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Second language writing and literary reading in university: three empirical studies

Nguyen, P.N.T.

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PREFACE

I came here on one autumn date in 2008 and since then I have been living in your warm support, the Vietnamese and Dutch people. I think I could never be able to say goodbye to you. The memories will be with me and the distance between Vietnam and Amsterdam will not be so large.

From Vietnam side, I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Pham Tiet Khanh, the Rector of Tra Vinh university, who gave me an opportunity to follow the PhD track in UvA. I also want to thank Dr. Le Viet Dung, director of Mekong-1000 Project who facilitates the study trip, Dr. Trinh Quoc Lap who helps with information about the research life in Amsterdam. I am grateful to Ms. Truong Kim Hong Ngoc, the official of Nuffic organization in Vietnam who listened and gave me professional counseling in the application. Chi Ngoc, you are my sister who gives me a warm encouragement during my time here.

I want to thank my two colleagues-friends in Tra Vinh university, Mai Khanh and My Chi, who have been with me since the time I was a teacher in Tra Vinh and during my PhD time in Amsterdam. I have also received the tremendous help from my colleagues, my students in Tra Vinh. I am deeply thankful for the practical and useful advice of the Vietnamese PhD chairs in the Netherlands, Dr. Mai Van Cong and Pham Quang Tu. To my cousin in Eindhoven, Anh Kiet-Chi Phuong, I will miss you so much.

I do not think I could function well and reach today without my friends-colleagues, officers, and teachers in UvA. My daily friends are Jantina and Albert who everyday answer many questions from me. So many questions that we planned to collect them and write a guidance book for Vietnamese students in Amsterdam! My thanks go to Anne, Marrit, Hessel, Gerhard, Ellen, Bram, Annoesjka, Mayke, Jaap, Sonia, Mariska, Melanie, Sandra (Enschede), Isabel and Flori (Spain) for their warm support during my happy or troubled time. I will miss our dinner times at the Roester so much. I am deeply grateful to Talita, Saskia, and Marion for their academic help; without that I could never finish the experiments in good time and to a proper standard. In ILO, I also have a chance to know the teachers, researchers in the UvA, Michel, Mark, Marc, Natasja, Riny, Femke (Boesenkool), Helen, Marie-Therese and Karin. I want to thank you for your wonderful friendliness.

Between the two cultures with many different conventions expected in each culture I have perceived the warm help of the officials in UvA that stimulates me to function well in the UvA's working environment: to Luus Reijken who are always listening and try to find the best solutions, to Jelka Driehuis who spend so much time and efforts to arrange a good living condition for me, to Petra and Marielle who always give me the great encouragement and quick help and Rob, Anne-Martine, Peters, Dorien to answer many questions from me, and to Marc and Karin in the international office who always help when I am in need of many procedures for the residence status. In the latter two years I also received professional help from Jean-

nette van Santen and Harry van Kesteren. My thanks go to Selma and Erwin who are wonderfully supportive to me. Finally, I want to thank the Meldkamer officials 6242 whom I meet via phone, however warm and responsible in offering me a safe working environment in late evenings.

I am grateful to Lenie Kneppers and Wim Broekman who give me a sense of family in the white winters of Amsterdam. I think every time when Christmas is coming I will miss you so much. I also appreciate the kind heart of Rijkje, Gonny, Carla, Jannet, Janneke, Femke (Geysel), Bernadette, and Geert in our meetings in ILO.

I will keep in my heart beautiful values I perceive from my teachers here. To my violin teacher, Jiska ter Bals, who not only gives me beautiful sound lessons but also is my spiritual mentor. I learn many lessons about Dutch and Dutch culture from my teacher Joke Olie. I was introduced to the concepts of self-study, autonomous learning from Thea Peetsma and minor processes of learning from Monique Volman. Thank so much Monique for the warm Christmas time with your family. I am indebted to Huub van den Bergh for his meaningful lessons of statistics in language research and for his spiritual support. I want to thank Marcel van Riessen and Martine Braaksma for their academic advices for the experiments. Finally I send my admiration to Tanja Janssen who inspires me with her study on self-questioning in literary reading.

To my three-generation family, Ong Noi, Ba Noi, Ong Ngoai, Ba Ngoai Tran Kim Dong, Ba Nguyen Van Phong, Me Cao Thi Thuy Duong, Van-Nam, Nhat-Nam, Vi-Nam, and Phan Qui Duc, I just want to state shortly that without you I definitely could not be here today.

The book could not come to reality without many days of long and continuous meetings, detailed comments of my supervisors during the four years. Professor Rijlaarsdam gives me the treasure that I put all my hope to reach in the study trip ó the confidence of a young researcher in language science. I am also grateful for his mental and moral counseling during the time. To Professor Wilfried Admiraal whom I admire for his intellectuality in science, his cross-cultural understanding, and the practical support when his student is in need, I feel so proud and fortunate to be your candidate.

When I look back I think I will appreciate more values from you, and from the friends who are not present in the preface because of my present shortage of memory. Last but not least, there are so many brightening values in the life that I receive in the study trip. Thank you!

We do not say goodbye, we say Tot Ziens!