audio quality is the most critical factor for virtual conferencing (Jennings & Bronack, 2001).

Cook et al. (2011) believed that audio and text chat features promote interaction, community and collaboration. Researchers Aydogan, Krakas, Aras and Ozudogru (2011) stated that learners can access educational materials and interact with each other even when the educator is unavailable, furthering the opportunities for synchronous distance education. Sternberger, deal and Fountain (2011) as well as Alexander, Higginson and Moge (1999) highlighted that virtual classrooms allow experts to enter the classroom from anywhere in the world, which makes it possible for people to connect from different parts of the globe.



Result and Discussion

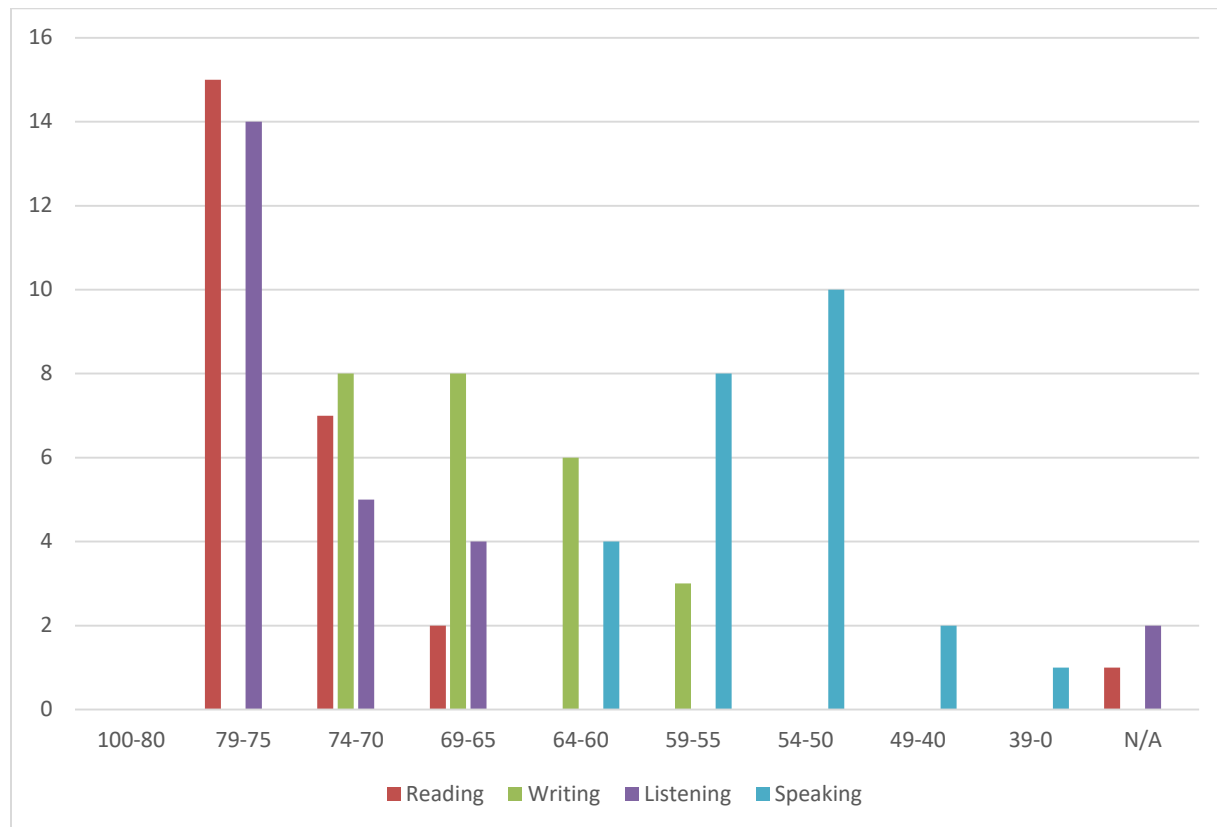
Table 1 Normal classroom learning.



Assessment performance of students, 1st year 1st semester in 2019 in normal classroom learning.



Table 2 Synchronous Classroom learning..



Assessment performance of students, 1st year 1st semester in 2021 via synchronous learning.

The quantitative finding is presented separately the of scores of students’ skills who underwent the synchronous learning in 2021, and the other students who did not undergo this similar type of learning earlier in 2019. Based on Table 1 and 2, the participants who received synchronous learning showed better performance than the non-participants in each skill. The marks ratio is adopted based on the institutional grading system. However out of 25 participants 2 were not fully involved. It should be noted that this study is rather small as it involved 25 participants only. Therefore, it is recommended that a more extensive sampling is utilized to validate this finding.

A qualitative method, semi-structured interview also was designed to get greater insights into the development of skills through synchronous learning. The purpose of the interview was to find out in detail the feed back of students regarding synchronous learning. In studying all these factors the researchers were able to gain a comprehensible understanding of various reasons



which influence the participants' skills development. The students become more committed and motivated because a quick response is expected in synchronous learning environment. Therefore, it affected much in the development of language skills.

