

Synchronous Computer-Mediated Interactions in English: A Case of Indonesian Learners-English Non-native Speakers Communication

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to investigate to what extent Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication with non-native speakers of English affects Engineering students' speaking skills, and how the use of SCMC in speaking practice is perceived by the students. Grounded in an *ex post facto* design, the data were gained from teacher journals, and interviews to fifteen vocational secondary students majoring in Engineering engaged in SCMC for one semester. Findings showed that SCMC did not indicate positive effects on improving Engineering-related vocabulary and accurate grammar use compared with their pronunciation aspect. The use of SCMC was considered negative in terms of interaction with their interlocutors, and technicalities. However, few students positively perceived that they found it joyful learning within SCMC and got motivated to improve their speaking skills within their interaction with their non-native speakers of English they met online.

Keywords: *English-speaking, non-native speakers of English, Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC), virtual exchange*

1. INTRODUCTION

In a situation where we are currently in the fourth industrial revolution, many higher education programs strive to make students become graduates who can communicate well using English as an international language to broaden their opportunities to get jobs, either at a national or international level. As Kirubahar, Santhi and Subashini (2010) stated, the relationship between a person's ability to get and maintain a job and the ability to speak in English is very significant. This requirement, no exception, also applies to students majoring in Engineering. Shrestha, Pahari, and Awasthi (2016) reported that English is the most essential language in the career of engineering students all over the world.

However, there are still many college students with low English-speaking performance, they were afraid of producing incorrect pronunciation and difficulty in discussing issues related to their major in English due to insufficient English words, expressions, and grammar knowledge. They also feel quite hard to recognize their true skill. In addition to those factors, the teacher factor is also a problem. Sometimes English lecturers only have general English skills and do not have a specific skill to teach English in some majors. Some research studies

found that students' failure to learn English in particular disciplines was caused by a lack of appropriately trained English language lecturers at their major (Hoa, 2016; Luo & Garner, 2017; Patra & Mohanty, 2016).

To overcome their unfamiliarity with specialized English required in specific fields, some English lecturers have directed EFL learners to have online English conversations with English-speaking partners who are also interested in improving their speaking performance in a similar topic to talk about. Several studies have indicated implicitly the features of Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication media allowing EFL students to access global communication, it affected an effectivity of English-speaking production, accuracy and fluency improvements in specific topics, such as implementing synchronous online English communication, done by letting learners interact with foreign interlocutors in their fields of interest about the importance of English and Internet (Mustafa, 2018), and about culture (Eguchi, 2014). This is also proved by Bueno-Alastuey (2011) that synchronous voice-based CMC with different L1 partners improves speaking achievement, and other research found that that SCMC facilitate language learners to improve their oral skills

(Ko, 2012; Satar, 2008), by giving each interlocutor's feedback (Gurzynski-Weiss & Baralt, 2014).

There are also studies have examined the implementation of Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication with native speakers and found several negative and positive perceptions in terms oral performance, when talking with native speakers via Second Life, one of SCMC platform, the EFL learners felt motivated to always talk in and decrease their anxiety to talk English (Kruk, 2016; Melchor-Couto, 2017), it also made the learners enjoy talking with native speakers of English. SCMC with native speakers of English also results in terms its effectiveness to improve oral skills (Abrams, 2003; Brown, 2016; Kung & Eslami, 2018; Spring, Kato & Mori, 2019). However, the interlocutors of the EFL learners in those studies were native speakers of English, while interactions conducted between especially EFL learners with foreigners who are predicated as non-native speakers of English invited from online speaking platform need to be further studied for its effects in improving their English speaking skills in Engineering topic and their perceptions towards it.

Many affordable online speaking platforms with its filtering features allow English language learners, especially EFL learners in Indonesia to find English speaking partners who usually come from other countries having not too much time differences and dominated with non-native speakers of English with specific topic preferences to talk, in this case Engineering-related topics. However, research on this concern is very limited and not enough to ensure that the Engineering-related English conversation conducted between EFL learners and non-native speakers of English who they get from the online platform can facilitate the students to improve Engineering-related vocabularies and such their English-speaking accuracy like grammar and pronunciation considered important to be mastered.

