Reading in the Digital Age: A case study of print and digital literacy practices and dominant discourses around reading in the homes of middle-class children in Cape Town across Grade R and Grade 1

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Abstract

Young children who are learning to read are exposed to digital technology from a very young age and many contemporary families have access to a range of digital devices. This project investigates the reading practices, both digital and print-based, of six middle-class suburban children in Cape Town and how the children and their mothers conceptualise reading. By analysing reading practices and associated discourses, this study aims to ascertain how the dominant discourses of the mothers influence the children's reading practices. This research project is a case study using a qualitative approach, with ethnographic data generating techniques. These included observations, interviews with the six children and their mothers and a questionnaire.

Analysis of the data showed that middle-class pre-school children engage in many emergent literacy practices, both digital and print-based, in their homes. Both mothers and children conceptualise reading as being the decoding of print, thus not recognising the multimodal meaning-making strategies to access and read screen texts as being part of the children's emergent literacy practices. A critical discourse analysis of the mothers' answers to the interview and questionnaire revealed that their dominant discourses are 'literacy is a skill' and 'being a good parent'. This resulted in the mothers in my study all exposing their children to digital technology, but also restricting the amount of time that their children spend engaging with it. The mothers failed to acknowledge the emergent literacy practices present in their children's digital activities and viewed online and offline literacy practices as separate, not acknowledging the relationship between the use of digital technologies and print-based decoding, seeing their digital practices as 'other' to what they needed to achieve. This serves to marginalise these digital literacy practices in the children's 'coming to literacy'. In trying to be a good parent, they feel conflicted by the need to expose their children to digital technology and the need to protect them and thus limit their access by imposing restrictions. Thus, discourse shapes which literacy practices are valued and which are restricted. Regimes of truth about what reading is and the need to restrict access to digital technology reinforce the suburban middle-class ideas and ways of becoming literate and being a good parent. Discourse is thus shaping literacy practices in suburban homes and constituting knowledge, marginalising particular ways of being and doing and, thus failing to recognise the child's potential to contribute to their own learning and full participation in their emergent literacy practices.

This project concluded that despite literacies changing as a function of social, cultural and technological changes, how people view reading has not changed since the 1950s. If people regard the contribution that the digital is making towards a child's emergent literacy, the 'formal' literacy learning that occurs in schools and other institutions may improve.

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*All names have been changed to protect the privacy of the participants

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1.1 Introduction

Young suburban children today live in a complex world where digital technologies play an important role. They are exposed to a variety of both digital and print-based literacy practices in their daily lives. Their literacy practices include many traditional ones, but also those that blend print, audio, tactile and visual media. Pre-schoolers, who are not yet able to read, are able to play games, invent worlds, complete educational tasks, and so on, as they manipulate modern technology like cellphones and tablets. They are using technology to make meaning and, thus, enriching their emergent literacy. According to Palaiologou (2016:9), pre-schoolers' use of digital technology can support the development of early print literacy and information gathering problem solving skills.

New Literacies Studies refers to a range of interdisciplinary areas of study that examine new types of literacy besides print literacies and includes digital literacies and the literacy practices found in contemporary societies (Gee, 2004, 2007; Kress, 2003; Lankshear, 1997). It emphasises the diversity of the multiple literacy practices in contemporary lives and the multiple ways of making meaning and communicating. Digital technology makes use of multiple modes and the pre-school child, who has not yet learnt to read printed text, is able to use other modes like images, icons and sounds to make meaning. Different modes are present in each literacy event and participants draw on these different modes as resources in making and transforming meaning (Stein and Slonimsky, 2006:118).

The earlier move to reconceptualise literacy, the New Literacy Studies (NLS) saw Street (1993) urge us to move away from a view of literacy that only sees it as reading and writing and Street developed the concept of literacy practices for "both behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualizations which give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing" (Street, 1995:2). Literacy practices include literacy events and also folk models of those events and the ideological preconceptions on which they are based (Street, 1995:2). Literacy practices have values, attitudes and aspirations around them as to which textual practices count, for whom and for what ends (Stein and Slonimsky, 2006:144). Gee (1996:189) maintains that literacy practices are connected to particular world views of particular social or cultural groups.

1.2 Background

Early years' policy in the U.K. recognises the importance of building on the extensive experiences children have growing up in homes with multimedia, multimodal digital technologies. The Early level of Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland, for example, lists as desirable experiences and outcomes that young children should enjoy 'exploring and using technologies to communicate with others within and beyond [their] place of learning' and 'taking photographs or recording sound and images to represent [their] experiences and the world around [them]' (Learning and Teaching Scotland, no date: 4). Early childhood education policy statements in Australia, New Zealand and the USA have also recognised the importance of developing communication skills through technology and encourage the use of digital technology in early childhood curricula (Neumann and Neumann, 2014:236).

Under the Apartheid government, white learners had access to high quality education and their schools were funded generously. Black learners received a fraction of the resources and finance and their schools had overcrowded classrooms, insufficient and poorly qualified teachers, an impoverished curriculum and very high drop-out rates. The system linked ability and potential for learning to race. The advent of democracy in 1994 led to the establishment of a single Education Department and attempts were made to eliminate differences and provide an equal education for all South African learners. On the surface, race appeared to no longer play a role in Department decisions, and attempts were made to treat all learners equally. However, too much emphasis on political symbolism in the mid-1990s led to a lack of change in South African education. Very little classroom based research was carried out for Curriculum 2005 (Jansen, 1997) and many implementation problems occurred. These include a complex curriculum, bad management, insufficient financial outlay and poor teacher training. The result was that previously advantaged schools flourished, while former disadvantaged schools continued to struggle. The gap between the two types of schools widened (Soudien, 2007:185). In 2012, The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades R-12 updated the previous curriculum and provided details as to what is to be taught on a term-by-term basis in all State schools in South Africa. The South African Department of Education's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English Home Language Grades R-3 that I will be referring to is a constituent of the National Curriculum Statement.

In South Africa, CAPS does not mention the use of digital technology in early childhood education. Children are only assessed on their 'skills' and the other literacy practices and

resources that they bring with them to school are not acknowledged. According to CAPS, the five components of teaching reading are: phonological awareness, word recognition, comprehension, vocabulary and fluency. In the Glossary at the back of the CAPS text, 'emergent literacy' is defined as "children's growing knowledge of the printed word". Thus, according to the curriculum, only print literacy is recognised and valued and the definition of literacy does not extend to include other forms of literacy like the digital, with its multiple modes.

1.3 Rationale

In my Honours project (Harris, 2018) I investigated digital literacy in the lives of suburban pre-school children. I found that these children were very busy using digital devices in their homes. However, their parents all experienced a conflict between feeling the need to expose their children to digital literacies and the need to restrict them. One mother said, "In my house, there is far less friction when there are **no** screens and we play creatively. I would be very happy if I could throw away all the devices and do old fashioned things like read and do puzzles and draw. I can talk until I'm blue in the face, but if any of my kids are on a screen, they will not respond. We usually have a 'no screens in the week' rule. Such a catch 22! I can see the advantages, but I **hate** them" (Harris, 2018:23). The parents appeared to value print-based literacy more than digital literacy. Results of a study conducted in 17 countries in Europe between 2014 and 2017 as to how children (0-8 years) engage with digital technology and how parents mediate this, report very similar accounts of the need of parents to control their children's digital activities (Chaudron, Di Gioia and Gemo, 2018:16). This study shows how the amount of control depends on parenting styles, parents' level of education and socio-economic background. It does not investigate possible reasons for the need to control children's digital activities and this is what my research investigates.

While teaching in 2019, I witnessed an 8 year old produce a little movie clip using an App on an iPad during class free time. What he managed to accomplish in less than an hour was truly impressive. However, this does not form part of the curriculum and will thus not be assessed. However, he will be assessed on his spelling, a 'skill' that can be performed by a computer.

I wished to investigate further the feelings and beliefs surrounding print and digital literacy in suburban homes and how parents conceptualise reading in a bid to find out why print-based literacy seems so highly valued over digital. I also aimed to find out when this conceptualization of reading originated. In order to do so, I observed the digital and print-based reading practices in the homes of contemporary suburban children and conducted interviews with the mothers and

children. By carrying out a critical discourse analysis of data gathered from the mothers' answers, I reveal some of the discourses surrounding the conceptualisation of reading. This information can be used in understanding the concerns of parents with respect to allowing their children access to digital technology.

Research conducted in the UK, (Livingstone, Marsh, Plowman, Ottovordemgentschenfelde and Fletcher-Watson, 2014; Ofcom, 2014), indicates that compared to other digital devices such as laptops, computers and mobile phones, touch screen tablets like iPads, are currently the most popular among young children and this trend is rising. For this reason and because of the nature of this project, I will be restricting my observations primarily to the use of tablets in the home.

1.4 Research Questions and Aims

The research questions are:

- What are the home literacy practices with respect to reading, both digital and print-based, of suburban children across Grade R and Grade 1?
- What reading roles do the children perform?
- What are the dominant discourses about reading, both digital and print-based, in these homes?

Educators who wish to use digital technology to enrich the learning environment and experience for young learners can benefit from such research. Understanding the similarities and differences between alphabetic decoding and multimodal engagement on a screen could enable the development of a curriculum that makes learning meaningful and engaging and closer to children's existing practices. These multimodal practices of screen-based technology are an important part of the lives of children outside the classroom and if we are to prepare them for the future in which competence in the analysis and creation of multimodal texts is crucial, we need to develop curricula and pedagogy that build on their knowledge.

1.5 Chapter Outline

In the next Chapter, I provide the theoretical framework and literature review for this project, in which I explain the main concepts and theories that I used to support this study. These include home literacy practices by looking at literacy as a social practice and emergent literacy. I also make use of the notion that reading is more than the decoding of print and examine Foucault and Fairclough's theories of discourse.

Chapter 3 deals with the research design and includes details of the research methodology, research site and participants, data collection, data analysis, limitations of the research and ethical considerations. Chapters 4-6 provide the answers to my research questions. In Chapter 4, I determine what digital and print-based reading practices are taking place in the homes of suburban Gr R children. I examine the children's conceptualisation of reading and the reading roles that they perform in Chapter 5. I identify the dominant discourses about reading by carrying out a critical discourse analysis of the mothers' answers in the interviews and questionnaire in Chapter 6 in an effort to find out how these discourses of the mothers influence the children's reading practices. I summarize the study and discuss the findings and their implications in my conclusion, Chapter 7.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the theoretical framework for this project and a review of the literature drawn on in order to complete the analyses and situate the research into that which has already been carried out by others. There is a scarcity of research that defines and describes literacy in the digital age and far less research has been conducted on young learners compared to other age groups. This has persisted over time (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Burnett, 2010; Sefton-Green, Marsh, Erstad, and Flewitt, 2016). This project identifies some literacy practices in the homes of young children and attempts to add to the knowledge available with respect to reading in the digital age.

I will be using the complementary theoretical frameworks of New Literacy Studies and Discourse Theory. The Socio-cultural approach is part of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) which sees literacy as multiple and as socially and culturally situated practices. This approach will enable me to examine reading in the context of the children's lives and their cultural understanding of what it means to read. Discourse analysis will help to show the influence of the conceptualisation of reading on reading practices.

Street (1984) challenges the dominant view of literacy, which positions it as a single, universal attribute, having impacts and consequences irrespective of the contexts in which it occurs and proposes an alternative approach, the 'ideological' view of literacy. This model acknowledges the sociocultural context in which literacies occur, the ideologies saturating literacy practices and the power relations of everyday life (Street, 1993:5-9). Street (1993:15) argues that discourse is part of the socio-cultural understanding of literacy and uses the interface between linguistic and anthropological theories that conceive of language as a social process, with discourse and ethnographic methods that emphasise ideological and power processes in his arguments. For Gee, "discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people" (Gee, 1990).

I begin by looking at what happens in the home, because this is central to the background of the present study, by considering literacy as a social practice, the emergent literacy practices surrounding reading that are embedded in everyday family life and online and offline worlds. Following on from this, I consider the notion that reading is more than decoding print using

Street's models. I then discuss teaching approaches, what makes a successful reader and multimodality. Finally, I look at Foucault and Fairclough's views on Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis.

2.2 Home Literacy Practices

Literacy as a Social Practice

In the first half of the twentieth century, research focused on 'reading readiness' and literacy was viewed as mainly an individualistic, cognitive process. The role of the family and the sociocultural context was not considered important (Marsh, 2010:307). In an early challenge to prevailing views, Scribner and Cole's (1981) study of the Vai community in Liberia showed that cognitive attributes are not products of literacy itself, but an outcome of particular social practices. Literacy is thus, a social practice, which may differ between home and school and is used for social and cultural purposes. Other studies in this period, including that of Heath (1986), showed that a wealth of literacy practices occur within the family, although these are often not acknowledged within schools. Heath showed how children acquire language and literacy in different ways, depending on how they are socialized into the norms and values in their communities. There has been a fair amount of research conducted since the 1980s, for example, Heath (1986); Moll, Amanti, Neff and González (1992) and Gregory and Williams (2003), into the relationship between home and school literacy practices and the transference of these practices between these two domains. Researchers like Heath (1986) and Scribner and Cole (1981) have used sociocultural theories to explain how literacy practices differ across various settings like the home and school.

New Literacy Studies (NLS) views literacy as not primarily a mental phenomenon, but a socio-cultural one. Literacy is seen as being about ways of participating in social and cultural groups and activities, and therefore, needs to be understood and studied in its full range of contexts. People learn a particular way of reading or writing by participating in the distinctive social and cultural practices of different social and cultural groups (Gee, 2010:166). This is evident in Heath's (1986) study where each community used language and literacy for different purposes and different audiences. There are many different social and cultural practices that incorporate literacies (Gee, 2010:167). NLS builds on what learners bring to the classroom from their homes and communities (Larson and Marsh, 2015:30). The ideas on which this is based is that literacies are changing as a function of social, cultural and technological changes and that understanding how people use these literacies in their everyday lives will provide ideas for improving the

'formal' literacy learning that occurs in schools and other institutions (Bulfin and Koutsogiannis, 2014: 332). Some studies that also used the Sociocultural framework looked at how schools could use the experiences and practices that children bring with them to the classroom to enrich the learning environment. These researchers, for example, Feiler, Andrews, Greenhough, Hughes, Johnson and Scanlan (2007) and Moll et al., (1992) use the concept of 'funds of knowledge' to describe "the knowledge individuals and communities build up through their life experiences, which can be drawn on in educational settings" (Moll et al., 1992).

NLS views different digital tools as technology for presenting and accessing meanings, just like language (Gee, 2004, 2007; Kress, 2003; Lankshear, 1997). The meanings that these technologies give rise to, are shaped by the social, cultural, historical and institutional practices of different groups of people. According to Gee (2010:175), "digital literacy refers to the different ways of using digital tools within different sorts of sociocultural practices". In the U.K., Ofcom (2004) defines digital literacy as how children access, understand and interact with digital technology. It describes the ways in which young children develop strategies to access and read a variety of screen texts with fluency (Levy, 2009:76). The skills and practices associated with traditional, paper-based texts are called print-based literacy (Burnett, 2010:253).

According to Street (1984, 1993), literacy events are the activities where literacy has a role. Literacy events are observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them (Barton, 2006:23). Heath's (1986) analysis of the role of the bedtime story in three communities in the Piedmont Carolinas is an example of a major literacy event in homes and Heath shows how this event is part of diverse literacy practices and wider socio-cultural patterns. I will be referring to this study again as the participants in my study behaved like the Mainstream community in the Heath study where the children are socialised into the ways of their community in ways that are similar to the ways of schools, for example, story reading serves as entertainment, the children acquire a love for and know how to care for and handle books, are able to label objects in them and understand that the pictures provide clues to what the words are saying.

Street (1993) urges us to move away from a view of literacy that only sees it as reading and writing and uses the concept of literacy practices for "both behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualizations which give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing". Literacy practices include literacy events and also folk models of those events and the ideological preconceptions on which they are based (Street, 1995:2). Literacy practices also involve values, attitudes and

aspirations as to which textual practices count, for whom and for what ends (Stein and Slonimsky, 2006:144). Gee (1996:189) maintains that literacy practices are connected to particular world views of particular social or cultural groups. Language learning and socialisation are interrelated and literacy events occur in the context of the sociocultural patterns of the community. Literacy acts are bound to discourse and Gee (1990) argues that "discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people". Primary discourses are acquired in the family as a result of socialization in a particular sociocultural setting, without any formal teaching. Secondary discourses are usually learned outside the home in settings like schools and churches and extend the primary discourse (Gee, 1996: 137-142).

Emergent Literacy

Emergent literacy is used to describe the process of becoming literate. It describes the early reading and writing actions and behaviours that can form the basis for conventional literacy. This usually occurs between birth and the time when children read and write conventionally in a literate society (Sulzby and Teale, 1986:728). Emergent literacy is influenced by the socio-cultural context in which the child is raised as they engage with different uses and forms of literacy in their everyday lives (Heath, 1986). Exposure to, for example, adult-child shared story book reading and environmental print like signs and labels, results in an increased understanding of the role and form of print and the relationship between oral and written words.

Pre-school children find it easy to handle touchscreen iPads/tablets. They are light and can be carried and operated wherever they choose. As a result, young children are learning to read multi-modally on them and recognise icons, use finger action to change screens and know where to tap to make invisible icons visible. Through stretching, dragging, swiping, pinching and tapping, children are activating icons and learning new reading practices. They are learning new ways of using their bodies for reading and writing and engaging with interactive texts that need more complex handling than turning a page in a book. They are able to express themselves using multiple modes like symbols, words, sounds and images. Emergent digital literacy practices include navigating among and within Apps, listening to e-Books, drawing and painting (Wohlwend, 2017). Emergent literacy practices that children develop when handling books include an understanding that letters make up words, directionality that progresses from front to back, top to bottom and left to right, book orientation and punctuation (Clay, 1993). Neumann

and Neumann's (2013) study of the relationship between children's emergent literacy practices and the use of tablets for reading and writing at home showed that there is a positive association between the children's access to apps and print knowledge and between the frequency of writing with tablets and print awareness, print knowledge and sound knowledge (Neumann and Neumann, 2013). Thus, both the digital and print-based are important literacy resources for children in their homes.

