Cross-cultural aspects of reading practices: A longitudinal study of Thai and Indian/Bangladeshi postgraduate students' metacognitive and framing abilities when reading at an Australian university

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains, as its main content, findings which have not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary institution.

Signed

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Cross-cultural aspects of reading practices: A longitudinal study of Thai and Indian/Bangladeshi postgraduate students' reading practices at an Australian university.

Abstract

This research aimed at understanding the reading practices of two groups of international postgraduate students across three semesters. The research was underpinned by a conceptual framework incorporating metacognitive concepts with framing theory. The methodology involved individual interviews using academic text and pair think-alouds followed by retrospective interviews using general-interest texts. The interviews and pair think-alouds took place at an Australian university with Thai and Indian/Bangladeshi postgraduate students and at university campuses in Thailand and India.

The data selected from the interviews and pair think-alouds revealed significant changes in reading practices between first and third semester at an Australian university and the participants' awareness of these changes. The participants' reflections also provided some explanation for the differences in their cognitive and metacognitive strategy use.

The research study was important because, at the postgraduate level, students are faced with complex text interpretation processes. International students, in addition, have to make a significant cultural/study shift; not only do they have to become

accustomed to the reading of academic texts using discipline-specific patterns but often have to adjust to different conventions used by authors from cultural backgrounds other than their own. Little is known, in particular, about Thai and Indian/Bangladeshi postgraduate students' reading experiences in their own countries or how their reading practices change during study at an Australian university.

The research findings suggest a dynamic, multi-dimensional, developmental framework for conceptualising international postgraduate students' reading practices in first semester at an Australian university, and the changes in reading practices and the educational and socio-cultural influences on these changes by third semester; the findings, in addition, can inform the debate on literacy levels in the cross-cultural academic environment and can contribute to discussions on such pedagogical issues as reforming of curricular structure, the internationalisation of curricula and the development of more culturally sensitive supervisory frameworks.

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