Based on the aforementioned importance of English-speaking skills for college students, in this case, students in Engineering major and the importance to conduct a study on the effectivity of Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication between EFL learners majoring in Industrial Engineering and foreigners who are predicated as non-native speakers of English who have similar interest to talk about Engineering, this study focus on one particular practice of Engineering-related English conversation between Engineering students with non-native speakers of English they get from online platform who has Engineering as their topic preferences to talk about. Based on the aforementioned issues, this study aims to investigate to what extent Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication with non-native speakers of English affects Engineering students' speaking skills, and how the use of SCMC in speaking practice is perceived by the students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication in Classroom Speaking Practice

Many English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers have acknowledged the benefits of technologies in learning and teaching English. They have increasingly involved in developing collaborative language learning activities using Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) served as a medium to practice foreign language (Coverdale-Jones, 2017; Lin, 2014; O'Rourke & Stickler, 2017; Trejos, Pascuas, & Cuellar, 2018). English-speaking practice has been implemented frequently in a synchronous mode. Helm (2015) reported that synchronous computer mediated communication is the most widely used in Europe institutions of higher education. Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication (SCMC) is also considered to be useful in one of the higher education institutions where participants in this study try to improve their course related speaking skills, i.e., Engineering.

The implementations of SCMC have been examined from a myriad of different perspectives. O'Dowd (2018) explores some outputs done through virtual exchanges in many contexts for varied educational aims and recommends using virtual exchange to refer to any programs providing online communication among language learners in different parts of the world. The O'Dowd's terminology in line with a particular practice implemented by EFL learners majoring in Industrial Engineering and foreigners who are predicated as non-native speakers of English have similar interests to talk about Engineering, which is the focus of this study.

2.2. English Oral Interaction through SCMC

Now many platforms make it possible to get partners to talk with globally involving users in different geographic locations, interacting to engage in learning dialogues (O'Dowd, 2016). With this opportunity, it usually used by English teachers to improve their students' English-speaking skills in oral interactions with foreign interlocutors (Osipov, Volinsky, Nikulchev, & Prasikova, 2016).

There are also studies have examined the implementation of SCMC with native speakers, when talking with native speakers via SCMC, the EFL learners felt motivated to always talk and decrease their anxiety to talk in English (Iino & Yabuta, 2015; Kruk, 2016; Melchor-Couto, 2017), it also made the learners enjoy talking with native speakers. SCMC with native speakers also results in terms its effectiveness to improve oral skills (Abrams, 2003; Brown, 2016; Kung & Eslami, 2018). Based on those studies, and a condition where we are here implementing it with non-native speakers of

English, the students' English-speaking production and accuracy are being asked, like how they produce Engineering-related vocabularies, applying good grammar, and pronunciation.

2.3. Effects of Interacting with Non-Native Speakers of English through SCMC on Vocabularies Use

There have been many ways to strive improving EFL learners' English-vocabularies production while speak English, one of which is by involving them practicing English conversation with foreign interlocutors through SCMC. Eguchi (2014) found that talking with foreigners through SCMC made EFL learners in Japan produce more utterances and felt more comfortable and being curious talking about culture. Kohn and Hoffstaedter (2017) also focused on vocabularies production, using BigBlueButton platform. The result show that it made the students being active and easy to develop topic, increase their English vocabularies production with non-native speakers of English. Abe and Mashiko (2019) also found that SCMC application affect English language production produced through audio SCMC. The other studies found similar findings that SCMC improve students' vocabularies use (Abrams, 2003; AbuSeileek & Rabab'ah, 2013).

During real-time synchronous communication through SCMC media, there is also less time to think about message content so that the vocabularies production increases (Smith, Alvarez-Torres, & Zhao, 2003). It also helps students to produce many sentences, as Eslami and Kung (2016) stated that SCMC interaction between interlocutors also improves English speaking production because it sets less structured and more dynamic discussion. However, Yanguas (2012) found different result on vocabularies production between learners using oral SCMC and learners with face-to-face interaction. Nguyen and White (2013) compared two modes of exchanges, SCMC versus face-to-face (FTF), it revealed that students with SCMC, collaborating an academic task produced fewer words than students in FTF mode, Loewen and Wolff (2016) also found that SCMC does not support any better speaking practice than F2F class.