Online/Offline Worlds

Literacy is learned in many different contexts, including the home and school. Young children learn about the use of digital technology in their families and it is here that they are provided with opportunities to explore for themselves the different digital tools available. It is now widely acknowledged that the boundaries between online and offline literacy practices are blurred (Elsley, Gallagher and Tisdall, 2014:702; Bolander and Locher, 2020:1 and Jones, 2004:24).

Web design has changed from a read only space, in which only a few could create content, to being interactive, allowing its users easy participation, connections with other users and the ability to create content (Bolander and Locher, 2020:2). The increased mobility of new technology like Smart phones and tablets and the diversity of software and hardware enable easy access and the creation and sharing of information via the Internet (Elsley, Gallagher and Tisdall, 2014:704,707). Modalities and practices merge, for example on Facebook, one can write on your wall, chat with others via messenger and create and manage your photo albums. Video-mediated communication enables families to stay connected visually though physically apart and video conferencing using, for example, Google Hangouts, enables multiple participants the ability to communicate visually and via live text commentaries though they may be in many different physical locations (Rosenbaun, Rafaeli and Kurzon, 2016:291-292). Until recently, people conceptualised the real, physical, material world as being separate from the cyber, virtual, immaterial world, but with the advent of the Internet, characterised by many-to-many communication, interactivity and multi-modality, these worlds are now interpenetrated. Many children, unlike their parents, don't know the world without digital technology. Digital tools are part of routine activities and children often don't make the distinction between online and offline (Elsley, Gallagher and Tisdall, 2014:705).

Digital technology is part of everyday life and the digital reading process is not just human, but is influenced by the immaterial as algorithms, bots and other hidden agents influence the reading pathway. Movement between texts and pathways result in a multitude of potential possibilities,

often dispersed via complex social media networks (Burnett and Merchant, 2018). Massumi (2015:8) defines affect as "the ways people and things come together and generate, perhaps by chance, something that interrupts a situation and by doing so brings something new into play". People, things and practices may come together as an affective encounter while reading as the reader engages with text, other people, places and things. When engaging with digital technology, it is not just the people who are doing the reading, but also those that posted the information, designed the app or game and the machine processes that come together (Burnett and Merchant, 2018).

2.3 Reading as more than Decoding Print

Street's Models

Street (1984) challenges the dominant view of literacy, which positions it as a single, universal attribute, having impacts and consequences irrespective of the contexts in which it occurs. This autonomous approach sees literacy solely as the ability to read and write and often focusses on what is lacking. He calls this an 'autonomous' model of literacy. In the South African Department of Basic Education's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English Home Language Grades R-3 (henceforth referred to as CAPS), the discourse with regards to literacy displayed throughout the CAPS text is that it is singular, decontextualized and skills based, neutral in its aims and universal across languages.

Street proposes an alternative approach, the 'ideological' view of literacy. This model acknowledges the sociocultural context in which literacies occur, the ideologies saturating literacy practices and the power relations of everyday life (Street, 1993:5-9). These form part of the theoretical framework of what became known as the 'New Literacy Studies' (NLS) in the early 1980s. This is reflected in Gee's statement, "There is no such thing as 'reading' or 'writing', only reading or writing *something* (a text of a certain type) in a certain way with certain values, while at least appearing to think and feel in certain ways" (Gee, 1990). NLS views literacy as not primarily a mental phenomenon, but a sociocultural one. It is about ways of participating in social and cultural groups. Since then, first and second generation literacy studies established that literacy is shaped by social context and many studies show that people 'take hold of' literacy in ways that are deeply rooted in what is valued by their particular culture and context of practice (Kell, 2017).

Literacy, therefore, needs to be understood and studied in its full range of uses and contexts. People learn a particular way of reading or writing by participating in the distinctive social and cultural practices of different social and cultural groups. There are many different social and cultural practices that incorporate literacies (Gee, 2010:167).

Approaches to the teaching of literacy

There are different approaches to teaching reading. The Balanced Approach attempted to combine the skills and the whole language approaches, but it too has its flaws as teachers fail to use both approaches equally, depending on their understanding of what literacy is (Bua-Lit, 2018:5).

In most South African schools, literacy is viewed as a skill. The skill-based approach, also known as the readiness and phonic-based instruction approach, has become the normative truth for pedagogic practice in South Africa (Prinsloo & Stein, 2004). Central to it is knowledge of the sound-symbol correspondence. A child passes through the stages of development that proceed from decoding, where letters are linked to sounds, to reading words. They then proceed onto comprehension, where they understand the meaning of the words and finally to automaticity, where they no longer need to break the word into smaller units in order to read it and are fluent readers. On Page 15 of the CAPS document, the five components of teaching reading are listed as: Phonological Awareness, Word Recognition, Comprehension, Vocabulary and Fluency. The text states, "…the skills in the Home Language curriculum are …" and "…it is important that these skills are effectively developed …" indicating that skills are valued and that these will be assessed. "The CAPS document provides the requirements for each Formal Assessment Activity". Children are only assessed on these 'skills' and receive no recognition for other literacy practices that they bring with them to school. The Bua-lit Collective argues that this bottom-up approach, where literacy is viewed as a decontextualized set of skills that can be transferred between contexts, is often not enough for learners to make meaning as literacy is a complex social practice that differs in different contexts (Bua-Lit, 2018:4).

The whole language approach to teaching reading challenged this bottom-up approach in the 1980s. Central to this approach is shared book reading and having a print rich environment. This top-down approach acknowledges the need for contextual clues, for example pictures, to connect to the existing knowledge of the reader. However, poorer children often don't have access to extensive book reading and texts in their homes and while immersion is important, it alone is often not enough in educating successful literate children (Bua-Lit, 2018:4-5).

Turbill (2002) gives a personal account and interpretation of how the teaching of reading has changed over time as a response to the whole language approach being blamed for the literacy crisis in Australia in the late 1990s. She identifies four ages of reading pedagogy: The Age of Reading as Decoding, The Age of Reading as Meaning Making, The Age of Reading as Reading-Writing Connections and The Age of Reading for Social Purposes.

The Age of Reading as Decoding occurred from the 1950s to 1970s. Teachers followed a syllabus which mandated how long they needed to spend on reading in the classroom and they were supplied with books by the State. Individual learning styles of the children were not considered and the focus was on skills like phonics, directionality and decoding. It was presumed that comprehension would follow once the child had learned the skills necessary to read. The Age of Reading as Meaning Making followed from the mid-1970s when teachers recognised that reading was more than decoding print. Semantic, syntactic and the graphophonic systems were recognised as being important and children were encouraged to predict, rather than sound out difficult words. Picture clues and comprehension were important. Teachers were encouraged to spend more time reading to children and book publishers provided them with books that were more interesting and engaging than in the previous reading age. The Age of Reading as Reading-Writing Connections began in the 1980s when the connections between reading, writing and spelling were acknowledged by teachers, who also accepted invented spelling by young children. They made use of a wider range of text types, including Big books, which contained many examples of rhyme, rhythm and repetition.

The Age of Reading for Social Purposes followed in the 1990s, when readers were encouraged to ask questions of the text and become critical readers, rather than just read for pleasure or information. The impact of culture and context on the reader was acknowledged. However, although teachers were encouraged to teach critical literacy, they were not encouraged to be critical themselves because of the rigid syllabus. Turbill (2002) concludes by mentioning that we have probably now moved into the Fifth Age, that of Multi-literacies, when multimodal reading is important and that teachers now need to broaden their view of what reading is and include colour, sound, movement and visual representations that go beyond paper-based print texts.

The social practices approach to teaching reading recognises the importance of decoding skills and the immersion of a child in a print-rich environment, but also the practices they engage in and that different activities require different kinds of literacy practices, often shaped by the community. The role of the text is important and meaning making is considered to be more than

just comprehension as different types of texts have different requirements, for example, a legal document and a sports report (Bua-Lit, 2018:6).

The Successful Reader

Freebody and Luke (1990) argue that as literacy is a complicated set of social practices with material technologies, in order to be a successful reader, you need to develop resources to play four related roles: code breaker, text participant, text user and text analyst.

The role of code breaker involves decoding the letter-sound relationship, understanding basic layout and recognising words. As a text participant, the reader needs to understand the text. In order to do this, they need to relate the text to what they already know and context, background and prior knowledge are important. The role of text user answers the question," What do I do with this here and now?" The reader needs to understand the purpose of the text. The role of text analyst involves critical reading and the reader needs to question whose interests are served in the text.

Durrant and Green (2000) comment on the integration of literacy and technology in education by proposing a 3-D model of literacy-technology as a socio-cultural practice, that is linked to Freebody and Luke's (1990) four resources model. In their model, the operational, cultural and critical aspects or dimensions of learning and practice need to be addressed simultaneously. Technical competence is complemented and supplemented by contextualising it and considering the cultural, historical and power relations surrounding it. The operational dimension consists of knowing how to type, make the computer work and open a file. The cultural dimension involves being aware of the different contexts in which the technology is used, for example school or home, and recognising its purpose. In the critical dimension, context, history and power are considered in an effort to critique and possibly re-design the technology. Most classrooms concentrate on operational activities, sometimes take the cultural dimension into account and rarely address the critical. Durrant and Green (2000:98) advocate for an experience and activity oriented curriculum with teaching FOR learning, rather than learning FROM teaching, with an emphasis on authentic meaning making and related social practices or real purposes.

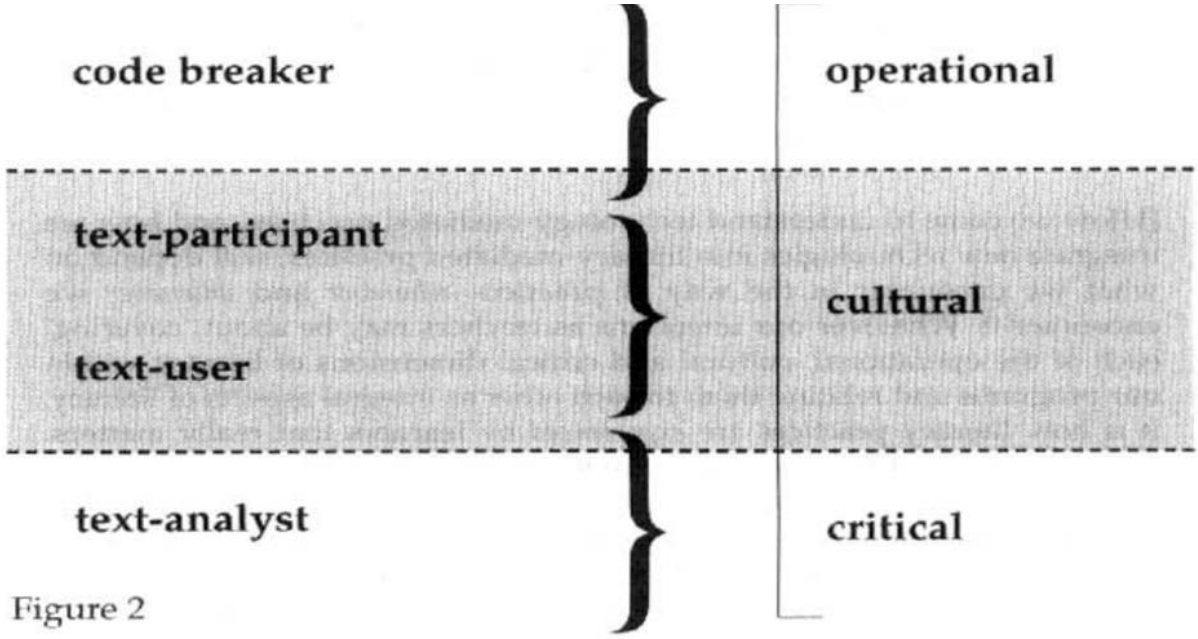

Figure 1: Demonstration of the two models overlapping. (Durrant and Green, 2000: 101)

Serafini (2012) also expands on Freebody and Luke's (1990) resources model to include the visual and multi-modal texts. In order to be successful, he proposes that readers need to navigate, interpret, design and interrogate the written, visual and design elements of these texts. The four roles are interrelated and inseparable.

The reader as a navigator needs to decode the written text, but also understand the structures and codes associated with the design, images and other visual elements. The reading path is not pre-set, but determined by the reader. The reader as interpreter constructs meaning from texts and images, drawing on their prior knowledge and experiences in their cultural context. The shift from comprehension to interpretation increases the agency of the reader. The reader as designer is able to design how the text is read, that is, choose their reading path and what they pay attention to, creating a unique experience and giving agency to the reader. The reader as interrogator includes the critical and socio-cultural aspects of analysis. Texts are always read in a particular context, written by a particular author with a variety of semiotic resources. The reader should interrogate what they read and view, identify the ideologies projected in both the text and images and identify who the intended audience is (Serafini, 2012:154-160).

Multimodality

Multimodality, according to Jewitt and Kress (2004), is based on the assumption that meanings are made, distributed, received, interpreted and remade in interpretation through many

representational and communicational modes, not just through language. These modes include speech, writing, image, gaze, gesture, movement, music and sound effects. Kress and Street (2006: ix) explain the relationship between NLS and multimodality:

> While both approaches look at broadly the same field, from each of the two positions the field has a distinctive look: one that tries to understand what people acting together are doing, the other tries to understand about the tools with which these same people do what they are doing.

They are saying that NLS focuses on the social practice and multimodality focuses on the means of production and engagement with texts. Pahl and Rowsell (2006) argue that multimodality is needed in NLS in order to understand texts as material objects and it provides an analytic tool to understand artefacts like children's drawings. The Stein and Slonimsky (2006) ethnographic study of multimodal literacies involving adult family members and girl children showed how the adults and girls were involved in the use of multiple modes of communication: writing, speech, image and the body in performance. Each literacy event was a multimodal communicative event and the participants used the different modes as resources in the making and transforming of meaning. Kress (1997) explores the sign-making activities of young children and shows that children use multiple modes to make meaning and easily move between and across these modes. By choosing the resources that interest them from their environment, the child has agency. Newfield (2011:33) argues that multimodality results in moving beyond language to adaptable and flexible meaning-making and gives children agency in their own learning which leads to an increase in their confidence and motivation to learn. Analysing children's multimodal communication can provide additional insights into their learning that a sole focus on language might mask (Flewitt, 2013).

Flewitt, Messer and Kucirkova (2015:293) investigated the use of iPads in two pre-school classes and a Special School and observed the children interacting with the multiple modes including spoken and written language, images, icons, sounds, layout and animation. By engaging with the multimodal technology, these children are interpreting symbols, developing touch screen skills, expanding their understanding of digital technology processes and increasing their vocabularies and thus, expanding their literacy learning. Multimodal technology can lead to imaginative, non-linear, interactive and dynamic play (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear and Leu, 2008). I am interested in finding out how pre-schoolers use the multiple modes available to them

when engaging with digital technology as resources to make meaning and thus, expanding their literacy learning.

Meaning making today involves more than being able to read print, but also interpreting, expressing or engaging with colour, sound, movement and visual representations that characterise digital texts (Turbill, 2002). People no longer just read and write printed words on paper, but also text message, blog, video record and so on. Digital texts are visual, non-linear and interactive. Kress (2010:148) says that "a text is a multimodal semiotic entity, seen as having completeness, by those who engage with it". It is not just print-based materials, but includes the digital and visual images also. I will thus be using the term 'text' to describe print, visual, digital and analogue media. There are multiple semiotic systems representing meaning and as technology changes, becoming literate has become a lifelong process. New technology influences literacy practices and young children are becoming multi-modally literate in their homes. However, they are often forced to be print bound when entering formal school as teachers often ignore the digital literacy practices that the children bring with them and focus on a print based pedagogy (Millard, 2003). In the CAPS text, the view of literacy is singular as the text only mentions the reading of books. Multiple modes and other forms of literacy like digital are not mentioned. No mention is made of reading objects like cereal boxes or magazines or any other object that might be a text in the home literacy practices of the children. In the Glossary at the back of the text, 'emergent literacy' is simply defined as "children's growing knowledge of the printed word".

2.4 Discourse

There are different understandings of the term discourse. These have led to different understandings of the relationship between language, the individual, ideology and society. The views that I will be discussing are those held by Foucault and Fairclough as I will be using these in my analysis of the data.

Foucault's understanding of discourse

Foucault, a philosophical historian, defined discourses as "regimes of truth", that is, the types of discourse which a society accepts as and makes function as true (Foucault, 1980:131). He viewed Discourse as systems of power or knowledge, which produces social realities and structures what we think, say or do**.** According to Foucault, it produces an othering effect, an 'us' and 'them'**.** He argued that meaning is located in the discourse itself, not in the relation

between linguistic form and function and that knowledge is formed and produced in discursive practices. It is almost impossible to think outside the discursive practices, which are embedded in orders of discourse. As they are repeated and reinforced, they become truth, "To think outside them is, by definition, to be mad, to be beyond comprehension and therefore reason", (Foucault, 1981:48). These regimes of truth govern what is said, done and thought and how it is said. Discourses are controlled by social exclusion, making scarce or limitations and conditions of application that govern the roles and restrictions for access to the discourse (Foucault, 1981:52-64).

Foucault's work provided an understanding of how discourses work and produce people and truth (knowledge) and this is important in understanding literacy as a social practice. Gee refers to "Master Myths" as the means by which social groups share certain assumptions, which hide other ways of thinking and seem to be common sense (Gee, 2012:111). This knowledge or truth then produces power, but is also produced by power. According to Foucault, power or knowledge might limit what one can do or enable one to act or think in new ways about oneself. Thus, power or knowledge might be constraining and/or productive. Discourse, which determines who is heard and who is excluded, is thus always political. The focus is on the many sites through which power operates. For Foucault, knowledge, power and discourse are intertwined (Pennycook, 1996:124-133). Examples of classroom discourses include 'literacy as a skill', 'the good teacher' and 'the developing child' and these discourses determine what can be said and thought about in their particular domains.

Fairclough's views on discourse

Fairclough is concerned with social changes and the relationship between discourse, knowledge and social change. Fairclough views language use as a form of social practice, which both reflects and creates reality. This implies that discourse is a mode of action, when people act upon the world and each other, and of representation. It also implies a relationship between discourse and social structure as discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure but also constitutes/constructs it. This is similar to Foucault's ideas. Discourse constructs social identities and subject positions, social relationships between people and systems of knowledge and beliefs (Fairclough, 1992:63-67).

