Videoconferencing using SCOPIA for Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language – Pedagogical and Technological Observations

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Introduction

- Initiating situation – description
  Blended learning course – 'to improve students' oral presentation skills in an academic environment.' Course overview.

- Technology

- Pedagogical principles and findings

- Research findings

Blended learning included:

- Three weeks + one week – classroom-based work (2011-2012)
- Twelve SCOPIA-based videoconferencing sessions, between the two periods of classroom-based work
- Email – for submitting scripts, texts, feedback
- Emerging Technologies Moodle site, with video links, links to online learning activities
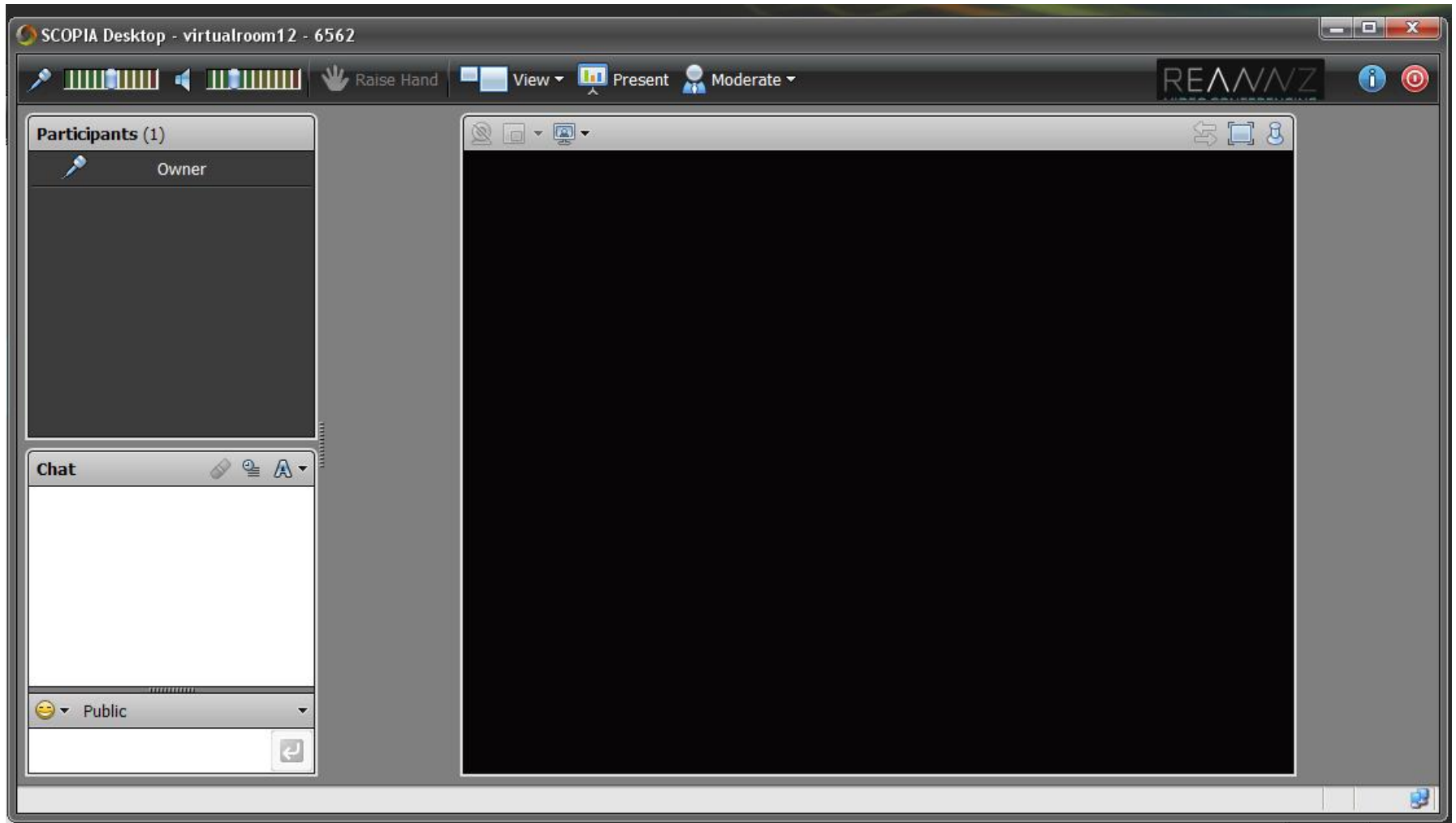
SCOPIA