On the factors of whom EFL learner speak with, anxiety becomes something causes lack of English vocabularies production spoken by EFL learners when practicing conversations with native speakers using SCMC media. Russell (2020) also claimed that language learners tend to be nervous facing and talking with foreigners, so their vocabulary production is less optimal. AbuSeileek and Qatawneh (2013), found that SCMC caused the language learners with only short, clear and unambiguous answers, they asked their interlocutors with restricted and closed questions, so that their vocabularies did not increase.

From all the studies, there is a tendency where EFL learners feel more comfortable and confident to have an English conversation with non-native speakers who have similarities in difficulty of speaking English that allows them to understand each other's meanings, and get used to speak English using simple words or sentences form, as Paetzold (2016) stated that non-native speakers tend to use simple sentences or vocabularies when they speak English, and there are also the ones who prefer to talk to native speakers.

2.4. Effects of Interacting with Foreigners through SCMC on Grammar and Pronunciation Accuracy

Grammar and pronunciation are important skills need to be mastered in speaking English. So far, the improvement in terms of grammar is still not enough to be achieved through this technique, as Alshahrani (2016) pointed out that interacting with foreigners, SCMC could not fully improve students' English-speaking skill in terms of grammar, it seemed that grammar is better to be improved in face-to-face learning with teacher in classroom. Mustafa (2018) emphasized that social media networking had a great impact on all speaking components which were in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation of 22 beginners EFL learners from Arab who practiced their spoken English with foreign interlocutors using SCMC media. Jung, Kim, Lee, Cathey, Carver, and Skalicky (2019) also found that SCMC was beneficial to improve grammar.

In pronunciation, SCMC also contribute to improve it. Hung and Higgins (2016) found that SCMC seems particularly effective for pronunciation improvement for Chinese-speaking learners of English and foreigners. Bueno-Alastuey (2010) also explores the effects of SCMC on pronunciation with three different kinds of oral exchanges, i.e. NNS-NNS with same-L1, NNS-NNS with different-L1, and NNS-NS. It shown that NNS-NNS with different-L1 SCMC as the most beneficial for pronunciation development. In her further research, Bueno-Alastuey (2013) also found that SCMC produced more negotiations and gave high interactional feedback quantity on phonetic triggers in NNSs-NNSs with different L1 interaction.

From above studies, it seems that speaking accuracy can be more achieved, especially for improving grammar and pronunciation, when EFL learners make an English interaction with foreigners, it seems that EFL learners better to interact with non-native English speakers because non-native English speakers pay more attention to grammar while SCMCing. In contrast, Kim (2014) found that grammar or processes to construct good sentences are more prevalent in F2F classes than in SCMC, foreign interlocutors did not fix or give any grammar correction, or even remind each other interlocutor towards their grammar mistakes, as Guest

(2016) stated that grammar does not seem to be a serious thing to concern in online exchange.

In conclusion, using SCMC might be more beneficial to improve pronunciation than grammar use, as Lin (2015) revealed that SCMC has good effect on pronunciation, however, it might have a negative effect on grammar accuracy, while Ziegler (2016) indicated that SCMC only has small benefit to improve productive skills. However, Loewen and Isbell (2017) found that SCMC does not support pronunciation improvement any better than speaking practice in F2F class.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study employed *ex post facto* research design since the use of SCMC in speaking practice has occurred and leaves some data such as a journal when I instructed and implemented SCMC, as Kerlinger (1964) defines that *ex post facto* design is used in which the independent variable or variables have already occurred. Then, for the second reason, because of that, I could not manipulate variables more (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018). Then, based on the aims of this study, *ex post facto* was a research design used for how I analysed the effects on the use of SCMC towards the students' English-speaking skills through the existing data, i.e. the journal, as Kerlinger (1964) states that he then studied the independent variable in retrospect for its possible effects on the dependent variable.