Fairclough is concerned with discourse as a mode of political and ideological practice, which may establish, sustain and change power relations. This is often the site of power struggles as discursive practices adopt particular power relations and ideologies. Different types of discourse

in different social domains may be politically or ideologically 'invested' in particular ways. Social change involves challenging a given form of discourse and the production and assertion of another discourse in its place (Street, 1993). Boundaries between elements may be lines of tension as they draw on different ideologies, subject positions and discursive practices. Fairclough states that discursive practice is manifest in linguistic form or text (Fairclough, 1992: 67-71). Fairclough developed the critical discourse analysis model to provide a usable framework for analysing spoken or written language.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Model is concerned with the analysis of various forms of discourse as instances of language use and in locating these discourses within wider questions of social power, where identifying the underlying ideologies is important. CDA shows how social inequalities and power relationships are reflected and created in language and are a means of exposing these. Fairclough (1999) argues that people need to know about discourse, whose it is and what they gain from its use, what other discourses are around and why a particular discourse is dominant. By understanding how discourses work within social practice, we are able to then critique the discourse. The three-dimensional model consists of three 'boxes'. These three interrelated processes of analysis are tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse, namely discourse as text, discursive practice and as social practice (Fairclough, 1992).

When looking at discourse as text, one provides a description of vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure as the choices that people make in these aspects of the text signify and construct social identities, social relationships and knowledge and belief. There is sometimes evidence of change in the texts as change often involves bringing together existing conventions in new ways. Discourse as discursive practice involves the interpretation of text production, distribution and consumption. Texts are consumed differently in different social contexts, depending on the members' resources and the nature of the social practice of which they are part. Snatches of other texts may be found in the text and this intertextuality links the text with other texts. Discourse as social practice is concerned with an explanation of power and ideology as according to Fairclough, "ideologies reside in texts" (Fairclough, 1992:88). One is able to analyse the social practice within which the discourse belongs in terms of power relations and whether it reproduces, restructures or challenges this (Fairclough, 1992:75-95).

According to Jones (2012:11), "ideologies are beliefs and assumptions that people have and provide us with models of how the world is 'supposed to be'", thus they may limit how one views reality and result in the marginalization and exclusion of people, ideas and things that differ from these models. Jones (2012:2) argues that discourse analysis involves examining the way that people use language in real life to show that they are certain kinds of people who belong to certain groups. This is because the language that they use is inseparable from the person they are and the different social groups that they belong to.

Gee (1996:162) elaborates on Foucault's (1980) theory that all Discourses (with a capital "D") are products of history when he explains that we should not say that an individual speaks or acts in a particular way, but rather it is the historically and socially defined Discourse that is speaking through the individual. In other words, the individual is giving body to the Discourse whenever they speak or act, and this is how the Discourse moves through time.

2.5 Conclusion

Young suburban children today are exposed to a variety of both digital and print-based literacies in their daily lives. This chapter began by considering literacy as a social practice, the emergent literacy practices surrounding reading that are embedded in everyday family life and online and offline worlds. Following on from this, I discussed the notion that reading is more than decoding print using Street's models, literacy teaching approaches, what makes a successful reader, including the four resources model, and multimodality. Finally, I looked at Foucault and Fairclough's views on Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis. I will use the theoretical framework from this chapter in order to analyse and discuss the home literacy practices with respect to reading, both digital and print-based, of suburban children, how the children and their parents conceptualise reading and to identify what are the dominant discourses about reading, both digital and print-based, in these homes in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This research project takes the form of a case study using a qualitative approach, with ethnographic data generating techniques. My aim was to investigate the home literacy practices with respect to reading, both digital and print-based, of suburban children in pre-school and as they move into Grade 1, identify the children's and their parents' conceptualisations of reading and investigate how the dominant discourses about reading of the parents influence the children's literacy practices. I used the NLS concept of literacy practices and discourse theory to investigate how the way that reading is conceptualised affects reading practices.

3.2 Research Methodology

In this section, I begin by defining the terms used before providing the research methodology of my study.

Case Study

According to Flyvbjerg (2011:301), case studies provide a detailed analysis of a particular class of phenomena and may be carried out with either an individual or a community. They focus on a particular time and place and produce context-dependent knowledge and an understanding of the participant's perspective. Dornyei (2007:151-155) argues that case studies provide valuable insights into socio-cultural phenomena.

Qualitative Approach

A qualitative approach is suitable for examining the social world, considering the individual's perspective and experience and the meanings that individuals place on events. It contains lengthy, detailed descriptions and is ideal for obtaining insights into contextual conditions. A range of data like interviews, photos and videos may be used and these are usually transcribed into texts because most data analysis is done with words. Data collection usually takes place in the natural setting, with a small sample size and results in open-ended, non-numerical data which is analysed primarily by non-statistical methods (Dornyei, 2007:24-38).

Ethnography

Ethnography is a type of qualitative research method that uses data from naturally-occurring events in real world settings, rather than settings set up specifically for research investigations.

This data usually comes from a range of sources, often including observations and conversations, so that the participants' perspective is used. The focus is often on a single setting or group. It does not set out to test a hypothesis, but instead is discovery-based. Analysis of the data is usually done by verbal descriptions and explanations. Social events and processes are explained in terms of the relationship to the context in which they occur. In order to explain human actions effectively, we must understand the cultural perspectives on which they are based (Hammersley, 1994:2-6).

Hymes (1973) argues that ethnography provides descriptions of the ways different social groups take knowledge from the environment. A well-known ethnographic study is that of Heath (1986), where the literacy event of the bedtime story was interpreted in relation to larger sociocultural patterns that they reflected. Ethnography enables descriptions of literacy events in their sociocultural contexts (Heath, 1986:340).

Ethnographic fieldwork, according to Blommaert and Dong Jie (2010:31), involves carrying out observations, writing field-notes and conducting interviews. Audio, visual and/or video recordings may serve as a record of the observation process and provide data that will later substantiate the analysis as a source of evidence and examples.

My Study

My case study involved six focal participants drawn from two sites and studied in the context of their six homes and families, and is thus a collective or multiple case study. These cases were studied jointly to investigate the literacy practices, both digital and print-based, of children in their families and how the dominant discourses of their mothers influence these practices of the children. The time and place that I focussed on was suburban children in their home and family settings across Gr R and Gr 1. I wanted to look at families, which would have included fathers, but only mothers availed themselves.

A qualitative approach was used and data collection took place over two separate sessions. The first session included observations of five pre-schoolers (age 6 years), from two different pre-schools in the same suburb, interacting with my iPad and book in the setting of their homes. I also made field-notes and interviewed the children and their parents, so that I could record their perspectives and the meanings that they place on events. I observed some of these children engaging with their own tablets after the interviews. I also observed and interviewed a Gr 1 child

and his mother, who had been participants in my Honours project, at this time. I transcribed the interviews and video observations into texts as the data analysis was done with words.

The second session occurred once these children had started formal schooling (Grade 1), six months after the first session. I intended to repeat the observations and interviews at this time, once the children had completed a term in Gr 1. However, life as we know it changed in 2020 due to the rapid spread on the Novel-coronavirus. On 11 March, the World Health Organization declared Covid-19 a pandemic, planes stopped flying, people stopped going to work and billions of people all around the world stayed home. On 15 March, the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, declared a National State of Disaster. Travel restrictions and the closing of schools and universities were implemented in an effort to contain the spread of the virus. On 23 March, he announced a National Lockdown, starting on 26 March. All public gatherings were prohibited and South Africans had to stay home. My university was forced to put a stop to any kind of fieldwork that involved face-to-face engagement. Because of this and due to the lockdown restrictions and in order to maintain physical distancing during the pandemic, I decided to email the parents and requested that they answer a questionnaire rather than engage in a second interview. They all completed the questionnaire regarding their own conceptualisations of reading, their digital and print-based practices and their observations of their children's digital practices after they had spent a term in Gr 1. These questionnaires were returned to me via email and provided me with the data that I still required to answer my research questions.

Ethnographic data generating techniques were used in the first data-collection session, observing real life events as they unfolded and video recorded these in the homes of the children. I also conducted and recorded interviews with the children and their mothers in their homes. The focus was on pre-school/Grade 1 children in the sociocultural context of a typical middle-class suburb. Field-notes were made after each observation and data analysis comprised of verbal descriptions and explanations as my research questions called for descriptive answers.

3.3 Research Sites and Participants

Upon acceptance of my research proposal and receipt of ethical approval from the University of Cape Town, I requested and was granted written permission by the principals of two pre-schools in the same suburb to hand out a letter seeking participants for my research project to the parents of the children in the Grade R classes. The schools, Rifle River Independent School and the partly State-funded, Children's Den Early Learning Centre (ELC) (both are pseudonyms), are located in a middle-class suburban in Cape Town. The children at Rifle River Independent

School have sessions with iPads as part of their school curriculum, whereas the children from Children's Den ELC do not. The children were in Gr R and 6 years old.

The principals of the schools passed my letters requesting research participants onto the teachers of the Gr R classes and they handed them out to the children in their classes who interact with tablets at home (See Appendix 3). Consent letters included a brief explanation of the study, ethical considerations and anonymity information. I asked for permission to observe the children in their homes while engaging with digital and print literacies and to interview the children and their parents in their homes. I received two letters of acceptance from the children at Children's Den ELC and three from Rifle River Independent School. As I only received one acceptance form from a boy, I requested the participation, and was granted permission by his mother, of Jordan, one of the participants from my Honours project, who was in Grade 1 at a State school in the same suburb at the time of the first session of data collection. Unfortunately, I did not receive any letters of acceptance from the fathers of the children and most were not at home at the time of the observations and interviews.

Rifle River Independent School has Grades RR-6, so the children were at the same school, but in a new grade with a new teacher when the second phase of data collection occurred. iPads are used as part of the curriculum. The children from Children's Den ELC were in a new school, a local State school, Oakley Primary, and also had a new teacher when the second phase occurred. They do not use iPads or tablets at school in Grade 1. The schools and pre-school all follow the CAPS curriculum closely.

The following table provides details of the six research participants:

Child	**Jordan**	**Tumi**	**Sharna**	**Becca**	**Isabel**	**Sakeena**
Age	7	6	6	6	6	6
Mother	Pamela	Thembisa	Kanushi	Tracey	Caroline	Ismah
Siblings	2	2	0	0	1	1
Languages spoken	English	isiXhosa English	English	English	English	English
Uses iPad at school				✓	✓	✓

Table 1: Research Participants

The children all live in the same middle-class suburb as their schools, except for Sharna, who lives in a neighbouring suburb and Becca, who lives 15km away, but whose mother teaches at Rifle River Independent School.

3.4 Data Collection

I used a range of data sources in order to elicit different types of information and provide comprehensive answers for my research questions:

Interviews

Dornyei (2007:134) describes interviews as "a conversation to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting meaning of a described phenomenon." I planned the interview questions before conducting them and thus, my interviews were structured (Kelly, 2006:297). I conducted interviews with the mothers in order to gain insight into the digital and print-based literacy practices of the children and the dominant discourses surrounding reading in middle-class suburban homes (See Appendix 1). I also interviewed the children (with their mothers or a care-giver present) and used cards with pictures of children doing age-appropriate activities, to find out about their conceptions with respect to their digital and print-based reading activities at home (See Appendix 2). The majority of the interviews took place in the homes of the children before observing them. I informed all the participants that there were no right or wrong answers, but that I wished to find out about their thoughts and feelings. I started the interviews with a non-threatening information question and ended by asking for any further comments. I audio recorded and transcribed these interviews. According to Swann (1994), transcriptions form a permanent accessible record of what was said and how it was said in a form that allows analysis of the data and may include non-verbal information like gestures and actions. I have used the following Transcription Convention:

(pp)	Whispers
bold	Added emphasis
..	Short pause
…	Longer pause
( )	Clarifying information

Table 2: Transcription Convention

Observations

I observed and video recorded five pre-schoolers and one Gr 1, interacting with digital and print-based literacies in their homes in order to obtain the information that I need to answer my research questions. The observations took place between 21 and 31 October 2019. A multimodal approach to digital literacy requires that data collection focuses on all modes (Jewitt and Kress,

2003:279) and I thus made use of a small hand held video recorder to capture the different modes and non-verbal cues like facial expressions. Thus, the video recordings provide a permanent record of verbal and non-verbal behaviour. During the observation session, I video recorded the pre-schoolers engaging with the print version of Beatrix Potter's "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" and with the e-book version of the same story on my iPad in their homes in order to find out about their digital and print-based literacy practices. I also made field-notes immediately after all the observations in order to assist with situating the observations into their contextual conditions. These helped me to remember the details of what I witnessed and how I witnessed it later on (Blommaert and Dong Jie, 2010). All observations took place after interviewing the mother and child.

Questionnaires

According to Knobel and Lankshear (1991:57), questionnaires may be used in research to gather information. I used a questionnaire six months after the first data collection session to gather information about the mothers' digital and print-based literacy practices, their conceptualisation of reading and in order to find out if there had been a change in the children's digital activities after spending a term in Grade 1. The second data collection session therefore took place between April and May 2020. I considered what information was needed and planned the questions in order to gather this information. The questions were structured clearly, to avoid ambiguity and so as to be clear to the mothers what was being asked as is suggested by Bell (1987). I typed up the questions, numbering them and as the questionnaire was sent via email to the mothers, it allowed unlimited space for them to insert their answers into the document before returning it to me via email. I acknowledged and thanked them upon receipt of their answers and recorded the data as a table (See Appendix 1).

Photos

These were collected if they were relevant to the research as evidence and examples of the practices I was observing. Photographs may serve as another source of data as Lillis (2008:372) recommends that multiple data sources help to build rich descriptions and understandings. All photographs are anonymised by making the faces of participants unrecognisable.

Field-notes

Field-notes were made immediately after the observations in order to assist with situating the observations into their contextual conditions. I typed them up for analysis. These helped me to remember the details of what I witnessed and how I witnessed it later on.

3.5 Data Analysis

Analysis of data was achieved largely through thematic analysis, discourse analysis and multimodal analysis in order to answer the research questions. In the thematic analysis, I looked for recurring themes in the data. Discourse analysis involved transcribing the data that I collected and analysing what was said and how it was said. I considered speech, facial expressions, hand and arm movements, body posture and actions in the multimodal analysis.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis provides a flexible method for identifying, analysing and interpreting key themes in qualitative data. It is guided by the research questions and provides a framework for organising and reporting the researcher's analytic observations (Clarke and Braun, 2017:297). My thematic analysis involved highlighting and categorising across all of the data. These categories were then clustered into a few main themes that are closely linked to my research questions (Dornyei, 2007). I used thematic analysis of the interview answers and transcribed observations to identify the digital and print-based reading practices taking place in the suburban homes and to locate the excerpts that were used for the CDA.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis provides a method for investigating sociolinguistic phenomena in qualitative research. According to Rogers (2003), adding discourse analysis into ethnographic data collection is a very effective way to examine social practices. In order to analyse the data, I listened to the audio-recordings and watched the video recordings that I made. I then transcribed the mothers' and children's interviews and reflected on what was being said and how it was said (Cameron, 2001). I used Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis Model (CDA), which is concerned with the analysis of various forms of discourse as instances of language use and in locating these discourses within wider questions of social power, where identifying the underlying ideologies is important. CDA thus shows how social inequalities and power relationships are reflected and created in language and is a means of exposing these. The words used by my participants not only convey information, but the terms and choices of words used also reveal how they position themselves. The three-dimensional model consists of three 'boxes'. These three interrelated processes of analysis are tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse, namely discourse as text, discursive practice and as social practice (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough's CDA model was used to identify the mothers' dominant discourses.

Multimodal Analysis

Multimodal analysis focuses on how meaning making occurs through the use of multiple modes of communication and not just language. It often involves texts with two or more modes of communication that are integrated or interact. The analysis often consists of detailed descriptions, which is what I did in the analyses of the observations. Speech, facial expressions, hand and arm movements, body posture and actions were considered in the multimodal analysis (Jewitt and Kress, 2004).

3.6 Limitations of the Research

A limitation of this study is that my research was confined to middle-class suburban children. There is a bimodal pattern of achievement that occurs across all grades and subjects, provinces and locations in South Africa, with 75% of learners achieving significantly below what they should in terms of curriculum, literacy and numeracy standards. Only 25% perform at internationally comparable levels and this is seen when learners are split by former education department, socio-economic status, geographical location, race and language (Spaull, 2013b:3). My group of children fall into this small group of South African learners and the findings are therefore not indicative of the vast majority of children in South Africa. I understand that it would be a worthwhile inquiry to extend this study to include a representation of children from other socio-economic groups, but due to the limited scope of the project and the ease of access to the chosen sites, I have restricted my research to middle-class children.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

According to Hammersley and Traianou (2012), the main ethical principles relevant to social research include minimising harm, protecting privacy and respecting autonomy. A prime ethical responsibility of the researcher is to endeavour to obtain worthwhile knowledge. As I was researching human subjects, I needed to obtain ethical clearance from UCT. This study did not involve any major interventions in the lives of the people being studied and thus, did not generate any ethical dilemmas (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). My research questions are a worthwhile enquiry and it is hoped that the results will help to improve the educational experience of the children in Grades R and 1.

I protected the privacy of the participants by changing all names. Video recordings were not included, but the necessary data was transcribed. Consent forms were obtained from the mothers and children before commencing the research and I explained fully the methods that I would be

using and the aims of the project. The participants were told that they could withdraw from the project at any time if they so desire. The children's identities were anonymised in the photographs used.

Written permission was obtained from the principals of the schools in order to hand out my letter seeking participants. I made the request for participants from the parents of the children and I respected their autonomy by not exerting any pressure on them to participate in the project. The letter asking for participants was placed in the children's message books at school and I only followed up with arrangements to observe and interview with those that return the signed consent form. There were no consequences for those that did not wish to participate.

Chapter 4: Home Reading Practices

4.1 Introduction

People learn a particular way of reading or writing by participating in the distinctive social and cultural practices of different social and cultural groups (Gee, 2010:166). The suburban children who were the research participants live in homes surrounded by both print-based and digital literacies. Their mothers read books and magazine articles for a variety of reasons, including for work, to increase their knowledge and for relaxation (See Appendix 1: Questionnaire, Answers 3 and 4). They use more than one digital device and are using digital technology in many aspects of their day-to-day lives like reading, for work, the News, communication, banking, online shopping, etcetera (See Appendix 1: Questionnaire, Answers 6 and 7). This Chapter addresses the question: What are the home literacy practices with respect to reading, both digital and print-based, of suburban children across Grade R and Grade 1?

