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Discursive Formations of UNESCO'S Policies on Literacy

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DISCURSIVE FORMATIONS OF UNESCO'S POLICIES ON LITERACY

A Dissertation

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This qualitative study was designed to explore UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy from 1949 to 2002. Documents included general conferences resolutions, policy papers commissioned by these organizations, brochures, booklets, position papers, global monitoring reports, education sector strategy papers.To analyze the data, I drew I drew from three methods of qualitative analysis based on grounded theory, metaphor analysis and CDA and various analytical tools such as Foucault (1972, 1980)'s notion of discursive formations, the concept of intertextuality, recontextualization and multivocality.

The conclusions drawn from this study follow the research questions and the findings therefore address five areas: (a) UNESCO's renewed definitions of literacy; (b) the discursive formations of literacy; (c) the excluded discourses in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy; (d) the relationships between the ethnographic insights and an economistic approach to literacy; (e) the metanarrative that surrounds UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy.

The overriding finding in this study revealed that the importance of the Anglophone discourse of literacy in the international arena and in academia and the relevance of UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy, ones aiming to incorporate ethnographic insights into a an economistic discourse that posit literacy as a social practice contributing to broader purposes of lifelong education and responding to the demands of the global economy.

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CHAPTER ONE

LITERACY'S UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSES

Introduction

As far as literacy education is concerned, UNESCO as a leading United Nations organization has been negotiating the contested terrain of literacy definitions by promoting a desire for some equality between underdeveloped countries and former colonizers through a rethinking of knowledge and social identities "authored and authorized by colonialism and western domination" (Prakah, 1994, p.1475). Through a postcolonialist lens, UNESCO kept on "claiming the right of all people on this earth to the same material and cultural being" by seeking to "change the way people think, they way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between peoples of the world"n (Young, 2003, p.7). As such, UNESCO recognized that the 'colonial subject' remains colonized internally, psychologically through a westernized educational system that defines the theoretical and pedagogica frontiers of literacy and illiteracy by carrying a predominant 'literate paradigm' that excludes specific ways of being, thinking, and acting. Thus, in order to reach 'national consciousness' according to frantz Fanon (1984), the binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized became transposed into the politicized opposition between the 'world of literacy' and the 'hidden premises of illiteracy'. By internalizing ways of being literate, the 'colonized' learned new ways of reading the world and their desires to achieve literacy skills are carried across into the desire for 'lite-race-ssness', a desire surrounded by social constructions of a westernized literate environment. Consequently, UNESCO developed a majr strand of analysis that involves attempts to understand the dynamics in the formation of the 'literate subject' as the basis for refusing the creation of the 'illiterate subject' as necessarily inferior.

Accordingly, UNESCO's since its inception until the 1960's built conceptualizations of literacy taking into account the willingness of the international community to eradicating illiteracy until the need to develop massive literacy campaigns become urgent in order to incorporate social, economical, cultural, and political pedagogical approaches to the traditional and monolithic view of literacy as a cognitive skill and a learning process. As such, in the 1970's, UNESCO promoted the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) in order to posit the urgency of implementing universal literacy. Meanwhile, during the 1980's adult literacy programmes couldn't benefit from sufficient funding because the main focus of the international community was to promote universal completion of primary education through the acquisition of basic learning needs. Thus, the conceptualizations of literacy started to incorporate the notion of basic learning competencies. Finally, in the 1990's, the 'policing of literacy' became associated with the urgent need to realize the Millennium Development goals and posit the achievement of schooled literacy as the new motto of the international community regarding literacy.

Nevertheless, UNESCO's understandings of literacy remained associated to the key elements of education developed by the United Nations' Task Force on Education for the Twenty First Century (1996). An illustration of this conceptualization of literacy can be found in a 2009 UNESCO report in which the organization states that:

> Education plays a major role in the development of self-identity (learning to be) in relation to a collective setting where individuals experience sharing their lives with others (learning to live together), enabling them to continuously improve and expand their capacities (by learning to know), which would translate into their capability to act in different domains of the world (learning to do). (UNESCO, 2009, p.13)

Additionally, these four pillars of education represented literacy as a key element of the learning process, one which allows younger children and adult to acquire and improve the fundamental skills of reading, writing, and calculation. In building a strong relationship between essential features of education in general and literacy in particular, UNESCO began to unravel the multiple meanings of literacy and recommended to its Member States, Non Governmental Organizations, public and private literacy stakeholders, and the United Nations agencies authoritative conceptualizations of literacy.

