

New Users, New Literacies: a Research on Academic Writing

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Abstract

When talking about language learning and the use of ICT the divide between what is taught at schools or universities and the tools that the students use in their everyday lives is really wide. The aim of this poster is to present a current project which would like to contribute to narrow this divide through the study of the habits of construction of academic texts of university students. This analysis stems from the premises of the New Literacy Studies, a field of innovative research in regard to the study on writing as a social practice. Its main objective is therefore to analyse the role which Web 2.0 tools play in academic writing, as well as the changes that have been generated following the emergence of such tools.

Thus, we propose a questionnaire and a quantitative approach to analyse the productions of university students with the purpose of describing and analysing both the resulting product and the procedure used in textual elaboration. The collected empirical data are analysed at different levels of depth, with the purpose of observing and examining variables such as the criteria for source selection, the multimodality, the digital scaffolding of the texts or the concept of authorship.

These documented academic uses will be contrasted with the vernacular productions, i.e. the free ones, of the same students, which will permit to observe the differences and similarities between both types of discourse and whether the penetration of the uses related to the technology tools is convergent or divergent in both areas.

This will provide a very comprehensive overview on the approach to the written language of the new generations. This knowledge is essential to design more applied activities that will result in the effectiveness of teaching the written language at all educational levels.