I begin with a description of the print-based reading practices, followed by that of the digital. I go on to provide an account of the similarities and differences between the two and then examine the blurring of online and offline worlds in suburban homes.

4.2 Print-based home reading practices

It's a cool spring afternoon and Tumi is leaning on the dining room table in his suburban home. Through the window, I can see a swimming pool in the garden, typical for the houses in this suburb. A large TV screen is attached to the wall behind Tumi. In the lounge next door, his younger sister lies asleep on the leather couch, exhausted after a busy morning at pre-school. Their childminder, who speaks very little English, sits next to the sleeping child. Tumi's parents are both at work. I have organised with his mother, an academic at the nearby University of Technology, to interview and observe Tumi, whose home language is isiXhosa. He attends an English pre-school and speaks fluent English. I have just finished with the interview and placed Beatrix Potter's 'The Tale of Peter Rabbit' book onto the table with the iPad version of the story next to it (See Figure 1). Tumi chooses to 'read' the book first. He opens the book and turns four pages, including the Title page and publisher's details, with illustrations and text, stopping at the start of the story.

Figure 2: The same story in the book and on the iPad

Tumi They're looking backwards for… or maybe there's an emergency (Tumi looks up and smiles, his hands move).

Figure 3: "They're looking backwards"

Chandra Okay, and are you looking at the picture or the words to tell that story? (Tumi looks down at the book, and then looks up).

Tumi The words.

Chandra Are you looking at the words?.. Okay, so what are those words saying then?.. Or what is the picture saying? (Tumi looks into the distance, deep in thought, a smile appears on his face, his hands move).

Tumi The picture is correcting (pp) you. (Tumi looks a bit puzzled at his choice of word, his eyes blink).

Chandra Is it helping you? (Tumi stands and raises his arms up)

Tumi Yes. .. To the words.

Chandra Is it helping you to make sense of the words? You are such a smart boy!

Tumi So if you tell **this** (Tumi points to picture), it's saying **here** (Tumi points to words).

Chandra It's the same thing-the words and the picture?

Tumi Yes.

Figure 4: Tumi indicates that the picture and words tell the same story

Tumi, like the other Gr R participants, is clearly a pre-reader, pretending to read the words, while focussing on the illustrations. The children all engage in many emergent literacy practices like holding the book the correct way and knowing how to turn the pages. All the children know where the book begins and where the story starts. As shown is Figure 4, Tumi and the other children all understand that the words and picture tell the same story and that the pictures provide clues as to the meaning of the words (See Appendix 2, Interview Answers, number 8). This knowledge will be very useful when they start reading print and are unsure of a word as they will know to look to the illustration to provide a clue as to what the word is. Kachorsky, Moses, Serafini and Hoelting (2017) argue that children use multiple resources to make meaning when 'reading' picture books. These include: illustrations, where facial expressions, body position, etcetera are considered; design features like word bubbles, motion lines and sound

effect words; paralinguistic features like exclamation marks; typography like font size and bold print and background knowledge of other texts, media, social practices and content knowledge. The children use these resources to make meaning and if teachers provide young readers with instructions as to how these resources work, they may expand the children's meaning making repertoires.

Just like the Mainstream families in the Heath (1983) study, the mothers in my study mentioned that they had been reading to their children from a young age, that their children had bookshelves with books in their bedrooms and that the bedtime story was a regular event in their homes. They read the children's own books and regularly visited the library, reading these books also. In addition, the children brought home books from school. These were wordless books for Rifle River Independent School and simple readers for the children from Children's Den ELC. The mothers listened to their children tell the story from these books as part of the children's homework activities (See Appendix 1, Interview Answers, numbers 3-5). These examples show how literacy is a social practice in these suburban homes. Further evidence for literacy as a social practice can be found when Ismah, Sakeena's mother, mentions the importance of children having access to help as they begin reading. She says

Ismah So with her for example, with 3 letter words, she can read some of them by sounding it out, so ..or sometimes she'll come and ask me, so it's nice if there's always somebody there to help them, ya, because that's how they're going to learn.

Chandra Absolutely.

Ismah So she asks me a lot, even some...of the bigger words, then she'll come and ask, "What does this mean? What does this spell? What word is this?"

Chandra Oh, that's wonderful. Are you excited to read?

Sakeena Yes (pp).

The children understand that the sounds that the letters make can be used to make words. Tracey, a teacher, describes how her daughter, Becca, is beginning to put sounds together to make words.

Tracey And.. Um... now she's...its beginning and end sounds of the words…em…she's now… if I spell out a three letter word…

Chandra … she can put it together.

Tracey She can understand and put the sounds together…em… She's not as confident…funny enough...em...If I do it with her on paper as she is **verbally** with it just yet.

Chandra Okay, that's interesting…

Tracey So if I **spell** a word using the sounds, she can say it, but if I write it on paper she says," No Mommy I can't".

The children are learning reading practices from a more experienced adult. The mothers read books to their children. They also assist their children in reading their homework books by listening to them, helping them with the words they don't know and correcting their mistakes. Many play games where they provide the child with the letter sounds, allowing the child to put these together and make the word.

The mothers all value books and read a range of different texts, including books and magazine articles for a variety of reasons, including for work, information, news, to increase their knowledge and for relaxation and pleasure. The majority read both fiction and non-fiction texts, with Tracey and Thembisa reading academic books and articles as well (See Appendix 1: Questionnaire, Answers 3 and 4). The children witness these print-based reading activities of their mothers and they will learn and become skilled in the practices of the community by interaction with a more experienced adult entering their Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1987:168-169). Further evidence of literacy as a social practice is found when Tracey mentions that children copy the practices of their parents.

Chandra So, what do you think and em, also interesting from a teacher's perspective, what are the basic components of reading?

Tracey emm, so obviously it's the alphabet and the letter recognition and everything first...um...to **model** good reading, I suppose would be, that we have to **model** it, because if we're just sitting in front of the TV, that's exactly what she wants to do, um...

Chandra Yes.

The above examples illustrate the print-based emergent literacy practices evident in the suburban homes of Gr R children and how literacy is part of the social practices and world in which these children live. Literacy means different things to different people and individuals, groups and communities 'take hold of' literacy in ways that are deeply rooted in what is valued by their particular culture and context of practice. These Mainstream-like family literacy practices (Heath, 1983) will serve as preparation for reading when the children enter formal schooling (Barton, 2006:149). By being exposed to books as well as the other printed materials in their homes, these children are building their vocabulary, language comprehension, understanding of books and number concept (Bird, 2008:225). They are developing print, word and rhyming awareness. By showing the children that they value and enjoy reading, the adults are teaching the children to do the same. I now examine some of the digital literacy practices of the children.

4.3 Home Digital Practices

I am sitting at the kitchen table with Sharna and her Mom, Kanushi. In the lounge, Sharna's Dad is watching one of the World Cup Rugby matches on a big screen TV. It is a Saturday morning in October and I have just completed my interviews with Sharna and Kanushi. I have placed the Peter Rabbit stories on the table and Sharna chooses the iPad version first. I explain there are two options on the iPad, namely, "Read to me" and "Read by myself". Sharna chooses the "Read to me" option and uses her thumb to tap it. A voice on the iPad begins telling the story while music plays in the background. Sharna, like the other participants, smiles while listening intently to the story (See Figure 5).

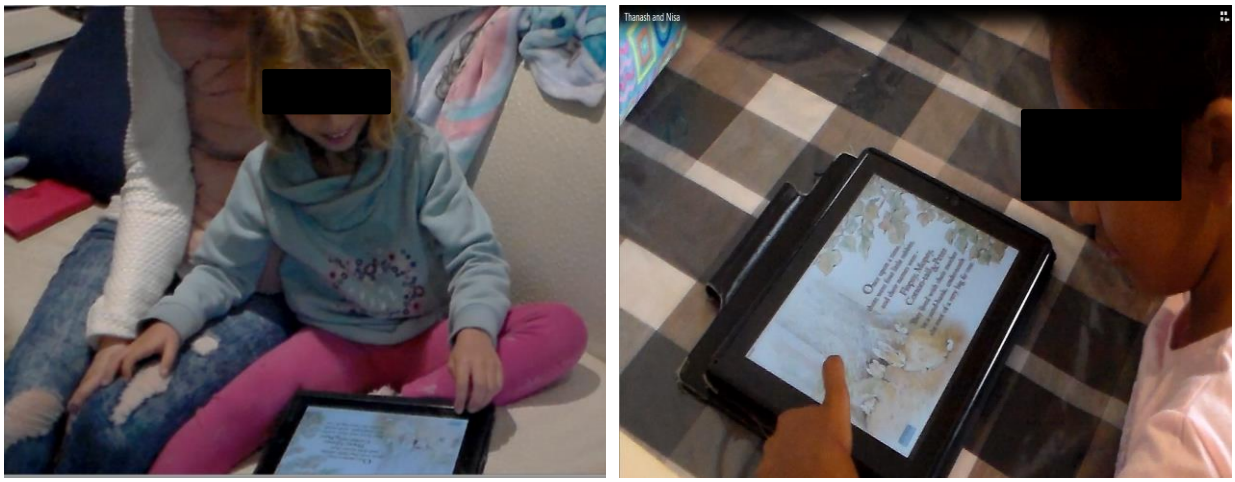

Figure 5: Isabel and Sharna enjoy the iPad story

She swipes to ‘turn the page’ and appears to know when to do this so that there are no long pauses in the story. She rests her head on her hands and seems to be deeply engrossed in the story, her focus never wavering. When the story finishes, I ask to observe Sharna on her own tablet. She is able to turn it on by herself.

Chandra So you've switched it on and now what do you do?

Sharna I just have to wait for it to download (Sharna holds her tablet and waits for images to appear on the screen).

Chandra Okay. And what are you doing now?

Sharna I was just going to...I was just opening it (Sharna’s hands move over the screen in a figure of eight).

Chandra And do you do a specific pattern to open it?

Sharna I just do like a line across (Sharna makes the figure of eight on the screen again).

Chandra Okay…and that opens it.

Sharna holds her tablet with both hands and uses both thumbs to operate it. Her fingers move very fast as she chooses the game, ‘Bubble Shooter’ that she wants to play. She increases the volume on the tablet without any assistance and touches an arrow to start playing the game. She chooses her level and opens a box with ‘tools’. Sharna uses her fingers and touches the screen to aim where she wants her bubbles to go. A soft toy, Peppa Pig, lies on a chair next to her, but Sharna ignores it while on her tablet. The game has sound, images and action. Sharna is able to close the game and shows me another of her favourites, ‘Colour-by-numbers’. She swipes fast and scrolls up and down until she finds the butterfly picture that she is looking for. She taps with her fingers as she ‘colours’ all the spaces with a number 2 on it with the colour blue. As seen in Figure 6, she then uses her fingers to pinch the image to shrink it so that I can see the butterfly.

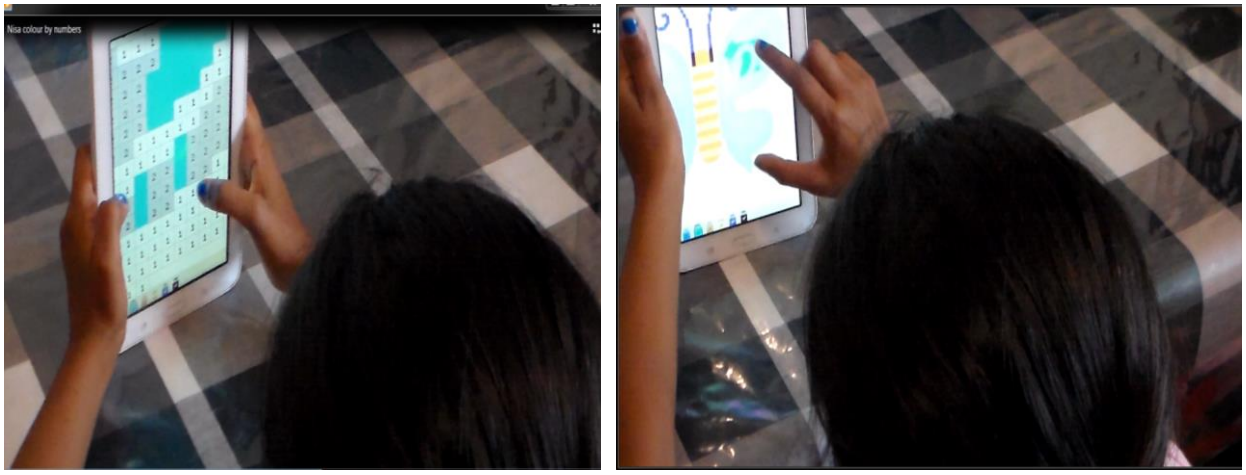

Figure 6: Sharna taps to colour and pinches to show the picture

She tells me that she sometimes reads a book on her tablet also, but when she is unable to find it, she says:

Sharna I think it got deleted.

Sharna, like the other participants, is engaging in new multimodal reading practices while on the tablet. She has developed touch screen skills and uses her fingers to start the tablet, taps the screen to operate commands, activate which App she wishes to use and to play the games. She pinches to decrease the object size, swipes the screen when necessary and is able to navigate between Apps with ease without any assistance. She is able to turn the device on and off and adjust the volume. Despite not being able to decode print, she is able to operate the tablet and interpret symbols. She uses terms like "download" and "deleted", showing her knowledge of digital technology processes and vocabulary. Digital devices make use of multiple modes, like sounds, animation, spatial layout, speech, icons and print, and Sharna uses these multiple modes to make sense of her games.

When reading a print book, the children use their fingers to turn the pages, a simple action in comparison to the pinching, swiping and tapping actions that they need to perform at different times in their digital activities. The reading pathway, print font and size, illustration content and size have been pre-determined by the author and illustrator of the book and the child has to imagine the actions of the characters. In their digital activities, the child has agency as they decide which game to play, app to start, the size of the object, whether to have sound effects or not and how loud these should be.

When asked how he knows what to do when playing a game, Jordan replies:

Jordan It like shows you stuff on the screen area…The first level is easy for...it just like teaches you it, the first level.

Chandra And do you have to read stuff to know what to do?

Jordan Well, sometimes... but sometimes you don't and it just makes arrows.

Chandra Oh, there's arrows, so you just follow the arrows? (Jordan nods his head)

Jordan Or maybe just like a hand that shows you.

It is clear that one way that the children are able to engage with digital technology before being able to decode print was by the use of icons. Icons are the graphic symbols displayed on screens and represent apps, objects like files or functions like the save command (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

Figure 7: iPad choices using icons

The icons provide the visual clues that the children in my study used in order to make their decisions before they are able to decode print. Similar findings occurred in the study conducted by Chaudron et al (2018:37). Wiebe, Geiskkovitch, Bunt, Young and Glenwright (2016) showed that 6-8 year olds correctly matched icons with their category over 90% of the time. When there are no icons present, the children are sometimes shown what to do by a parent or sibling as Sharna explains:

Sharna Mom showed me how to do it. Mom also has it on her phone. My first time it was a high score and I got 3 stars.

Chandra It looks like lots of fun.

Sharna It is.

Digital activities are an example of literacy as a social practice in these suburban families. Most of the children in this study engage with digital devices with their parents and siblings (See Appendix 1: Parent Interviews, Answer 9). According to the parents, the children's most popular digital practices are playing games, followed by creative activities like colouring and drawing. eBooks is the least popular activity with my participants.

	Tumi	**Sharna**	**Isabel**	**Becca**	**Sakeena**	**Jordan**
Digital Activities						
Games	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creative eg. drawing, colouring, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Books	✓			✓		

Table 3: Ranking of Digital Activities

Tracey describes Becca's digital activities:

Tracey All sorts of things. So she's got a colouring-in game that she uses. She's got a drawing game, she's got... she watches movies, she's got her own Netflix thing that she watches...em we've got Bible stories em... she's got... little puzzles that she builds...em.. And she's got like one of those Bubble Pop games, ja... em...ja.

Chandra Fantastic, thank you. And then, who does she typically use the device with or ..by herself?

Tracey Depending on what she's doing, if it's just watching one of her shows, she'll sit by herself quite happily...em... games, she's quite happy and she'll come to us if she needs help...em and when she's doing the Bible stories, she sits with either my husband or myself em.. ja.

Chandra Fantastic, so it's a mixture.

Tracey She's got... she uses her iPad most of the time em... on my phone she literally just plays a little game if we're somewhere out, but its em... and then she watches the

TV... which she knows how to use the Apple TV, she can use the Apple remote. We haven't gone on the computer yet.

Chandra That's amazing. I've seen it in my Honours project..

Tracey That tiny remote..

Chandra They work their way across indexes with only text..

Tracey Ja.

Chandra That is..I was blown away by that.

Tracey Yes.

When selecting what to watch on Apple TV, there were no icons present. Becca, who was not yet able to decode print, was able to use the indexes. Typically, indexes (as lists of data or groups of files) only contain text and provide the child with no picture clues as to their meaning. The child is sometimes shown what to select by a parent or older sibling. They then memorize and use the spatial mode, the position of the text, as a resource to make meaning in order to achieve what they want.

Figure 8: Using an index

Another way is to try the various options and then remember which option yielded the desired result. They don't know what the words say, but understand the consequences of their choices.

When asked how she knows what to do in the game, Sakeena replies:

Sakeena I try.

Chandra You just try things. That's awesome!

As with the print-based literacy practices, digital practices form part of the emergent literacy practices of suburban Gr R children and provide evidence for literacy as a social practice. By engaging with the multimodal technology, these children are interpreting symbols, developing touch screen skills, expanding their understanding of digital technology processes and increasing their vocabularies and thus, expanding their literacy learning. These young children are learning to read multi modally, recognise icons and use indexes. Through stretching, dragging, swiping, pinching and tapping, these children are activating icons and indexes and learning new reading practices. Despite not being able to decode print, these children are using the multiple modes of their digital devices to make meaning.

I now go on to examine the similarities and differences between print and digital practices and blurring of online and offline worlds in suburban homes.