3.2. Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted for a particular online distance learning practice i.e., SCMC in English II subject implemented by one tertiary education in Bandung, Indonesia. To inform important facets and perspectives related to the phenomenon being studied, the selection of participants in this study was purposeful. Therefore, 3 (three) higher achievers (HA) and 12 (twelve) lower achievers (LA) out of fifteen students majoring in Engineering engaged in Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication for one semester were taken as participants for this study.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection techniques used in this research study are document i.e., teacher journal, telling how I instructed and implemented SCMC in speaking class referred to *Rencana Pembelajaran Semester*, and semi structured grouped interview. After the data were been collected, to find the effects of SCMC implementation on students' speaking skills and students' reactions/perceptions towards the implementation might be implied from the journal and the interview transcript, it began with the coding process, and grouping the codes

from the journal, and display it into tables and charts to be analyzed and interpreted the data in accordance with the research questions. All the analyzed data collected were interpreted into a description, matched, compared, and linked with other research. Conclusions were then drawn to answer the research questions. After all the interpretation were corroborated, conclusions were drawn and regarded in the light of other research findings.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Effect of SCMC on Vocabulary Use

From the result of teacher journals analysis and interview transcripts, this study found that SCMC implemented by the Engineering students, did not indicate positive effects on improving their Engineering-related vocabularies use. In the teacher journal, it was stated that from all the students' 9 recording SCMCs with foreigners that I wrote in the journal, they only produced about 1 to 6 Engineering-related vocabularies. Furthermore, through the interview, they felt some factors causing them for not producing what vocabularies should be more concerned to be used, i.e., Engineering-related vocabularies. The number of vocabularies seemed very limited.

From all the SCMCs, the production of their Engineering-related vocabularies was very limited, the students also seemed not enjoying their conversation with their foreign interlocutors. This was also supported by the students' perceptions stated in the interview session that it was not about even using Engineering-related vocabularies, for only using general vocabularies in English was very difficult due to anxiety. Six LAs students felt that they could not even neither produce general vocabularies nor Engineering-related vocabularies.

4.1.2. Effect of SCMC on Grammar Accuracy

Data taken from the teacher journals and interview show that SCMC did not also indicate positive effects in proper grammar application. From the teacher journals, it is found that SCMC did not make the students using proper grammar taught through all English 2 subject materials referred to *Rencana Pembelajaran Semester* that should be applied in their conversation with their interlocutors. The students were not maximally applying the materials while they conducted SCMC, especially for using complex and compound sentences, and equal, comparative, and superlative degrees. There was one student asked in his SCMC recording like "what is industrial the best in your country?", actually, he tried to

apply superlative degrees, however he could not arrange the words properly.

There are also many grammar mistakes made by the students, because they arranged English words into sentences like the way they arrange words in Bahasa Indonesia sentences and their vocabulary choice was still like what Indonesian say, like “I am new resign” instead of “I quit my job”, and the other basic one like “how old I am?” she said “old me?”, and the most grammar mistakes that the students did were the way they use verbal and nominal sentences, like “I am very like duren”, and “I am not now about...”, and other ones like “You can speak Indonesia?”, and “What are you busy now?”.

In this study, most of the students, high and low achievers felt that their interlocutors (non-native English speakers) could not support them to improve their grammar, they did not really concern on grammar use, and rarely gave any feedback to the students regarding their grammar mistakes, the students were also difficult to improve their proper grammar use.

4.1.3. Effect of SCMC on Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the speaking skill that the Engineering students could improve through this SCMC technique. In the teacher journals, it was stated that all SCMC recordings showed the same result on the students’ pronunciation, it was quite understandable even though with Indonesian accents, and some of them still pronounce English words the way they pronounce words in Bahasa Indonesia like involves, industrial, discuss, assignment, other, university, busy, quality assurance, conversation, agriculture, students, and enough. However, they improved it, they changed how they pronounce it with better pronunciation. It because they had a good corrective feedback from their interlocutors. It was also confirmed by the students from the interview session that they felt pronunciation is the skill they could improve due to their foreign interlocutors’ feedback on recasting their mispronunciation.