As such, this study seeks to explore the a historical investigation of conceptualizations of literacy at the international level by examining how UNESCO is positing its renewed definitions of literacy and representing multiple supportive discourses in delineating its visions about a major issue pertaining to literacy education. The purpose of this theoretical investigation is to explore through a sample of documents published by UNESCO the diverse forms of literacy from 1949 to 2002. It is anticipated that through unraveling UNESCO's forms of literacy that the lessons learned from this qualitative inquiry would bring to the table new insights and a more informed perspective regarding the actions of literacy stakeholders at the international level.

This research included a purposeful sampling of eighteen documents illustrating UNESCO's renewed definitions of literacy and the discourses associated to these diverging and competing definitions. The documents under our scrutiny include international conferences resolutions, world congresses on literacy, policy papers, position papers, reports, guides, brochures, booklets, papers commissioned by international organizations, and education sector strategy papers. The study also considers official documents that indicate policy directions and priorities.

This chapter starts with (1) an overview of the context and background that surrounds the study (Reasons for doing the study). Following this is (2) The Purpose of the study, (3) a discussion of the Notions of literacy and illiteracy, and (4) an overview of the research questions.Also included in this chapter is (5) a discussion around the Reasons for choice of range of data,(6) the need for a study linked to UN's authority and (7) the highlights about what I found.

Why Do we Need to Study Literacy Definitions

Acknowledging that literacy policies remain immersed in a contested theoretical terrain, I, as a second language learner, born and raised in what has been qualifiedas the 'third world', couldn't ignore the voices of 'subaltern illiterates', "those people who did not comprise the colonial elite" (Guhas, 1982, p.7). Through the words of Spivak (1988), I was also able to acknowledge that there is an "epistemic violence" done upon the peoples viewed as illiterates and realize that there is a need to improve their conditions by granting them a 'legitimate voice' in the the educational system and in the world of work. As such, as a researcher I became engaged into a're-staging' of the 'literacy discourse' promoted by international organizations such as UNESCO in order to study and analyze how the "social articulation of difference" (Bhabha, 1994, p.23) is enacted and re-enacted in the world of academia and in the center stage of UNESCO's literacy arena. In doing so, my primary purpose is to try to incorporate the 'illiterate subject' into the colonizing culture of a dominant westernized model of literacy. Consequently, I pursued this theoretical, political, and pedagogical engagement in unraveling and delineating the dialectical relationships between the 'literates' and the 'illiterates' because the latter are capable of interpreting, accommodating, and resisting dominant literacy discourses and practices. To paraphrase Tomlinson (2000), I can infer that one needs to 'deterritorialize the

culture and politics of literacy' by creating a 'vernacular understanding 'of literacy by showing how the contextual dialectics between influence our education systems and literacy practices because the literacy arena is an institution in which the 'subaltern illiterates' need to acquire the necessary skills in resisting dominant westernized liyeracy ideologies, beliefs, traditions, values, and practices.

By trying to understand how the politics and ideologized culture of dominant literacy models "travel across transbnational routes through new patterns of communication and consumption", this study can be a site where the legacies of a UNESCO's westernized literacy model and the need to defend and implement a 'glocalized view of literacy' can intersect. Accordingly, I became immersed in a research journey that questioned the 'educational route' I took all along the years and my belief in how literacy in its hybrid forms can be re-inscribed and given new , divergent, competing, unexpected, and opositional meanings.

Personal Stakes in Studying Literacy

Thus, looking into the future of this research project so often seems like looking into the past. I can remember when I went to a Christian private school in Dakar, "College de la Cathedrale", a school that promoted excellence but forbids the students to speak in their own language. Our school system manufactured us to learn the wholeness and soundness of French, the language of the colonizer. I managed my way through high school, practiced reading and writing about topics that were strange to me. One of my History professors initiated us to the work of one of the most brilliant Egyptologists of his times, Cheikh Anta Diop. I started to become interested by the cutting edge work of African philosophers, the heritors of the intellectual traditions established by the generations who fought for the liberation of Africa and

these scholars developed systems of thoughts rooted in African vernacular concepts relevant for the arts and humanities.

