INVESTIGATING INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE BUSINESS
STUDENTS’ MULTIMODAL
LITERACY AND NUMERACY PRACTICES:
A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH

A thesis by
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Submitted in fulfilment of
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Discipline of Linguistics
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
University of Adelaide, Australia

March 2014
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Abbreviations

BLE: Blended Learning Environment
CMS: Course Management System
CPA: Certified Public Accounting
CPAA: Certified Practising Accountants Australia
EAL: English as an Additional Language
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
EAP: English for Academic Purposes
ESL: English as a Second Language
ESP: English for Specific Purposes
GEAP: General English for Academic Purposes
ICAA: Institute for Chartered Accountants in Australia
IELTS: International English Language Testing System
IL: Information Literacy
LMS: Learning Management System
NLS: New Literacy Studies
OLE: Online Learning Environment
PASS: Peer-Assisted Student Support
PBL: Problem Based Learning
PEP: Pre-Enrolment English Program
SFL: Systemic Functional Linguistics
SF-MDA Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis
SOCPA: Saudi Organization for Certified Public Accountants
Abstract

The purpose of this ethnographic case study is to document multimodal literacy and numeracy practices of seven Saudi postgraduate students enrolled in the Master of Commerce Accounting program at the University of Adelaide, Australia. Specifically, it aims to investigate the interrelated dimensions of multimodal texts, literacy and numeracy practices, and contexts.

The study employs a multidimensional framework for researching the participants’ literacy and numeracy practices in three course modules: Accounting Concepts and Methods, Principles of Finance, and Management Accounting. The study includes a metadiscourse analysis of collaborative wiki literacy practices in the Intermediate Financial Reporting module. The framework consists of three stages of analysis: description of literacy and numeracy requirements, description of literacy events and participants’ actual practices and their experiences, and a Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) of Business texts. The analysis of the study is primarily based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The findings of the case study revealed the academic literacy and numeracy practices students were expected to manage with in key topics in the business modules.

The analysis of the three accounting modules and the online literacy practices revealed the multimodal and multisemiotic nature of accounting discourse, diversity of text type, the literacy and numeracy practices, and features of collaborative learning. The multiple-perspective framework has implications for the investigation of tertiary students’ literacy practices in other disciplines with the application of an SF-MDA of financial statements, graphs, and mathematical symbolism.
Statement of original authorship

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Acknowledgements

All praises and thanks are due to Allah, the Almighty, for giving me the chance to exert sustained efforts to finish my PhD thesis project. Without His Grace and Mercy, this project would not have been accomplished. My thanks then go to the many people whose support and encouragement have contributed to this thesis. I give my sincere gratitude to my principal supervisor Dr Peter Mickan, and secondly, to my co-supervisor Dr Michelle Picard. It has been a privilege to work with two scholars of their calibre. I have appreciated their knowledge, wisdom, and encouragement throughout the intensive process of research. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of the papers I published during my candidature. I also thank the anonymous examiners of this thesis for their constructive feedback.

I thank the anonymous lecturers and tutors who gave me the opportunity to attend their classes, and provided me with invaluable data set. I am also indebted to the research participants, without their contribution this thesis would not have been possible. I thank them for their time, their effort, and the information they provided.

I also thank my colleagues at the Linguistics Discipline, the University of Adelaide, for attending my thesis orals throughout my candidature. I also acknowledge colleagues from the City University of Hong Kong for giving me the opportunity to present my research findings at the Halliday Centre for Intelligent Application of Language Studies, and in particular Prof Jonathan Webster for his feedback and interest in my research. I wish to thank all those members of Sysfling mailing list who have offered constructive comments on the transitivity analyses of confusing process types.

No words can express my deep gratitude to Dr. Odah. Al-Johani, the former chairman of the English Language Department at King Saud University (KSU), who I cannot thank him enough for all that he did for me.

I am grateful to my parents whose love and encouragement endowed me with the opportunity to grasp the prerequisite experiences to successfully engage in the PhD journey. I sincerely express my appreciation to my beloved wife and six kids for all that they have done, and for all that they are doing.