

Literacy and children at risk of social exclusión in urban context: a study in southern Spain

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Introduction



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Poverty rate in Andalusia and Spain (Source: Llano, 2016)

%	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Spain	24,7	26,1	26,7	27,2	27,3	29,2	28,6
Andalusia	33,3	35,0	38,4	36,9	38,3	42,3	43,2

Theoretical basis

- **Literacy as a social and situated practice:** literacy as a useful tool to solve practical problems in children's daily lives (Street, 1984, 1994, 1997):
 - Social Semiotics (Kress, 1997)
 - Ethnography of communication (Gee, 1999; Halliday, 1978; Hymes, 1996; Van Leeuwen, 2005)
 - New Literacy Studies (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, Gee, 1999)

Theoretical basis

- **Literacy as a social and situated practice:** literacy does not take place solely in the school domain, but also in their home or neighbourhood. Important concepts:
 - **Events:** observable instances in which literacy is experienced
 - **Domains:** place where a literacy event is created and is repeated in similar situations (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). This place can be physical (bookshops, rooms, libraries, parks) or virtual (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp)

Theoretical basis

- **Literacy as institutional or vernacular practices:**
 - **Dominant/Institutional practices:** literacy practices originated and disseminated by an institution with a high social status (school, educational institution)
 - **Vernacular practices:** new forms of literacy, alien to the purposes of students' school practices and with low social recognition (home, neighbourhood, church) (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Camitta, 1993)

Theoretical basis

- **Literacy and ICT:** ICT has changed learners' access to literacy, specially in the vernacular discourses of daily life (Merchant et al., 2013)
 - The sociocultural contexts determine the means of dissemination (printed or digital), the mode of text (linguistics, visual, etc.) and the discursive genres that schoolchildren read and write in different domains.
- **Literacy and families:** the heterogeneity of vernacular practices at home and its relationship with the institutional literacy practices has to be investigated, specially the **social values of vernacular literacy practices within the families**

Aims and objectives

1. **Describe** the **literacy practices and events** in which students participate in diverse domains such as home, school, neighbourhood, religious congregation or group of friends.
2. **Identify** and **analyse** the **conflicts** that the interaction of the different local discursive communities in which learners are immersed may generate in the institutional / school literacy processes of children.
3. **Elaborate** an **explanatory model** for the low degree of literacy achievement in deprived urban areas.
4. **Design** a **literacy improvement programme** involving teachers, families and different local communities.
5. **Develop teaching guidance and support** materials for teachers and families to improve student literacy in these areas.

Methodological approach

Ethnographic approach: the ethnographic perspective intends to go beyond the cognitive processes that underlie literacy development to focus on **the role of the social context** in the development of writing and reading skills: “In which contexts does variable x have an effect on y?” (Carter & Sealey, 2000)

Interactional sociolinguistics and the **study of identities** (Rampton, 2010).



Methodological approach

3. **Research design:** nested case-control study (type 4 design according to Yin, 2014)
4. **Sample:** 16 children of 5-7 years old at risk of social exclusion from 4 schools in Seville and Cádiz city. The schools are located in peripheral neighbourhoods with structural situations of poverty and social marginalisation.

Methodological approach

5. Data collection:

- Interviews, participant observation, written documents and audio-visual records.
- Researchers are progressively interacting with participants and coming in contact with their literacy practices and events in different domains.
- From local literacy (neighbourhood –markets, churches, cultural and recreational associations, family homes) to institutional literacy (schools)
- Different form of literacy: graffities, talks, meetings, conversations, etc.

6. Data analysis:

- Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2003) and New Literacy Studies (Barton & Hamilton, 1998)

Expected results

- **Description** of the **literacy practices and events** of students, their families and the school.
- **Identification of conflicts** in the literacy of children both inside and outside the school.
- **Elaboration** of an **explanatory model** for the low development of literacy in deprived urban areas.
- **Design** of a **literacy improvement programme** where teachers, families and different local communities participate.
- **Development** of **teaching and support materials** for teachers and families in order to improve student literacy.

First results: Mapping “A day in a life”



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Thank you very much for your attention



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