Technology use in ESL: An investigation of students' experiences and the implications for language education

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Abstract

In Australia, information and communication technologies (ICT) are a significant element of a multicultural and multilingual society. However, some people (in particular, international students, immigrants, refugees) may experience many challenges because they use technology in English as their second language (ESL) and in a new sociocultural environment. Informed by a sociocultural perspective and Bill Green's 3-D model (Green, 1988), the study views technology as a complex social, multimodal and multidimensional practice which requires relevant capabilities – technoliteracy. The case studies focus on four international students and their experiences with technology use in ESL. This paper introduces five interrelated categories of challenges – navigation, comprehension, application of discourses, critical analysis and the affective domain. It also outlines the capabilities required for technoliteracy practices in ESL – the English language capabilities, ICT capabilities, contextual capabilities and critical capabilities. The discussion focuses on the need for educators to rethink the use of ICT in a language classroom.

Keywords: ESL; ICT; literacy; tertiary