4.1.4. Effect of SCMC on Learners’ Overall Speaking Performance

With whom the students talk to also affects the students English speaking skills, especially in terms of Engineering-related vocabularies use and grammar. In the teacher journal stated that the students hardly to find foreign interlocutors who were interested in talking about Engineering. Three HAs and six LAs said that they should always divert the conversation to Engineering topics because their interlocutors do not have Engineering background, it was difficult to find interlocutors who are interested in Engineering.

Based on what the students stated in interview, there are two kinds of foreign interlocutors who students talked to, the first were foreign interlocutors with English skills that are the same as or lower than theirs and the second ones were foreign interlocutors with upper English skills. The first kind of foreign interlocutors limiting the students to explore Engineering-related vocabularies, because the students need to always repeat and explain what they had asked. Meanwhile, talking to interlocutors with upper English skill made the students fear instead and could not catch meaning of what their interlocutors said, moreover they said all of their utterances with unfamiliar accents. This thing also caused the students for not exploring and applying the materials, they were comfortable to use simple sentence and use improper grammar, because their interlocutors also did not pay attention on grammar mistakes.

4.1.5. SCMC Use as Perceived by Learners

Anxiety is a condition indicated by tension, nervousness, fear, or worry, of doing something. This actually felt by the students while they were conducting SCMC. I felt feeling anxious is the one of reason why they could not improve their speaking skills, as I wrote in the journals and as what the students admitted in interview. From the three skills descriptive result, the students only could produce one to six Engineering-related vocabularies, dominated with very basic and common vocabularies that always repeated in the next SCMCs, even though few of them also produce different vocabularies. SCMC seemed affecting their Engineering-related vocabularies use because of anxiety.

Six LAs and one HA students felt that anxiety made them confused, run out of things to say, and hastily answered questions asked by their foreign interlocutor and asked questions in English sentences by only relying what was on their mind. Six LAs students felt that they could not even neither produce many vocabularies nor Engineering-related vocabulary because of that, while two LAs said that it caused grammar and mispronunciation. However, two of LAs felt that they were feeling motivated to improve their pronunciation and increase vocabulary use. In other opinion, one HA felt that anxiety does not affect the production of Engineering-related vocabularies as long as he could still lead the conversation in Engineering topic.

In conclusion, anxiety is something that the students think as one of the factors affecting their speaking skills, the first effect is making them confused, run out of things to say, and hastily answered questions asked by their foreign interlocutor and asked questions in English sentences by only relying what was on their mind, secondly, the Engineering vocabularies use was not optimal, followed by grammar errors, and mispronunciation.

4.1.6. Challenges of SCMC in Classroom Practice

In the teacher journals, I found some of the students conveyed that they had bad internet connection so that they could not ask or answer what their foreign interlocutors ask, there are always repetitions between them. While in the interview transcripts, all participants of HAs and LAs agree that unstable internet problem is the one affected them to not practice their speaking skills maximally, so they needed to always repeat what they have said, and it effects on students' English-speaking production. Three HAs and seven LAs said that the unstable internet connection caused miscommunication, it made them could not heard messages clearly, there was a misunderstanding, difficult to catch messages, the farther away the countries that the participant contact the worse the quality of the messages heard. While three HAs and three LAs said that they always requested their foreign interlocutors to repeat what had been said, and it caused the conversation got stuck. As a result, it effects on lack of vocabulary production and grammatical misunderstanding.

Other than that, Five LAs felt that they cannot speak English fluently, and five other LAs said that they felt that they are difficult to say English words in proper pronunciation, explained by two LAs, it because they did not learn much about English pronunciation before entering university, they do not have a good history of learning English pronunciation when they were in elementary, junior, until senior high school level, the students tended to feel unfamiliar with using English. Participant tended to have difficulty in speaking English. Two LAs tended to have low motivation to improve their English language skills, they tended to be lazy in learning English. One LA felt that she is less proficient at using engineering-related vocabulary, and one other tended not to be confident in his grammar skill.