4.4 Blurring of online and offline worlds

Understanding these similarities and differences between print-based and digital home literacy practices may enable curriculum developers and teachers to bridge the gap that currently exists between the home and school literacy practices (Marsh, 2010).

I begin by looking at the similarities. These suburban children live in homes filled with many different examples of both print-based and digital literacies. They often have their own bookshelves and tablets. Smartphones, computers and smart TVs are all around (See Appendix 1: Parent Interview, Answers 3, 7 and 8). The children use these devices to play games, draw, 'paint', watch YouTube clips and movies. They are exposed to words and pictures in both books and tablets and are able to make meaning by using the pictures, that is, the visual mode, in both. They understand that the words and pictures convey the same message. They know how to hold and operate or handle both books and tablets without any assistance. Both books and tablets have print and form part of the literacy practices in these families. The parents and older siblings often provide the scaffold that helps these young children to make meaning, despite not being able to decode print, by encouraging the children to 'read' the pictures in books and showing them what to do on the tablet when necessary. Both books and tablets serve as entertainment and are used for educational purposes.

Pamela mentions some benefits:

Pamela Jordan has one hour of game time, per day, most days he plays with his siblings. It is an amazing **bonding** hour, as they build different worlds in the game together. They basically only play Minecraft, which is such a great game. As a result, at 7 years old, Jordan has a vast **knowledge** of the type of natural materials found in the world and how to build with them. Electronics used as a **fun** educational tool can be hugely beneficial to a pre-schooler.

Neumann and Neumann's (2014) study of the relationships between children's emergent literacy practices and tablet use in the home for reading and writing showed that there is a positive association between children's access to apps and print knowledge and between the frequency of writing with tablets and print awareness, print knowledge and sound knowledge. Engaging with both print and digital resources results in building the children's vocabularies, language comprehension, number concept and sight word awareness. Thus, both digital and print-based resources enhance children's emergent literacy practices and are important literacy resources in homes.

There are also important differences. Literacy today is not just about knowing how to read and write, but one needs to be able to apply knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts. Turbill (2002) argues that there are multiple ways of reading and meaning making involves more than just being able to read print, but also interpreting, expressing or engaging with colour, sound, movement and visual representations that characterise digital texts. Writing mistakes are easier to correct on a tablet than in a book and to colour in on a tablet involves only the use of a finger, whereas to colour in a book requires crayons. With books, one has to imagine the action that takes place, whereas with tablets, animation occurs and one does not need to imagine what the action looks like. The child is able to listen to the story on the tablet and does not need an adult to read it to them. Parents mention that with books more social interaction occurs as the children are very focussed on what they are doing when using tablets and avoid interaction with them. Kanushi says:

Kanushi Yeah, I get a lot of interaction when we're reading, when she's sitting on the tab, it's just... (Kanushi puts her hands up next to her face)

Chandra Okay, so she's focussed..

Kanushi "Mommy, you're too loud, the TV's too loud, you and daddy are speaking too loud".

Young children today live in a complex world where digital technologies play an important role. Their literacy practices include many traditional ones, but also those that blend print, audio, tactile and visual media. Until recently, people conceptualised the real, physical, material world as being separate from the cyber, virtual, immaterial world, but with the advent of the Internet, characterised by many-to-many communication, interactivity and multi-modality, these worlds are now interpenetrated. The increased mobility of new technology like Smartphones and tablets and the diversity of software and hardware enable easy access and the creation and sharing of information via the Internet (Elsley, Gallagher and Tisdall, 2014:704,707). It is now widely acknowledged that as modalities and practices merge, online and offline worlds are blurred (Elsley, Gallagher and Tisdall, 2014:702; Bolander and Locher, 2020:1 and Jones, 2004:24).

In Figure 9, a picture of Becca's augmented reality dragon can be seen. According to Tracey, Becca plays with this virtual pet at home in addition to playing with her other actual toys. This App on the tablet turns their home environment, seen in the background in Figure 9, into a digital interface by inserting the virtual dragon into the real world in real time. Becca is able to train, feed and play with her virtual pet at home or in any environment provided she has access to the internet.

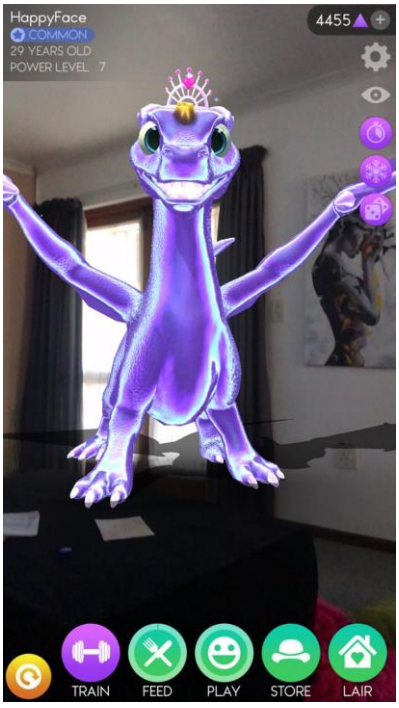

Figure 9: Becca's augmented reality dragon

These multimodal practices of screen-based technology are an important part of the lives of children outside the classroom. Tracey mentions that her Gr 4 learners use characters from their games in the stories that they write in the classroom.

Tracey Their stories often revolve around their computer games which..we say, "Try to create your own story".. em...

Chandra They become the character in their game?

Tracey But..exactly and the stories are all about what they did in the game, it's not their own story, it's the game's story...em I think that's the biggest thing.

The children thus recontextualise the characters and ideas from their online practices into their stories at school. Jordan uses a term from an online game he plays in his talk, when he describes how fast he rides his bicycle.

Chandra Which thing do you think is the easiest thing to do?.. If it was you, which would be the easiest thing to do?

Jordan This. (Jordan points to picture of a child riding a bicycle)

Chandra Riding a bike?

Jordan Yes.

Chandra Really?

Jordan Because I can go **nitro** speed!

These children are engaging in Durrant and Green's (2000) cultural dimension as they are aware of different contexts in which they can use technology by using game characters and ideas in their stories and talk. Tracey mentions that she downloaded 'Beginner Readers' for Becca, in other words she has used the online to create print books for her daughter. The online and offline worlds are interpenetrated for these young children. They are aware of the uses of digital technology in their everyday lives and will tell their parents or teachers to "Just Google it" when they are need information.

The discontinuities and gaps that occur between home digital practices and those found in the classroom are well documented (Merchant, 2007; Hannon, 1994). According to the CAPS curriculum, only print literacy is recognised and valued and the definition of literacy does not

extend to include other forms of literacy like the digital. When commencing this project, I had no idea what was about happen in 2020. Due to the lockdown that occurred in March 2020, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools shut for over 2 months and parents and teachers had to work together to home-school the children, often using digital technology. The predominantly offline world of school used online technology to move into homes.

In the questionnaire (See Appendix 1: Questionnaire, question 9), I asked the mothers what activities their child had done with tablets (or other digital devices) during the lockdown. There was a marked difference between the two schools. The mothers of the children at the Rifle River Independent School reported that the children were reading e-books that the teachers had uploaded for them as due to lockdown the children were unable to change their hard copy school readers. School teachers posted daily activities on the school website that the parents had to access and complete with their children at home, using both books and links to websites to complete the tasks with their children. Teachers also taught lessons and made contact with their learners via Apps like Zoom, a cloud-based App that allows audio conferencing, live chats and screen sharing. Caroline mentioned that Isabel had been reading, playing educational games, taking pictures, colouring and drawing on her tablet. Becca had been playing games, reading, doing Maths games and video and voice chats with family and friends, including hour long virtual play dates with her friends. As a result of online digital technology, Becca was able to interact and have fun in real time with her family and friends while all participants remained in their own homes.

According to the mothers, the children at the Oakley Primary were not given any reading to do at home and had Life skills, Maths and projects to do with their parents during the lockdown. Kanushi mentions that Sharna was doing puzzles, games and watching YouTube on her tablet. Thembisa had stopped Tumi from using digital devices.

From these answers, it appears that the children at the Rifle River Independent School, where e-books were uploaded during lockdown and where iPads form part of the curriculum at school, were spending more time and doing more activities on their devices than the children at the Oakley Primary School, where tablets are not used in Gr 1 and no books were uploaded by the teachers for the children to read during lockdown. This difference in the reading activities that the children at these two schools in the same suburb were able to do during lockdown is a small indicator of the vast differences that occurred in education during this time in South Africa,

where the gap between those that have access to technology and uncapped Wi-Fi and those that do not, is vast.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the question, "What are the home literacy practices with respect to reading, both digital and print-based, of suburban children across Grade R and Grade 1?" by examining the reading practices, both digital and print-based, taking place in the homes of these children.

I have shown how these literacy practices, both digital and print-based, form part of the emergent literacy practices of these children and how they form part of the social practices of the family. Meaning making today is more than just being able to read print, but also engaging with multimodal digital texts. Children are learning new ways of using their bodies for reading and writing and engaging with interactive texts that need more complex handling than turning a page in a book. I have discussed the ways in which the young children develop strategies to access and read a variety of screen texts with fluency, despite not being able to decode print.

Following on from this, I also mentioned the differences and many similarities between the digital and print-based literacy practices of the children and went on to discuss the blurring of online and offline worlds for these children in their suburban homes.

In the following chapter, I examine the conceptualisations surrounding reading, both digital and print-based, of the children and the reading roles that they perform in their digital activities.

Chapter 5: Children's Reading Roles

5.1 Introduction

Many literacy scholars see literacy as a complex set of social practices involving the engagement with texts (Bua-Lit, 2018:1). These practices which take place in the family, community and institutions, vary across these different contexts and are shaped by history. According to Kress (1997:58), reading is not just decoding, but "a transformative action, in which the reader makes sense of the signs provided to them within a frame of reference of their own experience and guided by their interests." How literacy is understood shapes the teaching approach. Due to changes in technology, meaning-making today is multimodal and children need to learn how to read and write multimodal texts. However, the CAPS curriculum continues to emphasise decoding and assessments are based on the idea of literacy being a measurable set of skills that develop with age. In contrast to this idea, Freebody and Luke (1990) argue that as literacy is a complicated set of social practices with material technologies, and in order to be a successful reader, you need to develop resources to play four related roles: code breaker, text participant, text user and text analyst (Bua-Lit, 2018). Durrant and Green (2000) comment on the integration of literacy and technology in education by proposing a 3-D modal of literacy-technology as a socio-cultural practice, that is linked to Freebody and Luke's (1990) resources model and Serafini (2012) also expands on Freebody and Luke's (1990) resources model to include visual and multi-modal texts.

This chapter attempts to answer the question: What reading roles do the children perform? I discuss the conceptualisations of the children with regards to reading, both digital and print-based and also use the models mentioned above to investigate the reading roles played by the children in my analyses.

5.2 Code breakers

These Gr R children in my study, who were in the process of learning how to read and write conventionally, were finding reading and writing difficult. Sakeena, Becca and Sharna felt that reading was the most difficult and Isabel felt that writing was the most difficult of the options I presented them with (See Appendix 2: Children's Interview Pictures and Answers, Number 4). Sharna and Sakeena also felt that writing was the least fun of the activities and when asked if she likes reading words in a book, Sakeena shakes her head and replies:

Sakeena It's difficult!

Even though they were finding reading and writing difficult, the majority of these Gr R children still thought that the children in the pictures I showed them liked reading the words in the book (See Appendix 2: Children's Answers, Number 11). This may be because these children love stories and having books read to them, so even though they are finding it difficult in Gr R, they still think others enjoy reading and that they too will enjoy reading once that are able to decode the print. When asked why she thinks the children in the picture like reading the words, Becca says:

Becca Because it's em...it's fun reading...

When asked how the children know what is going on in a book, Jordan replied:

Jordan They read the words and they look at the pictures and get knowledge in their heads.

The children use the visual mode, that is, the pictures, to make meaning. They understand that the words and pictures convey a message, that may be a story, but other times the message may be something important. Tumi says:

Chandra And what do the words do?

Tumi It tell us something what happened, but it's just a pretend one.

Chandra Is it a story that it's telling you?

Tumi Yeah, or sometimes it's really, really important.

Chandra The words?

Tumi Yes.

Becca and Isabel, both at Rifle River Independent School, where they use iPads as part of their school day, thought that writing on a screen was the easiest and that screen time was the most fun of the options I gave them. Jordan also thought that writing on a screen would be the most fun of the options given to him. He says:

Jordan Ja...it's cool … and also

emm…I would guess **this**. (Jordan points to picture of a child writing on a screen, seen in Figure 10 below)

because they would be able to draw anything.

Chandra On the screen?

Jordan Yes.

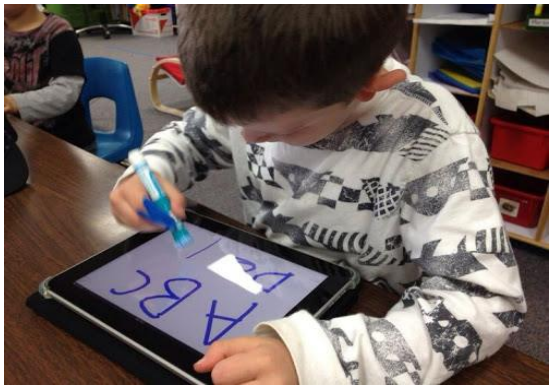

Figure 10: Writing on a screen

The child in the picture above is writing letters on the screen, yet Jordan mentions that the reason this would be the most fun is because they could draw anything. Kress (1997:97) argues:

> For children, alphabetic writing is clearly multimodal: it is blocks of print; letter shapes; media - such as newspapers, birthday cards, books; genres; it is an aesthetic object which can be used in design; a media of meaning; a drawing of sound; and so on.

Kress (1997) goes on to explain that as children learn to write, they experiment with word forms, sequences and directionality and use the two modes of writing and drawing interchangeably, which is what is implied by Jordan's comment. Pictographic script provides a means for the child to progress from drawing ideas to drawing letters (Kress, 1997).

The majority of the children felt that reading on a screen and book were equally difficult as they both involved decoding the sound-symbol relationship. Jordan says:

Jordan It's the same.

Chandra It's the same. Why?

Jordan Because you have to read it and it doesn't help you at all.

Chandra Is that so?

Jordan So you have to learn the words first and then you read.

Chandra And then you read... so you need to know all the steps before...

Jordan Ja.

Chandra To get to what the words are...

Jordan I know a lot of words.

Chandra Okay.

Jordan, like the other participants, all use illustrations to get clues to the story when reading a book, and use icons to operate their tablets, but understand the term 'read' to mean decoding print or decoding the sound-symbol relationship, which they are finding difficult to do. When he says, "You have to read it and it doesn't help you at all", he implies that if you don't know this sound-symbol relationship, the word or letters themselves give no clue to what it says. This is an interesting observation in the context of the ongoing 'reading wars' and the growing emphasis globally on phonics as the best way to teach reading. Jordan seems to suggest that he wants clues, like illustrations or icons, or perhaps sounds, to help him find the meaning of the word. His idea that "it doesn't help you" seems to refer to the arbitrariness of the sound-symbol correspondence. For Jordan, the sound-symbol relationship may be an abstract concept as he uses the word "learn", implying that conscious effort is involved in reading what a word says. In Jordan's case, this applied to words on a screen or in books.

Sharna thought that reading words in a book was easier than on screen, but when asked why she thought this, she mentioned:

Sharna Because it's a little bit hard..Because sometimes Mommy's help[ing] me.

Chandra With the book?

Sharna Ja.

Chandra So **that** makes it a little bit easier.

Sharna's mother helps her to read books and that is why she finds it slightly easier than reading on her tablet. When asked why he doesn't like reading words on a screen, Jordan replies:

Jordan Because reading.. I don't like.

Chandra Is it? Why?

Jordan Because it's boring. It's not like playing games.

Chandra Is that so? So why are games more interesting than reading?

Jordan Because you have to do the stuff.

Chandra **You** can do the stuff. It's easier?

Jordan Ja.

Chandra Okay and when you're doing the games, do you get clues from the sounds and the pictures and all that stuff whereas when you're reading words, it's just ..you have to know the words?...Or do you still get clues from the pictures like when you read books?

Jordan You get clues from the pictures, but like sometimes..on phones, it doesn't show any pictures.

Chandra Okay.. so you just have to figure it out.

Jordan Read the words.

Chandra Okay, that's very interesting..

Jordan That's actually a **problem!**

Unlike when playing multimodal digital games, Jordan and the other participants find reading words on a screen or in a book difficult. Their concept of reading is that of being able to decode the sound-symbol relationship, which they are still learning to do. This is a problem for them, especially when there are no pictures to provide a clue as to what the word is saying. The children are in the process of acquiring the resources needed to fulfil role of code-breaker, yet are active text participants and users in the digital games that they play.

5.3 Text participants and users

As a text participant and meaning maker, the children understand what the text means and relate it to what they already know. The role of text user answers the question," What do I do with this here and now?" and they need to understand the purpose of the text (Freebody and Luke, 1990). The roles of text participant and user overlap with the cultural dimension in Durrant and Green's

(2000:101) model. The cultural dimension involves being aware of the different contexts in which the technology is used, for example school or home, and recognising its purpose.

Freebody and Luke's (1990) roles of text participant and user also correspond with Serafini's (2012) reader as interpreter and designer. Serafini's (2012) model includes visual and multi-modal texts. The reader as interpreter constructs meaning from texts and images, drawing on their prior knowledge and experiences in their cultural context and the reader as designer is able to design how the text is read, choose their reading path and what they pay attention to, thus, creating a unique experience and giving agency to the reader.

While watching Jordan play Minecraft, a video game in which players create and break apart various kinds of blocks in 3-D worlds, he stopped playing the game where he was fulfilling the role of interpreter or participant, to perform the role of designer or user by selecting the "Mine" option, when prompted to do so by me:

Chandra So I believe you were doing things with different rocks and stuff (On the screen, the green block turns brown, the words, "diamond sword" above it. Jordan uses the sword to break the block and it breaks into smaller green blocks, which bounce up and down).

Jordan Done!

Chandra Oh, okay. (A hole opens up on the grass. At the bottom of the screen, the option "Mine" appears.) Ooh, what's down there?

Jordan You don't know what's underneath the grass? (The screen shows the options of building blocks available. See Figure 11. Jordan chooses obsidian.)

