Academic Literacy: A Study of L2 Academic Reading Literacy among a Group of EFL/ESL Postgraduate Arab Learners in a British University

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Abstract : The current study contributes to research on foreign/second language (L2) academic reading by presenting a significant case study, which seeks to investigate specific groups of international (Arab) postgraduate students' L2 academic reading practices in the UK educational context. In particular, the study scrutinises postgraduate students' L2 paper-based and digital-based academic reading strategies, and their use of digital aids while engaged in L2 academic reading. To this end, the study investigates Arab readers' attitudes toward digital L2 academic reading. The study aims to compare between paper and digital L2 academic reading strategies that the students employ and which reading formats they prefer. This study tracks Masters-level students and examines the way in which their reading strategies and attitudes change throughout their Masters programme in the UK educational context. The academic reading strategies and attitudes of five students from four different disciplines (Health Science, Psychology, Management, and Education) are investigated at two points during their one-year Masters programmes. In addition, the study investigates the same phenomenon with 15 Saudi PhD students drawn from seven different disciplines (Computer Science, Engineering, Psychology, Management, Marketing, Health Science, and Applied Linguistics) at one period of their study in the same context. The study uses think-aloud protocol, field notes, stimulated recall, and semi-structured interviews to collect data. The data is analysed qualitatively. The results of the study will explain the process of learning in terms of reading L2 paper and digital academic texts in the L2 context.
Keywords : EFL: English as a foreign language, ESL: English as a second language, L: Language