Literacy events of communication: An analysis of multiliteracy in General Basic Education in Costa Rica

Author(s):Fernando Guzmán-Simón (presenting), Celia Moreno-Morilla, Eduardo García-Jiménez (presenting)

Conference:ECER 2016, Leading Education: The Distinct Contributions of Educational Research and Researchers

Network:31. LEd – Network on Language and Education

Format:Paper

Session Information

31 SES 07 A, **On Literacy**

Paper Session

Time:2016-08-24
17:15-18:45

Room:OB-Theatre C

Chair:Ingrid Gogolin

Contribution

Literacy events of communication: An analysis of multiliteracy in General Basic Education in Costa Rica

The various reports on the educational situation in the First and Second cycles in Costa Rica (MEP, 2012; CONARE, 2013) have shown the limited improvements in education which Costa Rica has experienced in the last decade. Similarly, the data obtained by international assessments (OECD, 2012) have shown the shortcomings in the field of literacy, in general, and reading comprehension, in particular (if their data are compared to other European and Asian countries).

In the context of Costa Rican Primary School students (9 to 11), it is unknown what their writing and reading practices are in and out of school, and how they relate to each other. Thus, we could describe those communities of practice to which the students of Primary Education, their families and teachers belong, as well as the interrelationships established both among the various domains as well as among the agents themselves (Ivanič, 1998, Maybin, 2006).

Literacy practices have a socio-cultural character (Barton, 1994; Cook-Gumperz, 1986) and can be grouped into four basic dimensions: "Personal literacy culture" (individual or collective literacy events outside the school setting), "(I)nstructional culture" (reading and writing tasks and activities required by school), "Cultural production and consumption" (literacy events related to the publishing market) and "Culture of Memory" (library uses and information storage) (Martos & Garcia, 2010 , Martos & Campos, 2013; Neuman & Celano, 2001). In these four dimensions we find both dominant as well as vernacula literacy practices (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 1998), in which primary school pupils develop different forms of written

communication.

Thus, the description of literacy event or practice includes participants, a place where it takes place, a device that enables reading and writing and an action which is carried out. In short, they are elements which appear around literacy practices that are clearly codified, since reading and located writing have a clear social function in the domain where they occur (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Lillis, 2013).

The domains to which a school-age individual belongs (i.e., belonging to different discursive communities) necessitate the acquisition of heterogeneous communication skills. The need to address multiliteracy (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) in a multimodal school context (Kress, 2010) draws a hybrid literacy system that combines print and digital elements (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000; Lea & Stierer, 2000). The adaptation to the multimodal text enhances metadiscoursal knowledge of the various modes of a communication system (linguistic, visual, gestural, spatial or auditory (Kress, 2003) and the various socio-cultural contexts.

The objectives of this research were as follows:

a. Describe the literacy practices of students in General Basic Education (Cycle II) from the different domains to which it belongs.

b. Determine the differences which exist among the literacy processes of students, families and teachers in the domains in which these occur.

c. Compare literacy events of primary schoolchildren (Cycle II) and their domains of development through the data provided by students, families and teachers.

Method

The research done uses the survey method to perform a description of the students' writing and reading events. This description has relied on self-reports done by the students themselves, by their families and by their teachers. Similarly, we have studied the relations to be seen among the views of these three groups regarding writing and reading events. Finally, an ex post facto design as conducted which allowed us to verify the existence of differences in the writing and reading events based on the schools where the pupils study.

An analysis has been made of the writing and reading events Cycle II students of Basic General Education (from 9-12 years old). In the schools all the students participated, completing a total of 1,354 self-reports. Similarly, the families of these students filled in 1,020 self-reports. Lastly, 96 teachers completed self-reports of the writing and reading events of their students.

The information was collected through a self-report with three versions, each of which was completed by an agent, in a printed or online text, based on availability. The version aimed at students can be found at https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/ZCTNDGQ, the version aimed at families can be seen at https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/9WSL63J, and the version aimed at teachers can be seen at https://es.surveymonkey.com/r/9W9YGTV located. The self-report in its various versions was developed by Guzman-Simon and Garcia-Jimenez (2015) for a Spanish sample. The validity of this instrument was made from a Non-Metric Multidimensional Scaling (PROXSCAL). The reliability of the instrument was estimated from the Cronbach´s Alpha using values between 0.70 and 0.90 depending on the different dimensions.