The synchronous learners are able to provide general meanings of familiar topics with less influence of their mother tongue and able to understand the spoken discourse and also, they are able to construct and develop compound and complex structures in writing for elaboration. Simultaneously they develop the level of confidence towards second language. They are able to ask relevant questions and apply appropriate vocabularies and also construct proper sentence structures. It further develops them to have a positive learning attitude towards second language and the participants build confidence in learning and are open to self-corrections particularly in pronouncing of words and phrases. They are expected to work in groups for getting to know each other, exchanging ideas and planning tasks.

The online video conferencing tutorials focuses on the multiple and interrelated skills necessary to facilitate language learning in multimodal online environments. Their combination of eye tracking data with stimulated reflections highlights the fact that necessary to facilitate technical skill, experience and confidence in the use of the online tools can free teachers' time to focus on more social and creative aspects of synchronous online teaching. The participants are more realistic in focusing attention more intentional learning of vocabulary and pronunciation.

The impact of synchronous learning in listening and vocabulary is much higher and along with the improvement of listening skill the students felt that they are able to comprehend the given topics with related phrases.

Knock's media natural hypothesis predicts the synchronous communication increases psychological arousal and Robert & Dennis's cognitive model of media choice predicts that synchronous communication increases motivation as well.

This finding is consistent with Gebhard and Nagamine's study (2005) on online language learning. The researchers emphasized that the Impact of synchronous Learning in the development of skills helps improve linguistic proficiency and subsequently increases self-confidence among learners towards second language.

This finding has proven that the online synchronous computer mediated communication in second language learning with the promotion of independence and student-centered approach promotes positive thinking, motivation, confidence. CALL through synchronous tools in ESL class room improves the learners with respect to a number of different perspectives such as learning efficiency, learning effectiveness, accessibility, convenience, institutional efficiency etc.



Bibliography

Blake,R.(2000). Computer Mediated Communication: A window on L2 Spanish inter language. *Language Learning Technology*, 4,120-136.Retrieved August 3,2005,from <http://t.msu.edu/vol4num1/blake>

Branon,R.F.&Essex,C.(2001). Synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in distance education: A survey of instructors: *Tech Trends*, 45, 36-42.

Handson-Smith,E.(1997).Technology in the classroom: Practice & Promise in the 21stCentury. [http://www.tesol.org/tesol/sec_document.aps?\(ID=403&DID=1064\)](http://www.tesol.org/tesol/sec_document.aps?(ID=403&DID=1064))

Krashen,S.(1985).The input Hypothesis: Issues and implications. London,longman.

LaPointe,D.K.,Greysen,K.R.B.,& Barrett, K.A. (2004). Speak2me: Using synchronous audio for ESL teaching in Taiwan. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/view/166/386>

Li,L.,& Pitts,J.P.(2009). Does it really matter? Using virtual office hours to enhance student – faculty interaction. *Journal of information Systems Education*, 20(2), 175-185

Ortega,L.(1997). Process and Outcomes in networked classroom interaction : Defining the research agenda for FL Computer Assisted classroom discussion. *Language Learning & Technology* 1(1)82-93. Retrieved from <http://t.msu.edu/vol1num1/otega/default.html>

Parker, M.A., & Martin, F.(2010). Using virtual classrooms: Student perceptions of features and characteristics in an online and blended course. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 3(3), 307-323. Retrieved from http://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/parker_0310.htm

Pattillo,R.E.(2007). Decreasing Transactional distance in a web-based course. *Nursing Educator*, 32(3), 109-112. [Doi:10.1097/01.NNE.0000270224.38543.2f](https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NNE.0000270224.38543.2f)

Pica,T.(1994). Research on Negotiation: What does it reveal about Second Language Learning conditions, processes and outcomes? *Language Learning*,44,493-527.

Rockinson-Szapkiw,A.J.,& Walker,V.L. (2009). Web 2.0 technologies: Facilitating interaction in an online human services counseling skills course. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*,27 (3, 175-193. [Doi:10.1080/15228830903093031](https://doi.org/10.1080/15228830903093031)



Sternberger,C.S.,Deal, B., & Fountain, R.A. (2011). Think globally, learn locally: Multimedia conferencing between two schools of nursing. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 32 (1), 41-43. [doi:10.5480/1536-5026-32.32.1.41](https://doi.org/10.5480/1536-5026-32.32.1.41)

Wang, Y.(2004). Supporting synchronous distance language learning with desktop video conferencing. *Language Learning & Technology*, 8(3), 90-121. Retrieved from <http://t.msu.edu/vol8num3/wang/default.html>

Warschauer,Mm,& Healey,D.(1998). *Computers and Language Teaching*:31,57-71.