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ESP community in transition: a study of ICT use in a tertiary context in Saudi Arabia

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University of Wollongong

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ESP Community in Transition: A Study of ICT Use in a Tertiary Context in Saudi Arabia

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

Ibrahim Shaabi

B.A. (English Literature & Applied Linguistics), King Abdul-Aziz University, 1997
M.A. (TESOL), Ball State University, 2004

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

2010

THESIS CERTIFICATION

I, Ibrahim Shaabi, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged below. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Ibrahim Shaabi

25 June 2010

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A/V	Audio/Visual
ASM	Activity System Model
AT	Activity Theory
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CD-Rom	Compact Disk-Read-Only-Memory
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
CSCL	Computer Supported Collaborative Learning
DOS	Data Operating System
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGP	English for General Purposes
ELC	English Language Centre
E-mail	Electronic Mail
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FL	Foreign Language
HCI	Human-Computer Interaction
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
iPod	Portable media player
IT	Information Technology
OCW	Online Cooperative Writing
OHP	Over Head Projector
SFL	Spanish as a Foreign Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TELL	Technology Enhanced Language Learning
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WBI	Web-based Instruction
Web CT	Web Course Tools
WTO	World Trade Organization

ZPD Zone of Proximal Development

LIST OF WEBSITES

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk>
- <http://www.clarityenglish.com>
- <http://www.dyned.com>
- <http://images.google.com>
- <http://smarttech.com>
- <http://www.youtube.com>

ABSTRACT

This research study examines the success of an ESP course as it adopts technology. The context of this study is a public tertiary institution in Saudi Arabia. The focus of discussion in this study is the ICT attitudes and practices of six ESL teachers and an administrator, the changes ICT introduction brought in the ESP teaching and learning environment, and the elements that affect ICT integration in ESP.

Methodology needs of this research suggest the recruitment of case study approach. To serve the purpose of case study, two methods of data collection are used: semi-structured interview with the teachers and the administrator and observation of classroom and computer lab lessons.

Activity system analysis (Engestrom, 1987) composes the analytical framework for this study. Activity system interpretation of the identified themes delineates several systemic tensions within the culture of ICT use in ESP instruction.

Five elements are identified to be significant for the successful transition to ICT in ESP: adequate ICT tools, teachers' professional development, technical support, funding, and planning.

Particularly, the sociocultural factor is found to be of high importance for understanding ICT use in the addressed ESP context. Analysis of the participants' ESP activity systems reveals that ICT transition in the ESP context is hindered by inherited sociocultural obstacles. Oversimplification of the complexity ICT introduced to ESP and failure to understand the importance of community members' relationships impact the success of ICT-enhanced ESP lessons' delivery.

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