



Information technologies and educational empowerment: A humanistic perspective

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The digital technology phenomenon



- Proliferation of software items and Computer-based projects showing their positive effects and impacts on teaching and learning is like constant tidal waves.
- Computer technology is rapidly growing at such a speed that what we consider as ‘current development’ will soon become ‘yesterday hero’ or has already treated as ‘outdated products’!

What should I share with you at this conference?



- Conference theme ‘**Computer-supported education**’.
- Instead of discussing selected computer related educational achievements.
- The focus: **humanistic** discourses of computer technology, particularly some **challenges** to education and globalization.

Different learning environments



Technology and learning discourse



- Computer technology as a ‘tool’;
- How to use these tools to enhance learning?
- ‘User-friendly’ = ‘Learner-friendly’ ???
- Teaching = Learning ???
- in terms of educational tool and learning discourse.

The teacher- centred learning environment



- Transmission of knowledge;
- Teachers are in full control;
- Highly structured curriculum;
- A focus on summative assessment:
 - “ *Am I on the right track?*”

How should technology be used to reflect this perspective of ‘learner-friendly’?

Learner- centred learning environment



- Learning as meaning-making process;
- Learners' active role in the learning process;
- Independence and collaborative learning.
- Negotiated curriculum;
- “ What does it mean to you?”

How should technology be used to reflect this perspective of ‘learner-friendly’?

The relationship between learning and technology



- Halliday: Language & learning
 - Learning a language
 - Learning about a language
 - Learning through language
- Similarly:
 - Learning the technology
 - Learning *about* the technology
 - Learning *through* the technology

Learning the technology



- The child as a natural IT expert;
- The critical stage hypothesis:
 - in learning and playing with language;
 - in learning and playing with computer.

Teacher: *Bill, could you show me how to upload this file?*

Child: *Yes, teacher, it's very simple: you do this..., you do that..*

Teacher: *Could you show me again, please!*



Learning about the technology

- The principles and theories underlying the technology;
- The benefits, health risk, and social dangers;
- The use, misuse and abuse of technology:
 - Commercially;
 - Politically.
- Impacts of technology on humanity:
 - How does it affect our lives?
 - How does it affect other people's lives globally?
 - Where will technology lead us?

Learning through technology



- Learning new knowledge.
- Learning how to make sense of knowledge
- Learning to challenge knowledge.
- Learning about the world in which we live!
 - Physical world
 - Human world
 - Inner world

The challenge: How should technology be used to enhance learners in terms of these three worlds?

The physical world



- Developing knowledge about the physical world.
- Understanding the physical world.
- Making connection with the physical world.

The challenge: How could we develop a learning environment which uses technology to enhance our relationship with nature? (e.g. global warming)

The human world

- Our family
- Our community
- Our culture
- Our global village
 - Co-existence
 - Interpersonal relationship
 - Inter-cultural awareness

The challenge: How to use technology to enhance international understanding & peaceful co-existence?



The inner world

- Self-concept & self-esteem;
- Prejudice and presupposition;
- World view;
- Emotional intelligence; and
- Peace of mind.



Globalization

- The world is a global village.
- We are villagers in a global village.
- Globalization increases the scope & magnitude of human contact, interaction, and interdependency.
- Aspects of globalization:
 - Idealistic & Romantic;
 - Pragmatic & Hegemonic.



Marsella against hegemonic globalization (a)



“ Thus, we are compelled to ask if the fruits of ‘hegemonic’ globalization constitute local and global improvements? Are we building a better world for all, or only for a small select group? Are the values and actions of the powerful who support ‘hegemonic’ globalization the values and actions we would choose given the opportunity to control our choices?”

Marsella against hegemonic globalization (b)



“I am against “hegemonic” globalization because of its consequences for homogenizing cultural diversity. I am against the asymmetrical concentration of power and wealth of “hegemonic” globalization because it is driven by concentrated values and motives capable of homogenizing the world’s diverse cultural traditions for commercial and political gain. “Profit” is not in itself evil, but when “profit” is driven by greed and avarice, it is simply violence. We need a globalization that is driven by equity and ethics.”

Konai Helu Thaman



- Impact of colonialism on people's minds – particularly on their ways of knowing, their views of who and what they are, and what they consider worthwhile to teach and to learn.
- to challenge the dominance of foreign philosophy, content, and pedagogy in the lives and the education of Pacific peoples
- to reclaim indigenous Oceanic perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom that have been devalued or suppressed.

Catherine Lim's solution



- She examines the problem facing Singapore in relation to the role of English in the contemporary Singaporean society. In her view, two questions or problems need to be addressed:
- Keeping our own culture intact while at the same time being exposed to other people's
- Teaching English so effectively that it not only has practical value but helps in the personality development of the learner, making them more aware and secure in their cultural identity. More open to new form of experiences and more skilled in meeting their challenges.

What should be done?

