

English and Information and Communication Technology: Zones of Exclusion in Education in Low-Income Countries

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Abstract : Exclusion in education on the basis of language in multilingual contexts operates at multiple levels. Learners of diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds are often expected to learn through English and are pushed further down the learning ladder if they also have to access education through Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The paper explores marginalized children's lived experiences in accessing technology and English in four low-income countries in Africa and Asia. Based on the findings of the first phase of a multinational qualitative research study, we report on the factors or barriers that affect children's access, opportunities and motivation for learning through technology and English. ICT and English - the language of ICT and education - can enhance learning and can even be essential. However, these two important keys to education can also function as barriers to accessing quality education, and therefore as zones of exclusion. This paper looks into how marginalized children (aged 13-15) engage in learning through ICT and English and to what extent the restrictive access and opportunities contribute to the widening of the already existing gap in education. By applying the conceptual frameworks of "access and accessibility of learning" and "zones of exclusion," the paper elucidates how the barriers prevent children's effective engagement with learning and addresses such questions as to how marginalized children access technology and English for learning; whether the children value English, and what their motivation and opportunity to learn it are. In addition, the paper will point out policy and pedagogic implications.

Keywords : exclusion, inclusion, inclusive education, marginalization

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