4.2. Discussion

This present study found that SCMC did not indicate positive effects in increasing the Engineering-related vocabularies use, the students seemed felt anxious to talk to their interlocutors, in this case non-native speakers of English. The more afraid they were to speak with foreigners, the weaker vocabularies they produced. It did not make them feel comfortable to produce English vocabularies. This result is not as similar with what Kohn and Hoffstaedter (2017) and Abe and Mashiko (2019) who found that SCMC with non-native speakers of English made the students being active interlocutors and easy to develop topic, increased their English vocabularies production. They can produce many sentences in English due to a similar way of thinking to string words into sentences.

There are some other factors also occurred in terms of their interlocutors, there are few non-native speakers of English with good English-speaking skills, and that was a problem for the students, the higher the speaking skills of their interlocutor, the more the students feel confused about talking to them. Foreigners interested in Engineering in the SCMC platform also hard to find, they mostly wanted to talk about general topic, so that the students were difficult to improve their Engineering-related vocabularies. It made the students exposed to situation where they were difficult to use Engineering-related vocabularies.

This study also found that SCMC did not indicate positive effects in proper grammar application. The students did not really maximally applying the materials, there are many grammar mistakes made by the students, because they arranged English words into sentences like the way they arrange words in Bahasa Indonesia sentences and their vocabulary choice was still like what Indonesian say, like "I am new resign" instead of "I quit my job", and the other basic one like "how old I am?" she said "old me?", and the most grammar mistakes that the students did were the way they use verbal and nominal sentences, like "I am very like duren", and "I am not now about...", and other ones like "You can speak Indonesia?", and "What are you busy now?".

Vinagre and Muñoz (2011) also found in their study that there are grammar mistakes while doing telecollaboration exchange mostly in terms of subject and verb agreement. Those mistakes did not get too much concern from the students and the interlocutors, foreign interlocutors did not fix or give any grammar correction, or even remind them towards their grammar mistakes, as Guest (2016) stated that grammar does not seem to be a serious thing to concern in online exchange. There are no grammar corrections from each other, this is not as what Monteiro (2014), and Yanguas (2010) stated that in video/audio-conferencing, we can improve our speaking skills because of corrective feedback given from each other interlocutor when they made mistakes.

In this study, most of the students, high and low achievers felt that their interlocutors (non-native speakers of English) could not support them to improve their grammar, they did not really concern on grammar use, and rarely gave any feedback to the students regarding their grammar mistakes, the students were also difficult to improve their proper grammar use, as Alshahrani (2016) pointed out that interacting with foreigners, SCMC could not fully improve students' English-speaking skill especially in terms of grammar. It because they exposed to use simple sentence to make their interlocutors understand to what they said, as Paetzold (2016) stated that non-native speakers tend to use simple sentences or vocabularies when they speak English.

There were also many interlocutors who had not quite good English-speaking skills, and the condition forced

the students to use simple sentences to make their foreign interlocutors (non-native speakers of English) understand what they say in English. However, for some of the students, they felt that that was indeed due to their lack of oral skills that made them difficult to talk with proper grammar.

This study also found that SCMC bring quite good effects on pronunciation. Other research also dealt with it, Mustafa (2018) emphasized that social media networking had a great impact on all speaking components which were one of them is pronunciation of 22 beginners EFL learners from Arab who practiced their spoken English with foreign interlocutors using SCMC media. Hung and Higgins (2016) found that SCMC seems particularly effective for pronunciation improvement for Chinese-speaking learners of English and foreigners. Bueno-Alastuey (2010) also explores the effects of SCMC on pronunciation with three different kinds of oral exchanges, i.e. NNS-NNS with same-L1, NNS-NNS with different-L1, and NNS-NS. It shown that NNS-NNS with different-L1 SCMC as the most beneficial for pronunciation development. In her further research, Bueno-Alastuey (2013) also found that SCMC produced more negotiations and gave high interactional feedback quantity on phonetic triggers in NNSs-NNSs with different L1 interaction. The existence of the NNSs of English brings own benefits on the Engineering students' pronunciation skills as what Bueno-Alastuey's studies in 2010 and 2013 found. There is some more interest to correct each other's pronunciation, or perhaps doing something like self-correction (Zeng, 2017).

