Chapter 9

New Languages, New Literacies and the School Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

We have in previous chapters undertaken a quite detailed analysis of the features of language and literacy practices within the medium of communication technologies, including email, ICQ, MSN, mobile phone speech, and mobile phone texting. This has given us the opportunity to examine carefully new or peculiar linguistic structures, and new ways of communicating and expressing oneself within these new technological environments.

Of course, it is not everybody who is comfortable with these new ways of using whatever language it is by experimenting with these new structures and strategies of encoding such as shortening words and explicitly disregarding standard grammatical encoding. In particular, parents and teachers have been quite critical about

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these new languages and new literacies produced within the context of new communication technologies by their children and students.

To address these concerns, I shall in the rest of the book, beginning with this chapter, take a closer look at the educational implications of these forms and ways of communicating in the age of IT. These concerns will be addressed by means of a case study based on a funded project whose aim was to do a focused and careful analysis of email, ICQ and mobile phone practices among young people in Hong Kong with a view to examining if there are any consequences of these language and literacy practices on the way they learn and use language in the classroom. The bulk of this chapter is a case study based on a survey report (Bodomo 2006) about the role of ICT in the curriculum, with particular reference to the issue of whether or not CMC language adversely affects standards of correct grammar and language use. This chapter has a simple organization. The next section is the bulk of the chapter since it constitutes the case study on which the chapter is based while the part that comes after the case study concludes the chapter with a summary of the main findings and implications for future curriculum planning.

CASE: NEW OF LANGUAGE AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Introduction: Rationale for the Study

There has been a general concern about the falling standards of language among students in Hong Kong. However, language use among the youth in some new channels of communication, such as texts from email, ICQ, and mobile short messages/SMS, reveals a good amount of creativity, eloquence, dexterity, systematicity, and multimodality. The issue is, if standards are really falling, how should we handle this paradox whereby students manifest falling standards within the formal context of the educational system and yet manifest considerably high levels of proficiency and linguistic sophistication in IT communication modes? This case study aims to:

i. Address the issue of ‘language standards’ through analyzing texts produced by the youth in new information communications technologies (ICT texts),

ii. Investigate the plausibility of using ICT texts in language education,

iii. Develop a considerably large corpus of ICT texts for educational purposes.

It is, therefore, expected that a better understanding of the changing paradigms of communication can help language teachers, educationists, and curriculum developers produce competent graduates to better serve society’s manpower and human resource development needs.
Language Teacher Beliefs About Technology: Expanding the Ecology
www.igi-global.com/article/language-teacher-beliefs-about-technology/238871?camid=4v1a