The analysis of the responses to the data obtained as a whole from the students' self-reports, and those of the families and teachers, has been performed taking into account the dimensions of the writing and reading events. Thus a descriptive analysis was conducted based on the calculation of the arithmetic mean and standard deviations of the responses. Similarly, comparisons were performed to determine the differences in self-reports done by students, families and teachers. To do so, a variance analysis was performed; after applying the Levene test it was determined that there was homogeneity of variances, so that multiple comparisons were made from the T2 Tamhane test. In order to study the relation among the different dimensions of the self-report, factor analyses for each of the three versions were done.

Expected Outcomes

The results obtained lead us in the discussion to a series of beginnings that characterize the literacy events of students, parents and teachers in the sample.
1. The written communication of an individual always takes place in a domain with a communicative purpose.
2. Literacy practices differ depending upon the domains in which they occur, thus the home domain exerts a stronger influence in the multiliteracy than does the school.
3. The students develop different literacy practices according to the domain in which it occurs. Thus, the different literacy practices are interrelated in the student.

4. At school age, the set of domains which best explain the literacy practices of students are the dimensions of "(P)ersonal literacy culture" and "(I)nstructional culture".
5. In Primary Education, the Instructional culture permeates almost every student literacy event.
6. The development of multiliteracy takes place in the "(P)ersonal literacy culture" dimension in several domains such as with friends or at home.
7. Poor multiliteracy training at school likewise renders impossible an optimal development of digital, audiovisual and informational skills in other domains.
8. There is little awareness of literacy events and practices in other ecosystems other than the "Instructional culture."

References

Barton, D. (1991). The social nature of writing. En Barton, D. & Ivanič, R., Writing in the community (pp. 1-13). Newbury Park/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications.
Barton, D. (1994). Literacy. An introduction to the ecology of written language. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). Local literacies. Reading and writing in one community. London/New York: Routledge.
Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanič, R. (2000) Situated Literacies: reading and writing in context. Routledge: London.
Consejo Nacional de Rectores (CONARE) (2013). Desempeño de la educación general básica y el ciclo diversificado. En Estado de la educación costarricense (pp. 135-195). San José: Editorama.
Cook-Gumperz, J.J. (1986). The social construction of literacy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New literacies, new learning. Pedagogies. An International Journal, 4(3), 164-195.
Ivanič, R. (1998).Writing and identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
Kalantzis, M. & Cope, B. (2000). Changing the role of schools. En Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (Eds.), Multiliteracies. Literacy learning and the design of social futures (pp. 116-144). London & New York: Routledge.
Kress, G. (2003). Literacy in the New Media Age. London: Routledge.
Kress, G. (2010). Multimodality. A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication. London/New York: Routledge.
Lea, M.R., & Stierer, B. (2000). Student writing in Higher Education. New contexts. Buckingham: Open University Press.
Lillis, Th. (2013). The sociolinguistics of writing. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Maybin, J. (2006). Children's voices. Talk, knowledge and identity. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
Martos García, A. E. (2010). Las prácticas de lectura / escritura y los enfoques etnográfico y geográfico. Didáctica: Lengua Y Literatura, 22, 199–229.
Martos Núñez, E., & Campos Fernández-Figares, M. (2013). Diccionario de nuevas formas de lectura y escritura. Madrid: RIUL-Santillana.
MEP (2012). Informe nacional de factores asociados al rendimiento académico en las pruebas nacionales diagnósticas, tercer ciclo de la educación general básica, 2010. San José: Departamento de Evaluación Académica y Certificación, Dirección de Gestión y Evaluación de la Calidad, Ministerio de Educación Pública.
Neuman, S.B., & Celano, D. (2001). Access to print in low-income and middle-income communities: an ecological Study of four neighbourhoods. Reading Research Quarterly, 36 (1), 8-26.
New London Group (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. Harvard Educational Review, 66, 60-92.
OCDE (2012). Informe PISA 2009: Lo que los estudiantes saben y pueden hacer: rendimiento de los estudiantes en lectura, matemáticas y ciencias. Madrid: Santillana.

Author Information

Fernando Guzmán-Simón (presenting)
Universidad de Sevilla, Spain

Celia Moreno-Morilla
Universidad de Sevilla
School of Education
Seville

Eduardo García-Jiménez (presenting)
Universidad de Sevilla, Spain