For pronunciation, this study also found that SCMC between NNS with different L1 could at least help the students improving their pronunciation. It is the one that have a great possibility to improve through SCMC with non-native speakers of English. They gave corrective feedback when they mispronounced English words. The students mostly pronounced English words like how they pronounced Bahasa Indonesia words, but it was still can be understood and they improve it because some of their foreign interlocutors remind them to change their pronunciation with the proper one, or simply like repeating it with the proper pronunciation.

Feeling anxiety while SCMCing made the students could not improve their speaking skills. This study found that anxiety is one of causes makes the students not confident to talk in English, as Guest (2016) found that the students felt anxious and had lack of confidence to talk. Macayan, Quinto, Otsuka, and Cueto (2018) also found the same, anxiety affects poor speaking English performance while SCMCing.

In contrary, other students' perception in the interview, they in fact feeling motivated to improve their oral skill and seemed enjoying the conversation, as other research suggested to use SCMC for improving speaking skills because it was found that it indicated a positive

effect to increase the learners confidence and decreased nervousness (Canals, 2020; Melchor-Couto, 2017), York, Shibata, Tokutake, and Nakayama (2021) also found that SCMC was making fun atmosphere to improve learning language. Those studies show that SCMC roles as good technique to decrease anxiety to talk, however this study found in contrast.

The next issue are technical problem and other factors before and when SCMCing made the students difficult to improve their speaking skills. Unstable internet problem is the one affected them to not practice their speaking skills maximally, as Nascimento & Melnyk (2016) stated that SCMC is dealt with internet connection quality, Blake (2016) also suggested that we have to know at least with any miscommunication happened due to technical problem. The students will find difficulty to talk when their internet connection getting worse or unstable, because the quality of video or audio will be also getting worse, so they need to always repeat what they have said, and it effects on students' English-speaking production. Ino (2014) states that the better English proficiency of students, the better they also manage the strategy in speaking English. 21 Japanese students with different English proficiency level, majoring in Economics were given opportunity to conduct five times SCMC sessions via Skype with foreigners for one semester.

However, in contrary, Nilayon and Brahmakasikara (2018) conducted Cross-cultural SCMC English conversation between EFL Thai students with two speaking practice partners, it was found that English speaking skills of participants in higher levels were not much better than other participants in lower ones, they tried very hard to speak English. The results of the study, therefore, seemed to show that lower-level learners tend to have more improvement, therefore this practice might be a suitable English-speaking practice for lower level learners as it seemed to work best with learners in the elementary level. This study finds similar finding as Ino (2014) stated previously. The students seemed could not manage their interaction with their foreign interlocutors also because of their basic of speaking skills, they admitted that they have lack of speaking proficiency and not really good English learning history.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, SCMC with non-native English speakers did not indicate positive effects on improving Engineering-related vocabulary and accurate grammar use compared with the students' pronunciation aspect. Pronunciation skill of the students considered as the one of the speaking skills improved by the implementation of SCMC.

It has also been found that the implementation of SCMC in improving oral skills bring negative and

positive perceptions from the Engineering student in this present study.

The negative perceptions come from the students for its ineffectiveness of the online platform to find the foreign interlocutors interested in talking about Engineering, so that they could not use or improve the use of Engineering-related vocabularies because they were not exposed to talk mostly about Engineering. Then, they were also exposed with technical problem interrupting them to interact, and some other problems related to their basic speaking skills that they perceived not really good enough to actively bring the conversation with foreigners through SCMC.

The positive perceptions come from few of the students' statement that they were fun doing SCMC and get motivated to improve their speaking skills with the foreigners they met online, even though not often talking about what they should dominantly talk, i.e. Engineering.

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