Figure 11: Building blocks

Chandra No. Oh! (The action on the screen is that of descending down the hole, which is made up of blue squares. See Figure 12)

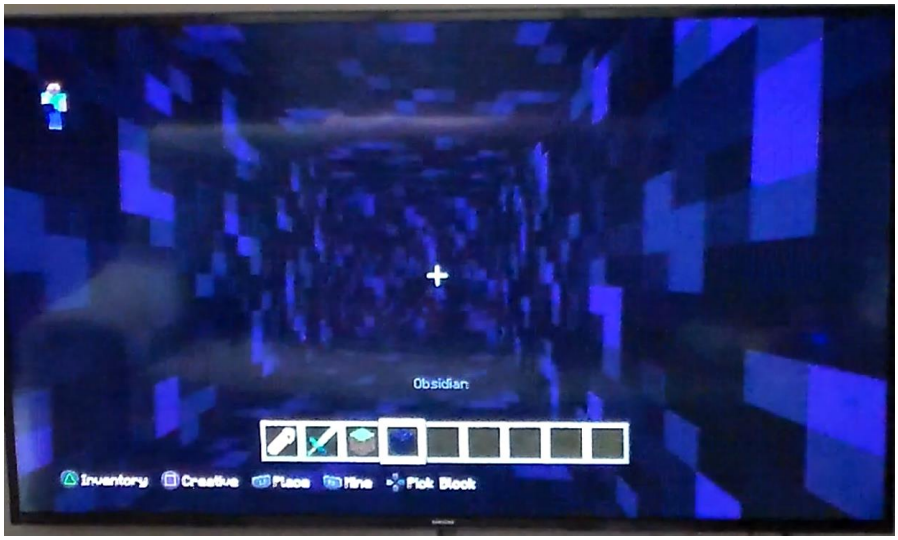

Figure 12: Descending underground

Jordan Obsidian, obsidian, obsidian, obsidian, there's a bunch of layers of obsidian. The word "obsidian" appears above a blue square in the Inventory key at the bottom of the screen.)

Chandra Okay, and do you know obsidian is a kind of rock? (Jordan zooms out back to the green grass with the brown hole on the screen.)

Jordan And then bedrock.

Chandra Shoo, that's going real deep if you get to bedrock.

Jordan has acquired knowledge of natural materials like obsidian from his teenage brother while playing Minecraft together. He switches from playing the game on the surface to select the mine option and moves underground. He also selects the rock type, obsidian from a variety of options available to him (See Figure 11) that he wishes to mine through to get to bedrock. He then goes back to playing the game (See Figure 12). He understands how the text works and is designing his own pathway through the various options that he selects, clearly carrying out the roles of reader as interpreter and designer. He is able to start and operate the game without any assistance and is thus functioning in Durrant and Green's (2000) operational and cultural dimensions. The operational dimension consists of knowing how to type, make the computer work and open a file.

Not only is Jordan designing his own pathway through games like Minecraft, but his older brother has taught him to design and create his own games using Scratch.

Scratch is a block-based visual programming language and website targeted primarily at children. Users of the site can create online projects using a block-like interface. The service is developed by the MIT Media Lab, has been translated into 70+ languages, and is used in most parts of the world (Wikipedia).

I received a video message from Jordan via WhatsApp during the lockdown:

Jordan I like being at home because of the lockdown because I have less schoolwork and also..I can be with my brother and sister more and also..I get to be with my family more. I even get to **play scratch** more.. And also I even get to **do scratch** more. I even get to play more and also play on the TV and things. That's what I like about lockdown.

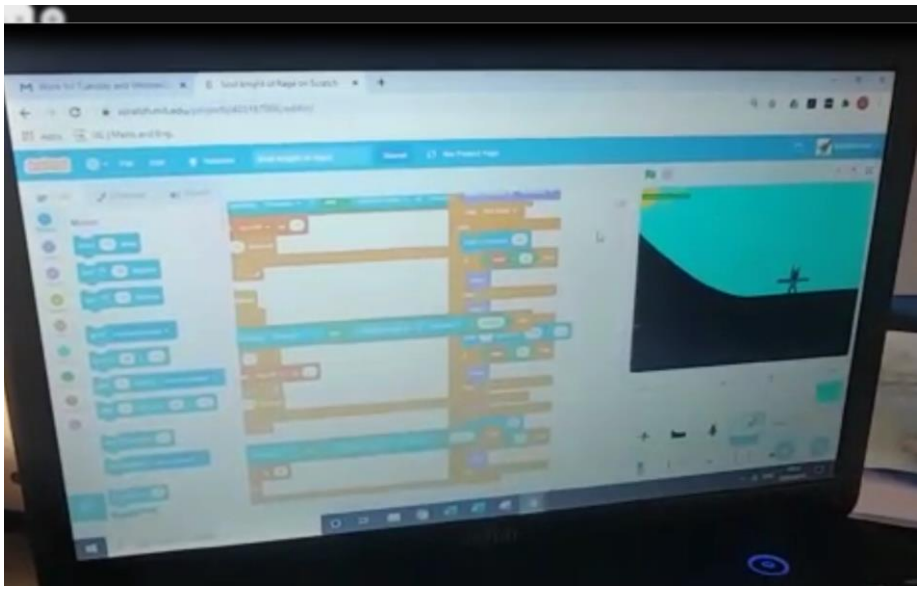

Figure 13: Scratch

The left hand side of Figure 13 shows the variables and methods that Jordan has selected to execute machine commands and on the right, the game that he has designed can be seen. Jordan is probably using sight words and contextual clues like arrows to choose the machine commands from the selection provided by Scratch (See Figure 14). According to CAPS (2011:133):

sight words - words that readers recognise automatically (on sight). There is no need to decode these words. In early reading sight words are usually frequently occurring or 'high frequency' words such as 'he', 'she', 'like' and 'were'.

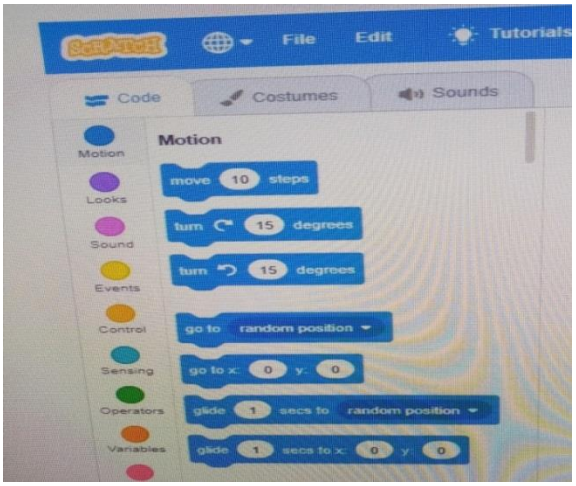

Figure 14: A few Scratch options

In the classroom, the ability to decode print often serves as a gatekeeper to children's other reading experiences, yet this is often not the case in their home digital practices, where children can fulfil the role of text participant and user before fulfilling that of a code breaker. Freebody and Luke (1990) argue that in order to be a successful reader, one needs to develop resources to play the four related roles, yet schools often focus their attention on that of code breaker and text participant. On Page 15 of the CAPS document, the five components of teaching reading are listed as: Phonological Awareness, Word Recognition, Comprehension, Vocabulary and Fluency. The role of text analyst involves critical reading and the reader needs to question whose interests are served in the text. I did not find any evidence of this reading role in my data. As with schools, Durrant and Green's (2000) critical dimension is rarely addressed in homes.

When I initially planned this project, the reason for having two data collection sessions was to investigate whether there was a change in the children's confidence as digital meaning-makers after being exposed to a pedagogy based on print when they began their formal education in Gr 1. The idea was based on a study by Levy (2009), who describes how young children are interacting with screens and developing strategies to make sense of multimodal digital literacies prior to entering formal schooling. She then goes on to report that the children in her study lose their confidence as meaning-makers in their digital activities when they enter formal schooling and encounter print-based literacy. However, due to the lockdown restrictions, I was not able to observe the children after they had spent a term in Gr 1, but instead emailed a questionnaire to

the mothers. I posed the question," Have you noticed any change in your child's digital activities after spending a term in Gr 1?" to the mothers in question 8 of the Questionnaire (See Appendix 1: Questionnaire). The following answers were provided:

Rifle River Independent School:

Caroline Yes, she is far more proficient. We have bought her a tablet to support the learning she is doing at school and she is very keen to play games and read the online readers. The Covid-19 pandemic has made her a lot more reliant on the tablet. All of the readers have only been available online and so Isabel has done most of her learning to read electronically.

Tracey She is more confident on devices. She enjoys spending time on her iPad, playing games. She engages in the reading games and doesn't even realise that she is learning. Using devices for communication is a natural part of life for her- especially with lockdown - she picks up the phone and knows exactly how to make a call to family.

Ismah She spends slightly more time on digital devices as she is being home-schooled. Some of the work is supplemented with videos, that is required to be watched on a device.

Oakley Primary:

Thembisa Nothing changed as I have limited the use of digital devices. They do however seem faster at learning new games on their own.

Kanushi I didn't notice any change.

Pamela Now that he can read for himself, he can navigate and download easier because he knows the words now. He used to get frustrated when he didn't know the words.

According to their parents, the majority of the children in my study, especially those at Rifle River Independent School, became more confident and proficient in their digital activities at home after spending time in Grade 1. I believe that a reason for this is the increased exposure to digital technology during lockdown for the Rifle River Independent School children. The children in my study have all been exposed to a pedagogy based on print in Gr R and have

already acquired the conceptualisation that reading is the decoding of print. Having taught Gr R, I know that reading programmes like "Letterland" are used in all of the pre-schools that the children in my study attended, to teach the children the relationship between the letter and the sound that it makes. Thus, upon entering Gr 1, this conceptualisation of reading as being the decoding of print, has not changed and the children become more proficient on their digital devices as their decoding of print abilities improve and they are able to read more of the words on their devices. They easily apply their growing knowledge of decoding print to their online practices.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter addresses the question: What reading roles do the children perform? The children understand that the words and pictures convey a message and that the pictures provide a clue to what the words are saying. The majority of the children felt that reading on a screen and book were equally difficult as they both involved reading words, which they conceptualise to mean decoding print or decoding the sound-symbol relationship.

The children are in the process of acquiring the resources needed to fulfil the role of code-breaker, yet are active text participants and users in the digital games that they play. They understand how the text works and are able to design their own pathway through the various options provided, clearly carrying out the roles of reader as interpreter and designer. In their home digital practices, the children can fulfil the role of text designer, participant and user before fulfilling that of a code breaker. This is not to deny the importance of phonics and breaking the code in order to become a successful reader, but my research shows that teachers and curriculum developers should acknowledge that in their home literacy practices, children have the resources to carry out some of the other reading roles before that of code breaker. These funds of knowledge should be recognised and included in the classroom. Researchers, for example, Feiler et al (2007) and Moll et al (1992) use the concept of 'funds of knowledge' to describe "the knowledge individuals and communities build up through their life experiences, which can be drawn on in educational settings" (Moll et al,1992).

Even though their digital activities form part of the emergent literacy practices of the children, the mothers in my study all felt the need to restrict the amount of time that their children spend engaging with it. In the next chapter I examine the discourses surrounding reading, both digital and print-based, in an attempt to find out what the concerns of the mothers are and how their own discourses influence the literacy practices of their children.

Chapter 6: Dominant Discourses With Respect To Reading

6.1 Introduction

Street's (1993) 'ideological' model of literacy acknowledges the sociocultural context in which literacies occur, the ideologies saturating literacy practices and the power relations of everyday life. This is reflected in Gee's statement, "There is no such thing as 'reading' or 'writing', only reading or writing *something* (a text of a certain type) in a certain way with certain values, while at least appearing to think and feel in certain ways" (Gee, 1990). Literacy, therefore, needs to be understood and studied in its full range of uses and contexts as people learn a particular way of reading or writing by participating in the distinctive social and cultural practices of different social and cultural groups (Gee, 2010:167). Literacy practices have values, attitudes and aspirations around them as to which textual practices count, for whom and for what ends (Stein and Slonimsky, 2006:144). Gee (1996:189) maintains that literacy practices are connected to particular world views of particular social or cultural groups. Literacy acts are thus bound to discourse. For Gee, "discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people" (Gee, 1990).

This chapter answers my third question: What are the dominant discourses about reading, both digital and print-based, in these homes? This chapter begins with a CDA of the answers given to me by the mothers during the interviews and in the questionnaire in order to identify their dominant discourses with respect to both digital and print-based reading. I then examine how these discourses shape the literacy practices of their children. Finally I discuss the continuity of discourses of reading over time.

6.2 Identifying the dominant reading discourses

The transcribed answers to the interviews and the questionnaire answers of the mothers are the text for the CDA. I begin my analysis by looking at discourse as discursive practice where I consider how the discourse has been produced, distributed and consumed in the social context of the suburban home.

The mothers in my study view literacy as skills-based and decontextualized. This view corresponds with Street's (1984) autonomous view of literacy. When asked about the basic components of reading, they answer:

Caroline The sounding out of letters and putting them together and making a whole.

Kanushi The consonants, the syllables…also the sounds it makes.

Pamela Sounding out words. Memory, seeing words over and over.

Tracey It's the alphabet and the letter recognition and everything first.

Ismah They're teaching the children the sound of the word, of the letters of the alphabet, so I think that is very important.

Thembisa is the only one whose answer is different:

Thembisa For their age, it would be the ability to make their own stories looking at pictures and words.

However when asked: What is reading? She replies:

Thembisa An understanding of written text.

The other answers to this question were:

Kanushi A process of combining words together to form meaning.

Tracey To decipher and understand groups of letters that make words using our eyes.

Ismah To look at and comprehend words and sentences.

While Caroline and Pamela both mention that reading is gathering information or knowledge, these mothers are not recognising that their children are able to make meaning, without being able to decode print, on their tablets. They only see the decoding of print, by sounding out the letters and combining the sounds to make a word, as a basic component of reading.

Their view of literacy is also singular as they only mention the reading of books when asked about the reading materials that they have in their homes, a school-like literacy activity, and decoding print (See Appendix 1, Interview question 3). Multiple modes and other forms of literacy like digital are not mentioned. No mention is made of reading objects like cereal boxes or any other object that might be a text in the home literacy practices of the children. No mention is made of the environmental print that the children are exposed to, for example, labels, shop signs, logos and posters.

Thus the mothers view literacy as skills based, singular and decontextualized. Literacy is treated as something to be learned, rather than acquired, and is thus a secondary discourse. This mainstream discourse about reading being an autonomous skill fails to recognise the sociocultural context of the home and environment in the process of learning to read. Heath (1982) shows the sociocultural embedded nature of literacy practices and that without reference to value or function in everyday life, literacy has no value.

I now move on to look at discourse as text where I begin by considering the vocabulary and voice as the choices that people make in these aspects of the text signify and construct social identities, social relationships and knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 1992:63-67). Caroline comments:

Caroline So..em.. Going forward it is all just digital, I think..

Chandra Absolutely, it's the world they're going to live in..

Caroline It's **frightening**, but it is..

Caroline's use of the adjective, 'frightening' is describing the future world that she believes her daughters will live in. She holds on to the view of a real, physical, material world and a separate cyber, virtual, immaterial world.

The use of pronouns like 'them', 'they' and 'their' instead of 'our', 'we' or 'us' used by the mothers indicate that they do not identify with the digital world that they feel their children are a part of and that they feel they are outsiders to this digital world. Foucault (1980) views Discourse as systems of power or knowledge, which produce social realities and structures what we think, say or do. It produces an othering effect, an 'us' and 'them' and this is evident in the mothers' choice of words. Tracey mentions:

Tracey I mean **their** whole world is technology, so I do think **they** need to know how to use it and have that confidence and just grow up with the confidence to..obviously.. with boundaries, otherwise **they** just become obsessed em..

In contrast to this, when chatting about print-based reading, the parents often use the pronoun 'we', indicating that they are partners with their children in their print-based reading. The following examples illustrate this:

Kanushi **We've** got library books.

Tracey So **we're** using flashcards.

Caroline **We** also have been getting wordless books.

In addition to the above, Caroline also thinks of herself as 'old-school' and an outsider to the digital world when she compares the manner in which she reads documents on a computer and print-based documents.

Caroline So **I think** it does give **them** a good basis on which to sort of think about the way in which **they** think about digital things.

Chandra Because things do work differently…

Caroline And also, em..Comprehension I think, I, I struggle with comprehension on a computer.

Chandra Okay..

Caroline I'm old-school..I prefer to read it. I have to sort of like print it to read it, to understand.. You know emails and stuff are different, but if it's a big document..

Caroline prefers having a print-based document in order to read with comprehension and for Caroline, there appears to be no blurring of the online/offline worlds. She only uses digital technology to achieve her ends. The vocabulary the mothers chose has a low modality, with most of them hedging what they are saying by using the words, 'I think'. This shows that they are not certain about what they are saying (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:152). This can be seen in the first line of the example above and in the following examples also:

Ismah Well, **I think** it's a good thing because that is the way the world is headed.

Pamela **I think** too much technology negatively affects children's focus.

Tracey **I still think** she needs to be holding a pencil and writing and drawing and colouring in.

I now consider voice. At times a passive voice is used by the mothers. The effect of this is that what they are saying is depersonalised as the agent behind the process is removed and they appear neutral. The following examples illustrate this:

Caroline So the giving up of the gross motor for the fine motor.

Pamela Technology is a great way to teach children.

Tracey If it's a book that's being read, there's pictures there…

Caroline's statement indicates that children's fine motor skills improve while engaging with digital technology at the expense of their gross motor skills, probably because they are not playing outside. None of these mothers mention the agent behind the action in the above examples, thus depersonalising what they are saying, which serves as a further indicator that they are not certain about the truth in what they are saying. Fairclough (1992: 67-71) argues that boundaries between elements may be lines of tension as they draw on different ideologies, subject positions and discursive practices. The mothers in this study are all conflicted between feeling the need to expose their children to digital literacies and the need to be a good parent by also restricting access and this serves as a line of tension or contradiction. The following examples illustrate these lines of tension evident in their words:

Kanushi …em..I don't stop her from doing it because I don't want her to fall behind with this technology, **but I do limit it**, because there's other things, just as important.