http://www.radvision.com/Products/Video-Conference-Systems/Desktop-Video-Communications/SCOPIA-Desktop-Video-Conferencing/
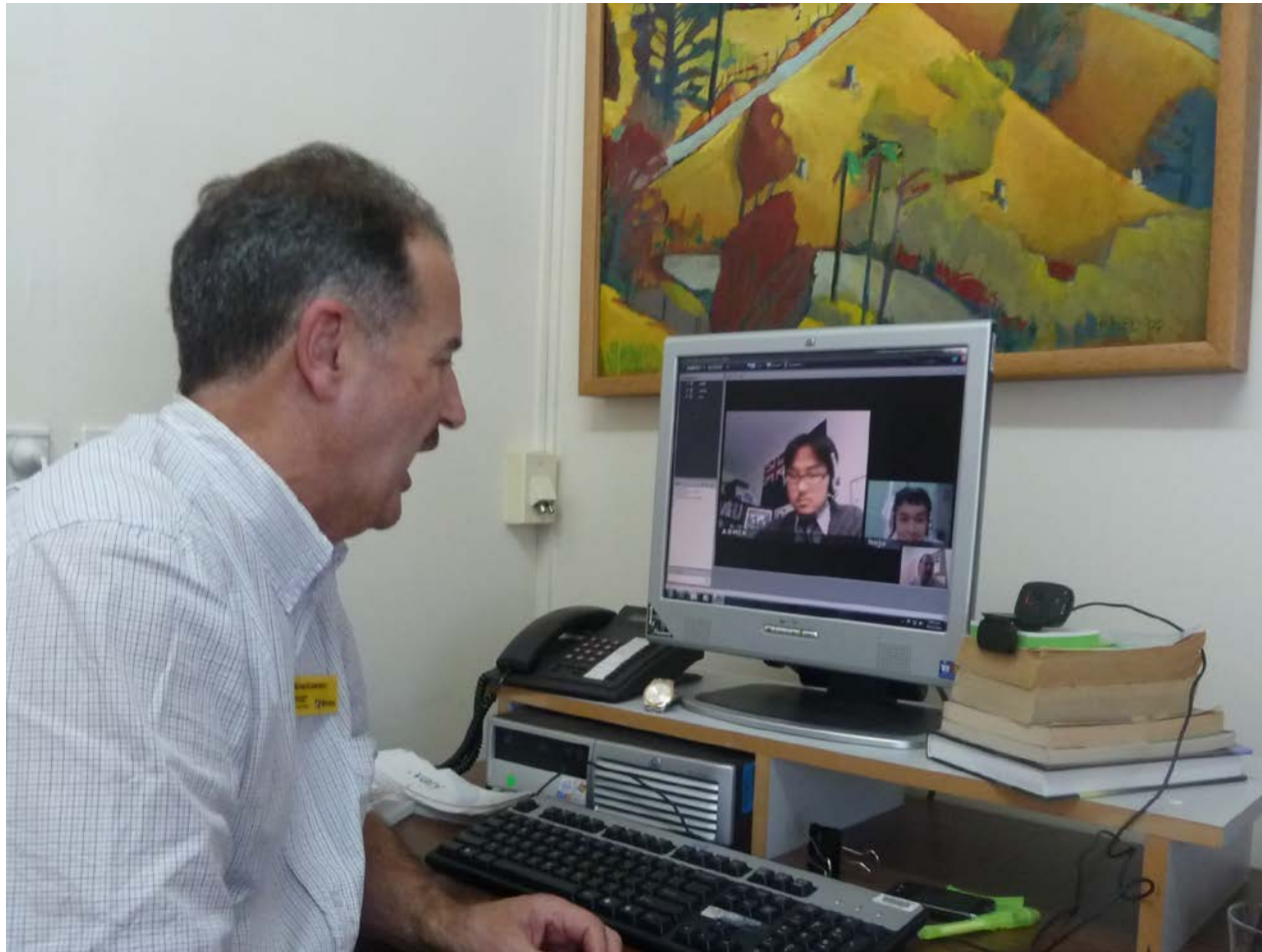
http://iview.karen.net.nz

http://sds.karen.net.nz/scopia/entry/index.jsp?ID=6562&autojoin

SCOPIA Desk top view

During a session 1

Discussing a graph – common view of graph

Emerging Technologies Moodle site

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing is a '.. system where two more participants, based in different places, can see and hear each other in full motion video.' (Ahmet, 2007)

This videoconferencing was neither 'one to one' nor a telecast lecture.

".. a 'small group' situation, with a high degree of synchronous interaction." (Mason, 1998, cited in Knipe & Lee).

Videoconferencing

'..few studies have examined hybrid, or blended classes, where face-to-face meeting are combined with online conferencing.'

(Grant & Cheon, 2007: 211)

McIntosh (2001, cited in Grant & Cheon) pointed out the value of a 'prior relationship' between the instructor and the students established face-to-face.

Questions

Within the delineations of goals, time frame and places, and methods of delivery –

1. How do I use the time and technology in order to achieve the goals?
2. How will we demonstrate attainment of goals? (If any)
3. How will we reflect on the course and learn from these initial endeavours?

Pedagogical questions

1. How do I use this tool (SCOPIA), not designed for language teaching and learning, for language teaching and learning?

2. Is this a wholly new situation? – neither classroom, nor tutorial room, nor one to one conversation, nor computer lab.

Some principles for technology and pedagogy – relating to videoconferencing (Wang, 2004)

1. Acceptable video and audio quality
2. Reliability
3. User friendliness

4. language-learning potential
5. learner fit
6. meaning focus
7. authenticity
8. positive impact
9. practicality

Learning activities

- Discussions

- Vocabulary practice activities

- Dictations

Research

Survey

Interviews

7.1 Research Findings - Technical Issues

Responses of three participants to the use of SCOPIA for videoconference tutorial language learning.	Yes	No	No Answer
It was easy to set up.	3		
It was easy to use.	3		
The quality of the video was good enough for language learning.	3		
The quality of the audio was good enough for language learning.	1	1	1
The internet connection was reliable enough for the session to go ahead readily.	2		1

From interviews

'When we need to watch a video, we should watch it on our PC without the network of SCOPIA in New Zealand.'

'Sometimes the audio was delayed.'

'Sometimes I couldn't see the other participants.'

From interviews

'I use both Firefox and Internet Explorer. In the beginning of the videoconference, SCOPIA worked only with Internet Explorer.'

'I would choose face to face lesson because the teacher is able to use the whiteboard. But if I take an English lesson from a place far from Japan, videoconference (sic) is very glamorous.'

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From interviews

'Tutors should be well-trained in how to use this system.'

'It is necessary for technical staff to participate in the meeting.'

Q: What is the ideal length of a videoconferencing language learning session?

    60 mins 0   90 mins   1   120 mins 2