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INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: A COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND DYADS IN A HONG KONG TERTIARY INSTITUTE

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education
at Massey University

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Beverley Margaret Teague

ABSTRACT

Interactive multimedia appears to offer many advantages for adult learners studying in a self-access centre. However, there has been very little research into the use of multimedia for language learning so the advantages are largely speculative. Computers have a very individual tradition on the one hand, while on the other there is considerable interest in the way in which group learning is facilitated by the computer. This study examines the way in which individuals and dyads respond to interactive multimedia for second language learning. It focuses on three areas: control in the computer environment, adult second language learning and the social dimension of the computer environment.

One of the problems with carrying out research in this area is the difficulty of finding a methodology that respects the learner choice that is such an appealing feature of interactive multimedia, while at the same time making it possible to compare the responses of different learners. The search for a suitable methodology was an integral part of this research. A case study approach was adopted. Two data collecting procedures, both of which relied in the first instance on video recording, were used. As the participants worked with the computer system two video cameras were operating. One camera focused on the computer screen and this was analysed to provide information about the way in which students used the program. The other camera focused on the participants and the computer system and this was used as the focus for stimulated recall. Interview data from the stimulated recall was analysed to provide information about participant response from the technological, socio-affective and cognitive perspectives.

Results indicated that individuals were more aware of the possibilities of the technology and more dynamic in their use of it. They viewed considerably more chapters than dyads and were more conscious of the use of time. Individuals expressed a general preference for working with a partner in the

future. In contrast, dyads viewed fewer chapters than individuals and spent considerably longer on each chapter. Their pace was more leisurely. There were clear examples of cooperation between members of dyads but a number expressed a preference for working alone in the future. There was a strong indication of the use of metacognitive strategies for language learning by all participants. Individuals provided evidence of a greater use of cognitive strategies than did dyads.

The study provided a considerable number of insights into the use of interactive multimedia for language learning by individuals and dyads. It also suggested directions for future research: these included studies to identify repetition, and its various roles, in the interactive multimedia environment, and studies of same gender groups. The methodology adopted appeared to be sufficiently robust to lend itself to use in further research.

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