Tracey I mean their whole world is technology, so I do think they need to know how to use it and have that confidence and just grow up with the confidence to.. obviously.. **with boundaries**, otherwise they just become obsessed, em.

Ismah I feel like if you expose them to it, **but a**lso you can't let them sit there all the time, because they need to go outside and play.. (Ismah giggles)

Pamela I think too much technology **negatively affects** children's focus, especially when it comes to mundane school tasks... Children's exposure to technology **must be limited**, so that they can develop in all other areas of their body and mind.

However, she also says:

> Technology is a great way to teach children, it is a much more exciting platform with an endless amount of possibilities of ways to teach children.

Caroline em.. so **very limited** access to a tablet, **very, very limited** and to our phones as well, **very limited**…

However, she also says:

As a tool, it's happiness.

In the same sentence, Kanushi mentions that she allows Sharna to engage with digital technologies, but limits the amount of time she spends doing it. Likewise, Tracey and Ismah also express the need to have boundaries. Pamela and Caroline mention the need to limit access, but also the positive side of digital technology. These examples give an indication of the conflict that the mothers experience. They all hold on to the view of a real, physical, material world and a separate cyber, virtual, immaterial world. Their children need to know how to access and 'be in' this digital world, but their activities in the 'real' offline world have more value for the mothers.

Finally, I explore the outer layer of the model: 'discourse as social practice'. The ideology reflected in the mother's words is that digital literacy practices, while a necessary part of the pre-schoolers' literacy practices, need to be limited and restricted. The reason for this may be that the mothers, who were not exposed to digital literacies as children, are fearful of it and the rapid pace at which digital technology is changing and developing. Shannon (2001) mentions that discourses about reading are created by the peoples' own experiences, media depictions and the commercialization of products designed to assist children in learning the skills associated with reading. The mothers also fear losing control as their children get older and they are no longer able to control who they interact with or what they are doing on their digital devices. Caroline uses words like 'frightening' and 'worry'. She says:

Caroline No, it can be a super, super, super tool. It can be and it is.. just.. it's easy now because I can **control** it, but I **worry deeply** for when they are older and I **cannot control** it or I can **control it less**, that's what **worries** me.

Caroline is clearly afraid of losing her power to control what her daughter does with digital technology and thus, to be a good parent. The mothers also fear that too much time spent on digital devices will negatively affect their child's physical, social or cognitive health. Caroline says:

Caroline I think there are.. em..**posture** for one, I see massively..you know we sort of get glued down here (hunches forward) and we have to remind ourselves to sit up.(sits up straight)

Chandra : Okay..

Caroline em.. And I always do worry about the **eyesight**, the hyperfocus, because when you're writing, you're doing something sort of weird and it's a hand-eye thing..

Chandra Yes.

Caroline But if you just.. It's a very limited fine finger moment, so the giving up of the gross motor for the fine motor.

Chandra Okay..

Caroline em..ja

Chandra Are you an OT or...

Caroline No..(laughs) no, I'm not, I just **worry.**.

Chandra It's an interesting observation though.

Thembisa made the following comments:

Thembisa I noted that digital devices discourages interactive free play and communication. They also fight more….

There's inactivity of certain parts of the brain and it removes some critical problem solving, logic and mathematical skills.

These fears provide reasons for why the mothers feel the need to restrict their children's digital practices. They do not view digital literacies as being part of their child's emergent literacy practices like they do with print-based literacy practices. They see the digital practices as 'other' to what the children need to achieve in their 'coming to literacy'.

Through carrying out the CDA, I am able to identify that the dominant discourses of the mothers are 'literacy is a skill' and 'being a good parent'. I now go on to examine how these discourses of the mothers influence their children's literacy practices.

6.3 Literacy as a skill

This dominant discourse, that literacy is an autonomous skill, is found in suburban homes and schools, and shapes how parents think about literacy.

The mothers believe that reading is the decoding of the sound-symbol relationship and that this is a skill their child needs to be taught. The child is therefore seen as an adult in the making, who lacks literacy skills, and the child's role as an active agent in the construction of knowledge and daily literacy experiences is not taken into account. Just like the CAPS definition of emergent literacy, "children's growing knowledge of the printed word", the mothers also only consider the reading of print and fail to mention that their children are able to make meaning, without being able to decode print, on their tablets. They see the code breaker (sounding out the letters and combining the sounds to make a word) and the text participant/meaning maker roles as basic components of reading. The role of text user is not noted and that of text analyst is not considered.

The child's multimodal digital practices are not recognised as being part of their emergent literacy practices and these funds of knowledge are ignored. The mothers feel like outsiders to the digital world and treat their children's online and offline practices as separate. Foucault's (1980) othering effect, an 'us' and 'them' is evident in the mothers' choice of words. As a result, print-based literacies are valued and the mothers encourage their children to copy their example of reading books. They assist in their children's print-based reading practices, helping their child grasp the sound-symbol relationship, reading them stories regularly and taking them to the library. However, they restrict their children's digital engagements, perceiving online and offline worlds as separate and seeing digital practices as 'other' to what the children need to achieve.

The discourse that literacy is a skill, that needs to focus on phonics and alphabetic knowledge has become the normative truth for pedagogic practice in South Africa (Prinsloo & Stein, 2004; Bua-Lit, 2018). This dominant discourse has become the common sense understanding about literacy and this regime of truth is thus widely assumed to be truth about how children become literate. Thus, the mothers marginalise and do not even consider their children's digital practices to be part of their children's emergent literacy practices. The parent's discourse results in concepts, beliefs and assumptions forming with respect to print-based and digital literacies and these in turn affect their actions. While I am not denying the importance of phonics in reading, the mothers' discourse influences the child's literacy practices by determining which are valued and encouraged and which are restricted.

6.4 The good parent

These suburban mothers are deeply concerned with being good parents and are actively involved in their children's education. They spend time reading to their children, take them to the library,

assist with the reading of their school books and play games with their children with words and sounds. They clearly value reading and assist the teachers in helping the children to become competent readers. They also encourage their children to engage in what they consider to be healthy outdoor activities. These all form part of the discourse of what a good suburban parent does for and with their child.

The mothers allow their children access to digital technology and acknowledge its importance for their children, but feel the need to restrict access and limit the time that their children spend engaging with it as part of their role of a good parent. By not recognising their child's digital practices as being part of their child's emergent literacy practices and because they view the real, physical world and virtual, cyber worlds to be separate, they don't value digital practices as much as print-based practices. Digital practices are seen as 'other' to what the children need to achieve in 'coming to literacy'.

They also fear not being able to keep up with the fast pace that technology is changing and the physical, social and cognitive effects of technology on the health of their children. Thus, they feel the need to protect their children and carefully monitor their children's engagement with digital technology. Results of a study conducted in 17 countries in Europe between 2014 and 2017 as to how children (0-8 years) engage with digital technology and how parents mediate this, report very similar accounts of the need of parents to control their children's digital activities (Chaudron et al, 2018:16). The need to restrict access to digital technology is thus widespread and contributes to the suburban ideas and ways of becoming literate and being a good parent. The standardisation and homogenising of trends like this encompassing what is considered to be proper parenting, results in those whose ideas differ being viewed as deficit (Hollekim, Anderssen and Daniel, 2016).

Discourse is thus, shaping literacy practices in homes and constituting knowledge. As Fairclough (1992:64) states, "discourse is being used to construct the social identity and system of knowledge".

6.5 Continuity of reading discourses over time

According to Foucault (1981:48), it is almost impossible to think outside discursive practices and as they are repeated and reinforced, they become truth, "To think outside them is, by definition, to be mad, to be beyond comprehension and therefore reason". These regimes of truth govern what is said, done and thought and how it is said. Gee (1996:162) elaborates on

Foucault's (1980) theory that all Discourses are products of history when he explains that we should not say that an individual speaks or acts in a particular way, but rather it is the historically and socially defined Discourse that is speaking through the individual. In other words, the individual is giving body to the Discourse whenever they speak or act, and this is how the Discourse moves through time.

The social practices approach to teaching reading emerged in the late 1970s (Bua-Lit, 2018), yet the discourse of literacy being a skill and the skills-based approach still dominates pedagogic practice in South Africa, both in schools and also suburban homes. In order to identify the period in which the mothers' discourses and conceptualisations with respect to reading originated, I made use of Turbill's (2002) Ages of Reading Philosophy and Pedagogy.

I consolidated the three tables found in Turbill (2002), in which she provides the probable responses from teachers to five questions in the different Ages of Reading (See Table 4).

	The Age of Decoding	**The Age of Meaning Making**	**The Age of Reading-Writing Connections**
Questions			
1. What is reading?	Reading is decoding print.	Reading is understanding the printed word.	Reading is parallel to writing. Writing is composing meaning into written text, while reading is composing meaning from text.
2. What are the skills of reading that need to be taught?	Phonics, word recognition, word attack, comprehension.	Sound-symbol relationships; sampling, predicting and confirming strategies; reading ahead, rereading and using the visual context to predict meaning.	Sound-symbol relationships; sampling, predicting, and confirming strategies; reading ahead, rereading and using the visual context to predict meaning; spelling and grammar; writing for meaning; understanding the writing process; understanding that readers learn from writing and writers learn from reading.
3. Why do we read?	For pleasure, for information.	For pleasure, for information, for learning and for individual growth.	For pleasure, for information, for learning, for individual growth and for writing.
4. What do we read?	Books, newspapers, magazines.	Books both fiction and nonfiction, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, environmental print.	Wide ranges of genres for different purposes and audiences.
5. How is reading best learned?	Learn the sound-symbol relationships and word recognition,	By learning the sound-symbol relationships, gaining background knowledge to bring to the	By learning sound-symbol relationships, having background knowledge to bring to the reading, reading for

	and this will lead to meaning. Learn through rote memorization and drill and practice.	reading, reading for meaning, being read to and by reading, reading, reading.	meaning, being read to and reading, reading, reading; by examining written models, understanding the writing process and writing, writing, writing.

Table 4: Turbill's Ages of Reading

I then compiled a similar table with the responses from the mothers in my study to the same questions and was able to assign their answers to one of the reading ages (See Table 5). Of the thirty answers, ten correspond to that of the answers for Turbill's (2002) Age of Reading as Decoding and eighteen to that of the Age of Reading as Meaning Making. In other words, thirty three percent for the Age of Reading as Decoding and sixty percent for the Age of Reading as Meaning Making. Only two answers correspond with the Age of Reading-Writing Connections. During the Age of Reading as Decoding, the focus was on phonics and decoding and in the Age of Reading as Meaning Making, picture clues and comprehension were considered important. These results indicate that the mothers' discourse with respect to reading is the same of that of teachers from the 1970s and earlier as The Age of Reading as Decoding occurred from the 1950s to 1970s and The Age of Reading as Meaning Making followed from the mid-1970s until the 1980s.

By using Turbill's (2002) Ages of Reading Philosophy and Pedagogy, I have identified that this discourse favouring phonics and viewing reading as the decoding of print, ignoring multiple literacies and multiple modes, originated in the 1950s-1970s and has been passed on through time and continues to the present day. The 6 year old children in my study have already acquired this conceptualisation of reading in their families and only view reading as the decoding of print, thus despite being competent in their multimodal digital activities, they do not view themselves as readers. The Ages of Reading as Decoding and Meaning Making correspond with just two of Freebody and Luke's (1990) four roles needed in order to be a successful reader, that of code breaker and text participant.

	Parent	Thembisa	Kanushi	Caroline	Tracey	Ismah	Pamela
Question							
1 What is reading?		Understanding written texts. **Meaning Making**	Combining words together to form meaning. **Meaning Making**	Gathering of information to know what is going on in society, for enjoyment and relaxation. **Meaning Making**	Ability to decipher and understand groups of letters that make words using eyes. For pleasure and to gather and share info. **Decoding**	Look at and comprehend words and sentences. **Decoding**	Gathering knowledge, imaginary entertainment. **Meaning Making**
2 What are the skills of reading that need to be taught?		Vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, para-phrasing, reading for understanding. **Decoding**	Comprehension, communication. **Decoding**	Word and letter recognition, sentiment, tone, comprehension. **Decoding**	Talk about and interpret pictures. Learning letters of the alphabet. Increase vocabulary using sight words. Integrate speaking and listening skills as well to improve comprehension. Developing phonemic awareness, spelling practice, vocabulary learning, grammar and punctuation study. **Meaning Making**	Phonetic sounds and comprehension. **Decoding**	Recognising words, understanding sentences, a level of focus and concentration. **Decoding**
3 Why do we read?		Work. To increase knowledge and to equip myself with different ways of interpreting different subject matter. **Meaning Making**	Build knowledge, relaxation. **Decoding**	Information usually, pleasure sometimes. **Decoding**	Enjoyment and study purposes. Also to mark books!! **Meaning Making**	Enjoyment, mentally stimulated and to acquire knowledge. **Decoding**	Self-improvement. **Meaning Making**
4 What do we read?		Research articles, scientific journals, etc. (work). Also opinion pieces on different subjects **Writing Connections**	Novels e.g. crime, romance, biographies, magazines, newspapers. **Meaning Making**	News, magazine articles, fiction books, thrillers, drama, comedy genre. **Meaning Making**	Thriller and horror novels, educational texts. **Writing Connections**	Non-fiction novels, magazines, news articles on websites. **Meaning Making**	Self-help, health articles and books. **Meaning Making**
5 How is reading best		Introduce new words into vocabulary and make them understand its use. Putting new vocabulary words in	Fun activities, actions, expressions, only helping with	Practice, practice, practice. Listening to others so you know how words are	Parents model by reading to children, practice reading books at their level.	Daily practice and exposure to reading materials in everyday life.	Knowing alphabet symbols, visually and auditory. Making word connection and sounding words by

learned?		sentences. Read books using vocabulary words and introduce new words. **Meaning Making**	difficult words. **Meaning Making**	pronounced. **Meaning Making**	**Meaning Making**	**Meaning Making**	themselves. Seeing words repeatedly like in games. Reading, reading and more reading **Meaning Making**.

Table 5: Ages of reading for the mothers

6.6 Conclusion

I have used CDA in order to answer the question: What are the dominant discourses about reading, both digital and print-based, in these homes and identified the dominant discourses as being 'literacy is a skill' and 'being a good parent'.

The view that reading is singular, decontextualized and skills-based corresponds exactly with Street's Autonomous Model, where literacy is regarded as a technical skill, neutral in its aims and universal across contexts and languages (Street, 1993). I showed that the children and their mothers consider reading to be the decoding of print, by sounding out the letters and combining the sounds to make words. The mothers fail to recognise the children's multimodal digital meaning-making as being part of the emergent literacy practices of the children. The effect of this discourse is that the mothers fail to acknowledge the emergent literacy practices present in their children's digital activities and this serves to marginalise these literacy practices, whereby the digital are seen as 'other' to what the children need to achieve in 'coming to literacy'. They value and encourage print-based practices. The skills-based approach to literacy has become the norm and truth in South Africa and this regime of truth is seen in both the CAPS document and in the answers given to me by the mothers.

Their lexical choices indicated that the mothers do not identify with the digital world that they feel their children are a part of and that they feel they are outsiders to this world. Unlike their children, the mothers maintain strong boundaries between online and offline practices. In trying to be a good parent, they feel conflicted by the need to expose their children to digital technology and the need to protect them and thus limit their access by imposing restrictions. They all hold on to the view of a real, physical, material world and a separate cyber, virtual, immaterial world. Their children need to know how to access and use this digital world, but their activities in the 'real' offline world have more value for the mothers. The ideology reflected in their answers is that digital literacy practices, while a necessary part of the pre-schoolers' literacy practices, need to be limited and restricted. The mothers' discourse results in concepts, beliefs and assumptions forming with respect to print-based and digital literacies and these in turn affect their actions. Thus, the parent's discourse influences the child's literacy practices by determining which are valued and which are restricted.

Regimes of truth about the need to restrict access to digital technology reinforce the suburban middle-class ideas and ways of becoming literate and being a good parent. Discourse is thus, shaping literacy practices in suburban homes and constituting knowledge, marginalising

particular ways of being and doing and, thus failing to recognise the child's potential to contribute to their own learning and full participation in their emergent literacy practices.

By using Turbill's (2002) Ages of Reading Philosophy and Pedagogy, I have identified that this discourse favouring phonics and viewing reading as the decoding of print originated in the 1950s-1970s and has been passed on through time and continues to the present day.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

In order to answer to my research questions regarding the reading practices of middle-class suburban children and the associated discourses of their mothers, I have conducted a case study using a qualitative approach, with ethnographic data generating techniques. By using interviews, a questionnaire and observations of the practices of reading, both digital and print-based, in the pre-schoolers' homes, and analysing this data largely through thematic analysis, discourse analysis and multimodal analysis, I answered the following research questions:

- What are the home literacy practices with respect to reading, both digital and print-based, of suburban children across Grade R and Grade 1?
- What reading roles do the children perform?
- What are the dominant discourses about reading, both digital and print-based, in these homes?

7.2 Overall Findings

Literacy Practices

The research revealed that these suburban children live in homes filled with both print-based and digital literacy practices. They are exposed to words and pictures in both books and tablets and are able to make meaning by using the pictures, that is, the visual mode, in both. They understand that the words and illustrations in books convey the same message. They know how to hold and operate or handle both books and tablets without any assistance. Both books and tablets form part of the literacy practices in these families and the parents and older siblings often provide the scaffold that helps these young children to make meaning, despite not being able to decode print, by encouraging the children to 'read' the pictures in books and showing them what to do on the tablet when needed. Both books and tablets serve as entertainment and are used for educational purposes. Engaging with books and tablets results in building the children's vocabularies, language comprehension, number concept and word awareness, and thus, enhancing their emergent literacy practices.

Jewitt and Kress (2003) argue that the dominant way of making meaning today has shifted from print on a page to images on a screen. Literacy today is not just about knowing how to read and write, but one needs to be able to apply knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts.

Thus, as Turbill (2002) argues, there are multiple ways of reading and meaning making involves more than just being able to read print, but also interpreting, expressing or engaging with colour, sound, movement and visual representations that characterise digital texts. These young children are learning to read multi-modally and recognise icons and indexes. Through stretching, dragging, swiping, pinching and tapping, the children are activating icons and learning new reading practices. They are learning new ways of using their bodies for reading and writing and engaging with interactive texts that need more complex handling than turning a page in a book. The reading path often differs on the screen and young children develop strategies to access and read a variety of screen texts with fluency despite not being able to decode print.