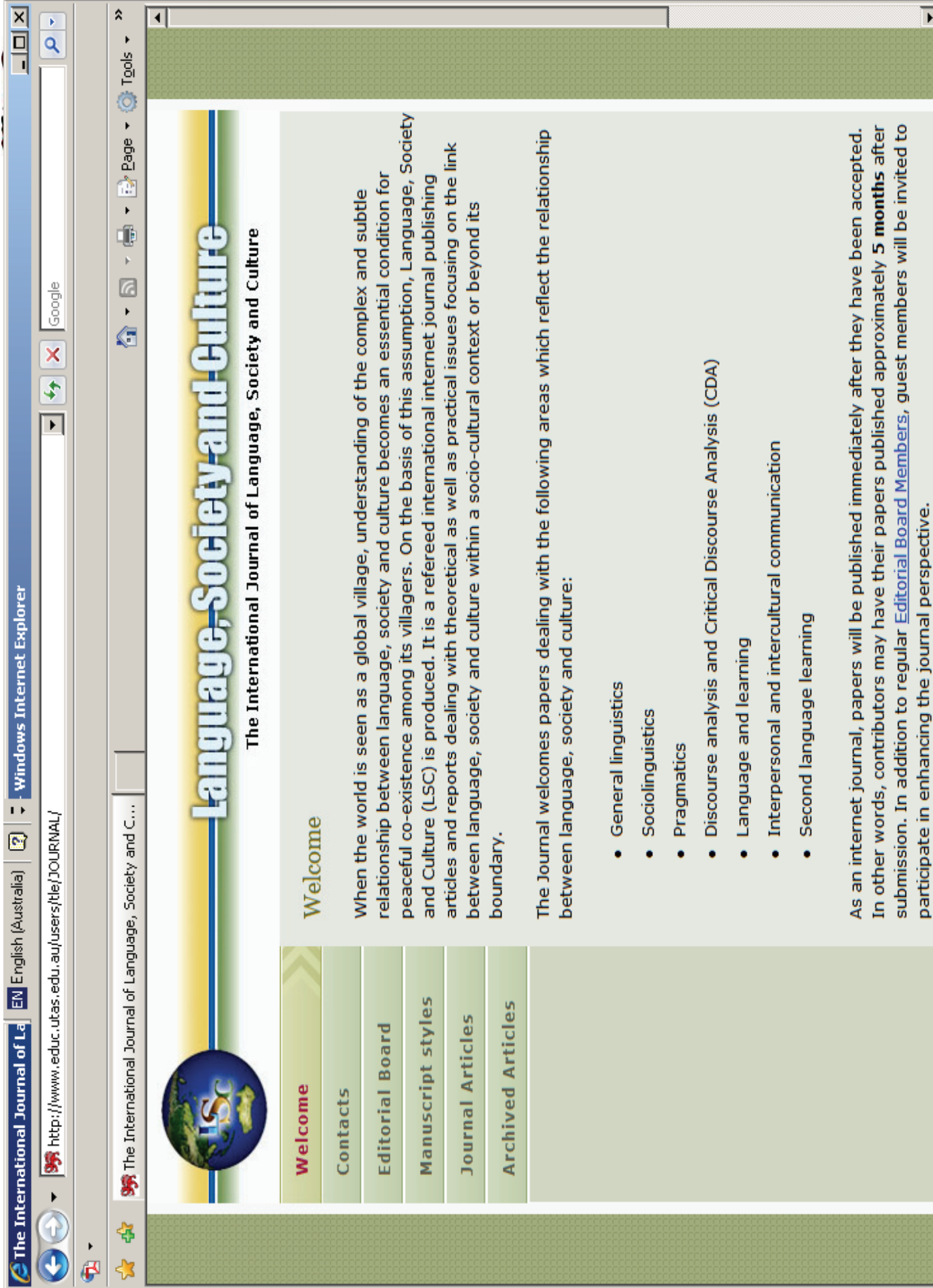
- “Villagers” should have a voice;
- They should be empowered;
- Their cultural knowledge and wisdom should be respected;
- Discursive practices should be improved & changed; and
- Resource sharing should be treated with respect, not as hand-outs.



Small positive steps forwards



- Mounting major research conferences:
 - Kuala Lumpur
 - Saigon
 - Hanoi
- Research journal *Language, society and Culture*



Language, Society and Culture

The International Journal of Language, Society and Culture

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- [Manuscript styles](#)
- [Journal Articles](#)
- [Archived Articles](#)

Welcome

When the world is seen as a global village, understanding of the complex and subtle relationship between language, society and culture becomes an essential condition for peaceful co-existence among its villagers. On the basis of this assumption, Language, Society and Culture (LSC) is produced. It is a refereed international internet journal publishing articles and reports dealing with theoretical as well as practical issues focusing on the link between language, society and culture within a socio-cultural context or beyond its boundary.

The Journal welcomes papers dealing with the following areas which reflect the relationship between language, society and culture:

- General linguistics
- Sociolinguistics
- Pragmatics
- Discourse analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)
- Language and learning
- Interpersonal and intercultural communication
- Second language learning

As an internet journal, papers will be published immediately after they have been accepted. In other words, contributors may have their papers published approximately **5 months** after submission. In addition to regular [Editorial Board Members](#), guest members will be invited to participate in enhancing the journal perspective.



Thank you for listening

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