

**Aboriginal and rural students' comprehension and talk
about image-language relations in reading tests**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of the University of New England in June 2011

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the financial support received in the form of a scholarship from the Australian Research Council as part of a ‘linkage’ project between the University of New England and the NSW Department of Education, *New dimensions of group literacy tests for schools: Multimodal reading comprehension in conventional and computer-based formats*. I also wish to acknowledge the support and guidance received from my supervisory team. In particular I want to thank Professor Len Unsworth and Dr Eveline Chan for their encouragement, patience and understanding and for sharing their knowledge and expertise in the field of multimodality. I would also like to acknowledge Peter Lind for his expertise and assistance with statistical analysis. I wish to thank Geoff Barnes and Kate O’Donnell, partner investigators in the ARC Linkage project in which this research is located, without whose support the completion of this work would not have been possible. I would also like to acknowledge Penny Hutton who helped develop the project and Susan Bremner who coded the text analysis to provide inter-rater reliability. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their forbearance.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the nature of image-language relations in State-wide group reading tests for primary school students conducted in all New South Wales government schools and most non-government schools from 2005-2007. It also investigates the comprehension of these image-language relations by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in metropolitan, provincial and rural locations. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were undertaken in relation to: the image, language and intermodal complexities in the reading passages that are reflected in the difficulty of assessment items; students' reading strategies; and their inferences and the linguistic complexity of their talk about the images and language in the texts.

The text and item analysis revealed differences in the difficulty of items according to the type of image-language relation and complexity in the language involved. The number of inferences students made and the amount of linguistic complexity in their talk did not differ according to Aboriginal status, geo-location and gender. However, the similarities in Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage for the sample schools in different locations could have resulted in the sample schools not being representative of social differences that exist in the State-wide population. The finding that students' reading scores correlated with the number of correct answers chosen using expected reading strategies, the number of inferences made and the amount of linguistic complexity in students' talk about texts, regardless of Aboriginal status, geo-location or gender, suggests that State-wide differences in reading performance between these groups are due to additional factors beyond Aboriginality, gender and geo-location.

Certification

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Signature:



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