Their literacy practices include many traditional ones, but also those that blend print, audio, tactile and visual media. The online and offline worlds are interpenetrated for these young children, they play with virtual toys in their real homes and recontextualise characters, ideas and words from their digital activities into their everyday lives.

Reading roles

The children understand that the words and pictures convey a message and that the pictures provide a clue to what the words are saying. The majority of the children felt that reading on a screen and book were equally difficult as they both involved reading words, which they understand to mean decoding print or decoding the sound-symbol relationship.

The children are in the process of acquiring the resources needed to fulfil the role of Freebody and Luke's (1990) code-breaker, yet are active text participants and users as well as producers and designers in the digital games that they play. They understand how digital texts work and are able to design their own pathways through the various options provided, clearly carrying out the roles of reader as interpreter and designer. In their home digital practices, the children can fulfil the role of text designer, participant and user before fulfilling that of a code breaker. These funds of knowledge should be recognised and included in the classroom.

The children in my study became more confident and proficient in their digital activities at home after spending time in Grade 1 as their decoding of print improved and they were able to read more of the words on their devices without help from a parent or sibling. Due to the blurring of online and offline worlds for the children, they easily apply their growing knowledge of decoding print to their online practices. Despite this and even though their digital activities form

part of the emergent literacy practices of the children, the mothers in my study all felt the need to restrict the amount of time that their children spend engaging with it.

Dominant Discourses

I carried out a CDA of the answers that the mothers gave to my questions in the interviews and questionnaire to identify the dominant discourses. I identified these as being 'literacy is a skill' and 'being a good parent'.

These powerful discourses meant that the mothers failed to recognise the children's multimodal digital meaning-making as being part of the emergent literacy practices of the children. They only see the decoding of print, by sounding out the letters and combining the sounds to make a word, as a basic component of reading. They value and encourage print-based practices and their view of literacy is also singular as they only mention the reading of books. The skills-based approach to literacy has become the norm and truth in South Africa and this regime of truth is seen in both the CAPS document and the parent interviews that I conducted and shapes how parents and schools think about literacy. It results in print-based literacy being seen as the route into full literacy.

The other dominant discourse that I identified for the mothers is 'being a good parent'. Unlike their children, the mothers maintain strong boundaries between online and offline practices. They hold onto the view of a real, physical and a separate cyber, virtual world. Their children need to know how to access and use this digital world, but their activities in the 'real' offline world have more value for the mothers. They feel their children are a part of and that they are outsiders to the digital world and used hedging and a passive voice in their interviews. This indicated to be that they are not certain about the truth in what they are saying, but because they identify with the suburban mainstream discourse of what a good parent does, they feel the need to restrict their children's digital activities.

The mothers' discourse results in concepts, beliefs and assumptions forming with respect to print-based and digital literacies and these in turn affect their actions. Thus, the mothers' discourse influences the children's literacy practices by determining which are valued and which are restricted. The ideology reflected in their answers is that digital literacy practices, while a necessary part of the pre-schoolers' literacy practices, need to be limited and restricted.

Through producing certain discursive practices, particular versions of reality are accepted as truth and repeated until they appear self-evident and depict the only possible option. Thus,

regimes of truth about what reading is and the need to restrict access to digital technology reinforce the suburban middle-class ideas and ways of becoming literate and being a good parent. Discourse is thus, shaping literacy practices in suburban home and constituting knowledge, marginalising particular ways of being and doing and, thus failing to recognise the child's potential to contribute to their own learning and full participation in their emergent literacy practices. As Gee (2010) argues, people don't just read and write in general, they read and write specific sorts of texts in specific ways and these ways are influenced by the values and practices of different social and cultural groups. He argues that mainstream discourses support power structures and institutions and contain beliefs that the way things are is natural and inevitable.

By using Turbill's (2002) Ages of Reading Philosophy and Pedagogy, I have identified that this discourse favouring phonics and viewing reading as the decoding of print, ignoring multiple literacies and multiple modes, originated in the 1950s-1970s and has been passed on through time and continues to the present day. The 6 year old children in my study have already acquired this conceptualisation of reading in their families.

7.3. Significance

I believe that this study contributes to the knowledge on the literacy practices of Grade R children in middle-class homes in Cape Town. It shows how these literacy practices, both digital and print-based, form part of the emergent literacy practices of these children and how they form part of the social practices of the family. Despite not being able to decode print, I have shown how these children are using the multiple modes of their digital devices to make meaning. Meaning making today is more than just being able to read print, but also engaging with multimodal digital texts and the definition of reading in the digital age should thus be expanded to reflect operational, cultural and critical dimensions.

7.4 Implications and Recommendations

The ultimate goal of CDA is to transform practices and bring about social change. Social change involves challenging a given form of discourse and the production and assertion of another discourse in its place (Street 1993). Compton-Lilly (2003:6) argues that discourses result in people identifying with particular social groups and result in socially defined ways of speaking, thinking, acting and believing.

The mothers in my study identify with the middle-class suburban discourse that in order to be a good parent one needs to restrict their child's digital interactions and do so, even though it forms part of their children's emergent literacy practices. Marsh (2005) shows how digital texts are important for the construction of young children's social identities and Gillen, Gamannossi and Cameron (2005) challenge the deficit discourses related to young children's engagement with media artefacts and show the benefits in children's cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural development as a result of technology. Finally, while not denying the importance of decoding print, I hope that this project might be used to bring about a change in the way that parents view children's digital activities and what reading is in today's world. The non-linearity, interaction of word, image and layout and multimodality of digital technology has changed what it means to read and write and thus, of being literate. It is also important that we as teachers deepen our understanding of how children are making meaning using technology in order to develop the means to best support their development in the classroom and develop a curriculum using their interests and what excites them. Modern definitions of reading should thus extend beyond the ability to decode print on paper and the ability to read digital texts should be included in literacy curricula and assessments at school (Levy, 2009: 75-77). Moss (2020:5) recommends an outside-in approach to literacy pedagogy that finds ways to include the child's interests in the classroom.

I believe that we should accept the digital child of the twenty-first century and encourage them to play with and explore new technologies, so that they are able to interpret and interact with non-linear multimodal texts. Reading today involves more than just decoding print on paper. Furthermore technology and play are not opposing activities, but digital technology provides the child with a new type of play and reading. We need to question what we assume to be 'truth' as our beliefs often serve to maintain the mainstream ways of doing things. We also need to acknowledge the broad range of literacies and find ways to use these new literacies that children encounter in their daily lives, in the classroom. Jackie Marsh says:

It is as if the developments in young children's lives outside of nursery and school are occurring within a self-contained, virtual bubble that has little to do with the stuff of the first years of schooling, which generally continues to focus on phonics, print-based literacy texts and canonical narratives. In contrast, family spaces are complex spaces in which globalised narratives are localized on a micro-level, public and private boundaries blur and there are no hard-and-fast rules about "real" and "virtual." This is the techno-territory of family life in the twenty-first century and unless early years educators acknowledge the rapid changes which are taking place, the curriculum offered to many of these "toddler-netizens" (Luke, 1999) will

continue to offer outmoded and irrelevant reflections of their lived realities, rooted as they are in ever-changing mediascapes (Marsh, 2006b:23).

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Appendices

Appendix 1

First Session Interview Questions (Mothers)

1. What are the ages of the children that live here?

2. What languages do they speak?

3. What reading materials do you have in your home?

4. Which of these do you read to/with your child?

5. How do you help your child to read?

6. What do you think the basic components of reading are?

7. What digital devices does your child have access to?

8. What does your child do on the iPad/tablet?

9. Who does your child typically use the device with?

10. What do you think are the advantages of pre-schoolers interacting with digital devices?

11. What do you think are the disadvantages?

12. Do you have any further comments?

First Session Interview Answers (Mothers)

	Parent	Thembisa	Kanushi	Caroline	Tracey	Ismah	Pamela
Question							
1		4 and 6	6	6 and 3	6	6 and 9	15, 9 and 7
2		Xhosa and English	English	English	English	English	English
3		Books and videos	Books-own, library and school	Books and magazines	iPad and lots of different books	Books	School, library and other books
4		As above	As above	As above	Books and Bible stories on iPad	Library books, but not every night	As above
5		To and with them	Read to her from 9 months, teach syllables, play games	Read books, wordless books	Flashcards, wordless readers	Older child: listen and correct reading	Homework-words and sentences, reading at night
6		Make up stories using pictures and words.	Syllables, consonants, visualization and repetition.	Sounding letters and putting them together	Alphabet, letter recognition, sounds, model reading, phonics	Phonics/sounds	Memory, repetition, sounding, listening and hearing.
7		Tablet and TV videos	Phone and tablet	Phone and tablet	iPad and phone	Phone and computer	Play station 4, phone and TV
8		Educational games, drawing and painting.	Games and YouTube	Spelling, Tetris games, Colouring and Bubble shooting.	Games, colouring, drawing, movies, Bible stories and puzzles.	Spelling, word-search games and videos	Games, YouTube, movies, scratch
9			Mom, Dad and self.	Mom and Dad.	Mom, Dad and self.	Self	Siblings
10		Educational tool.	Not fall behind.	Digital world, but prefers paper for self and wants to avoid	World is technological-must have confidence, but	Way world headed, so must expose Sakeena, but need to	Children learn fast, develops reflexes, bonding, fun

				this with Isabel.	with boundaries.	go outside and play also.	educational tool.
11		Addiction, brain inactivity, removes critical problem solving, logic and maths skills.	Limit, because outside games are important	Posture, eyesight, losing gross motor for fine motor.	Prefers it to book work, but needs to hold pencil. Need balance. Instant gratification, imagination not there and fast paced.	Addictive-they get stuck there.	Addicted and very focused.
12			More interaction with books.	Can be super, while easy to control now, but worries about control in future.	School-stories revolve around games-creativity goes.		Great way to teach. It's exciting, but need to limit it so they can develop in all areas of mind and body.

Second Session Questionnaire (Mothers)

1. What is reading?

2. What are the skills of reading that need to be taught?

3. Why do you read?

4. What do you read?

5. How is reading best learned?

6. What digital devices do you use?

7. What do you do with them?

8. Have you noticed any change in your child's digital activities after spending a term in Gr 1?

9. What activities has your child done with tablets (or other digital devices) during the lockdown?

10. Describe the activities that your child has done with books during the lockdown.

Second Session Questionnaire Mothers' Answers

	Parent	Thembisa	Kanushi	Caroline	Tracey	Ismah	Pamela
Question							
1		Understanding written texts.	Combining words together to form meaning.	Gathering of information to know what is going on in society, for enjoyment and relaxation.	Ability to decipher and understand groups of letters that make words using eyes. For pleasure and to gather and share info.	Look at and comprehend words and sentences	Gathering knowledge, imaginary entertainment
2		Vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, para-phrasing, reading for understanding.	Comprehension, communication	Word and letter recognition, sentiment, tone, comprehension.	Talk about and interpret pictures. Learning letters of the alphabet. Increase vocabulary using sight words. Integrate speaking and listening skills as well to improve comprehension. Developing phonemic awareness, spelling practice, vocabulary learning, grammar and punctuation study.	Phonetic sounds and comprehension	Recognising words, understanding sentences, a level of focus and concentration
3		Work. To increase knowledge and to equip myself with different ways of interpreting different subject matter.	Build knowledge, relaxation.	Information usually, pleasure sometimes.	Enjoyment and study purposes. Also to mark books!!	Enjoyment, mentally stimulated and to acquire knowledge.	Self-improvement.
4		Research articles, scientific journals, etc. (work). Also opinion pieces on different subjects/	Novels e.g. crime, romance, biographies, magazines, newspapers.	News, magazine articles, fiction books, thrillers, drama, comedy genre.	Thriller and horror novels, educational texts.	Non-fiction novels, magazines, news articles on websites.	Self-help, health articles and books.
5		Introduce new words into vocabulary and make them understand its use. Putting new vocabulary words in sentences. Read books using vocabulary words and introduce new words.	Fun activities, actions, expressions, only helping with difficult words.	Practice, practice, practice. Listening to others so you know how words are pronounced.	Parents model by reading to children, practice reading books at their level.	Daily practice and exposure to reading materials in everyday life.	Knowing alphabet symbols, visually and auditory. Making word connection and sounding words

							by themselves. Seeing words repeatedly like in games. Reading, reading and more reading.
6		Laptop, tablet, phone.	phone	Phone, Kindle, laptop	Computer, iPad, iPhone	Smart phone, computer	Phone, laptop
7		Read, work, communication.	Apps	Download books, read articles, watch video clips/news clips, listen to audiobooks	Read e Books, communication, work, learning, searching online, education.	Keeping in touch with family and friends using various apps, banking and online shopping, social media and searching for information.	Read, social media, communication
8		Faster at learning new games on own	no	Far more proficient. Keen to play games and read online readers. Lockdown made her more reliant on tablet. Readers only available online. Doing most of her learning electronically	More confident, natural part of life especially with lockdown	Slightly more time on digital as home-schooled. Some work supplemented with videos-need to be watched on a device	Easier now to navigate and download for himself.
9		No longer allowed.	Puzzles, YouTube, games, phonics apps	Reading, playing educational games, colouring and drawing apps, taking pictures.	Games for fun, practising reading, Maths games, video and voice chats	Smart phone and smart TV	Playing games, scratch.
10	1	Reading, create story boards, made up stories from pictures in books.	Homework, reading,	Reading, sticker books, child activities in magazines.	Reading, colouring in, activity books, school work, writing stories, writing letters to family, listening to stories, drawing.	No access to books. Reading e-books on smart phone	Reading.

Appendix 2

Interview Questions (Children)

I will be turning the pictures below into cards and using them to 'interview' the children.

1. How old are you?

2. Can you tell me what's happening in these pictures?

3. Which is the easiest thing to do?

4. Which is the most difficult?

5. Which child/ren is having the most fun? Why?

6. Which child is having the least fun? Why?

7. How does this child understand what is happening on the screen?

8. How does this child understand what is happening in the book?

9. Is it easier to read words on a screen, in a book or the same?

10. Does this child like reading the words on the screen? Why?

11. Does this child like reading the words in the book? Why?

12. Please separate the pictures into a group of things that are easy to do and another with pictures of things that are difficult to do.

13. Do you use tablets at school?


http://cute-pictures.blogspot.com

I will place the book and iPad, both with the story of Peter Rabbit visible, on a table and ask the child which they would prefer to ‘read’ and why they have made this choice. I will then ask them to tell me what they think is happening on the first few pages of the book and then observe them interacting with the first few pages with the eBook.

Interview Answers (Children)

	Child	Tumi	Sharna	Isabel	Becca	Sakeena	Jordan
Question							
1		6	6	6	6	6	7
3		Running	Tying shoe laces and riding a bike	Writing on a screen	Writing on a screen	Painting	Riding a bike
4		Tying shoe laces and riding a bike	Reading books	Writing on paper	Reading books	Reading books	Tying shoe laces
5		Running and reading books	Painting	Screen time	Screen time	Riding a bike	Writing on a screen
6		Tying shoe laces	Writing on paper	Tying shoe laces	Tying shoe laces	Writing on paper	Tying shoe laces
7		Games, videos and phoning	Games, words and sounds	Games-figured out for self	Eyes and pictures	Try things	Teachers tell you/it shows you
8		Reading words	Pointing to words	Pictures	Pictures and words	Words	Read words and look at pictures
9		Same	Reading books	Easier on screen	Same	Same	Same
10		Yes	No	Yes	Yes, it's fun to read	Yes	No. It's boring, not like games
11		Yes	Prefers books	Yes	yes	No, it's difficult	Prefer games-it's easier

12		Easy: painting, running, writing on screen and paper Difficult: tying shoe laces, reading on screen and paper In between: riding a bike	Easy: all except reading on a screen	Easy: all except writing with a pencil	Easy: all except reading on screen and paper and tying shoe laces	Easy: all except reading a book and writing with a pencil	Easy: all except reading on screen and paper and tying shoe laces
13		No	No	Yes. Letterland	Yes	Yes. Maths –it's fun	Only for homework

Appendix 3: Request for participation in a research project

Dear Parents

Request for your participation in a research project:

Reading in the lives of pre-school children in the Digital Age

I am doing a research project in order to complete my MEd degree in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town. My research aims to find if there is a change in how pre-school children understand texts and make meaning in their digital and print-based activities, in the context of the home and family when they begin Grade 1 and start to read books. I am a qualified teacher and have taught at Children's Den ELC for many years. While completing my studies, I have been a Relief teacher at Happy Hollow Pre-Primary, Oakley Primary, Lea Primary and Rifle River Independent School.

I have not found any research of this nature conducted in South Africa, although a similar study has been carried out in the UK. I am interested in whether the children will lose the confidence that they have in order to operate tablets when they begin reading books in Grade 1. I would like to observe your child/children in his/her home and family setting and data collection will be in the form of video recordings of your child/children operating the iPad/tablet and reading books. This will be carried out in two 40 minute sessions over the period 21-31 October 2019 and 1-18 April 2020. I would also like to interview you and your child/ren regarding their digital activities that they are doing at home while in Gr R and then again in Gr 1.

Participation is voluntary and confidentiality is guaranteed. All participants will be given pseudonyms in the writing up of the research. All video recordings will be transcribed and no faces will be recognisable in any images used in the final report. You may withdraw permission for conducting the research at any time. I only need six participants, so will be selecting them randomly from all who volunteer to partake in the project.

Please fill in the slip below to indicate your consent for the research. You have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time. You are welcome to ask any questions regarding this research to me or my supervisor. Our contact details are: Chandra Harris on 082 359 6395 or cfharris@telkomsa.net and Prof. Catherine Kell at catherine.kell@uct.ac.za.

Yours sincerely

Chandra Harris

Parent Consent form

Name: (Print)

(Signature)

(Date)

…… (Contact Number)

I consent to	**YES**	**NO**
1. My child/children being observed at home		
2. My child/children being video-taped at home		
3. My child/children being interviewed		
4. Being interviewed		
5. Audio-recording of the interviews		
6. My child/children's texts, e.g. pictures, etc., produced during the observations, being used in the final report		

My child uses the following Apps on an iPad/tablet :	**YES**	**NO**
1. Games		
2. Creative e.g. drawing, colouring, etc.		
3. Books		