THE IMPACT OF MULTIMODAL TEXTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

This research study titled 'The Impact of Multimodal Texts on the Development of English language proficiency' is conceived from three problem statements: (a) Is the Communicative English One (CE1) course effective? (b) Is the use of multimodal technologies useful? and (c) Is it useful to have knowledge about students' learning needs in the design of a course, as well as taking cognisance of their needs in the planning? The CE1 course guided this research study. A sample of 400 students was drawn out of a total of 1300. Students' English language proficiency was assessed before they started the course, at the end of the course and three months after they had completed the course. An English Proficiency Test (EPT) was administered on three occasions to assess change in performance with respect to learning English. Information about students' background characteristics, in addition to the processes involved in the course and those related to the course was collected. The English Proficiency Test was used to assess the students' performance on the course and the data were analysed with Partial Least Squares Path Analysis to examine the mediating effects that influenced outcomes. Hierarchical Linear Modelling was used to examine the moderating effects that influenced the outcomes. Thirteen students were also interviewed to obtain an in-depth perspective of the situation. Students' written responses to open-ended questions were also analysed.

The key findings are: (a) multimodal technologies are effective in English language learning, (b) there is a gain in performance of students who enrolled for the CE1 course with low English proficiency, (c) while the girls do not lose, the boys increase noticeably in performance, (d) students from the East Coast region do not progress as rapidly as other regions, (e) students in some faculties gain more than students in other faculties and (f) there are faculty differences in the benefits obtained from the course. The implication of this research study to the theory of language learning is that multimodal technology increases the informal learning of English as both a second and foreign language alongside formal instruction in the classroom. Thus the use of technology can supplement the learning of a second and a foreign language in ways similar to the learning that takes place within the community in second language learning. This research study indicates that there are important benefits from the application of multimodal technologies that can be used for foreign language learning as well as for broadening second language learning.

Key words: English language proficiency, Multimodal technology, Latent variable path analysis, Multilevel Modelling, Change analysis

DECLARATION

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available in all forms of media, now or hereafter known.

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Sasikala Nallaya

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