I started to enjoy learning and went on to study Law and Political Science at the university "Jean Moulin Lyon 3" in France. Immersing through the rules of the 'educational glaze', I realized that most of modern African thought seems to be dependent on 'western paradigms'. As such, this new discovery increased my intellectual curiosity in exploring new concepts, new ideas, and new inspirations. Therefore, I found myself immersed in the workings of international organizations such as the United Nations and started to dream that I will one day be able to be part of this 'network of apprenticeships' and participate in the ''enactment and re-enactment of literacy education policies'.

Consequently, I kept the dream alive when I came to the United States to do a Masters degree in TESOL at Salisbury University. One of my linguistics professors DrPandey introduced me to the inextricably linked realities of language and culture. DrPandey pushed me to enroll in the doctoral program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP).

Accordingly, the doctoral program at IUP brought a new vision which appears to me as the basic prerequisite for the resolution of my 'educational errantry' and my 'pedagogical dilemnas'. I realized that I had a narrow view of education and literacy. Throughout the semesters my educational horizon and 'capital' seems to be regenerating and I was realizing that, as a 'good member of society', duly trained by western universities, I should go into life conscious of the deeper issues at stake and of the values involved in them. I started thinking about the fact that all men by nature are guided by the desire to know and in most cases they also desire to apply their knowledge and I was finally realizing that education is a process of gazing out the unknown sea of our inner being.

During one of my course work, a graduate seminar in literacy, I participated in one panel chaired by DrHurlbert at the College Conference on Composition and Communication (4Cs) in San Francisco in 2006. Our line of inquiry was rather interesting: "Affirming access or securing the gates: UNESCO, the World Bank, the IMF, and the globalization of literacy". I talked about the effects of World Bank policies on Africa, explained the attempted 'genocide' of my native language through the imposition of French curricula, and described the effects of business-university linkages.

Consequently, I realized that I am now less naively optimistic about the potential of education, in and of itself, to effect major changes at societal levels because poverty and oppression are persistent. As such, I realized that literacy education and educational paradigms have a critical role to play in unveiling the truth behind all these interdisciplinary literacy debates even if it is not the key role some might once have claimed. I like to remember the words of Gandhi who once said that the measure of a society is the quality of life it provides for 'Andiodya', the 'last person'.

Accordingly, I believe that our success as researchers will therefore not be measured by invention of new concepts or development schemes until we begin to make a difference to 'Andiodya', the 'subaltern', or the 'illiterate'. Thus, I realized that I must continue to learn, to practice research, to work, and to hope that I will not become one of these migrant African scholars who are well positioned, touring on generously funded research, attending international conferences where they defend global structures because they are constrained by the priorities of aid donors to prove certain outcomes or policies. As such, the dynamics of this vision question my world of experiences and I found myself immersed in a research journey in which I intended

to unravel and delineate the discourse surrounding UNESCO's various forms of literacy from 1949 to 2002.

Therefore, this large array of theoretical frames and conceptual tools in analyzing UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy reveals the importance of the 'glocalization' approach that suggests that reconsidering frames of references is useful for both global and local research. Also, it is anticipated that the attempt to uncover UNESCO's forms of literacy through the lens of a 'glocal and transnational' approach might reveal the co-presence of both 'universalizing aspects' and 'particularizing traditions' of the literacy glaze.

It is an axiom of this study that literacy and literacy education respond to the challenges of new world cultures and economies. Without falling prey to the traps of taking globalization as the "mother of all metanarratives" (Luke, 2001), this study intends to raise questions about how to reshape UNESCO's conceptualizations ofliteracy. Also, this study posits the re-appropriation of the concept of transnational literacy (Spivak, 1992, 1999, 2003), a notion that expands critical literacy into a more empathetic mode of reading by promoting the 'transnational literate', someone whose identity has been diluted through international modeling and re-modeling of his/her literacy or his/her literacies. As such, my personal and theoretical tribulations influenced the topical orientations of this study.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry is to explore UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy from 1949 to 2002 in order to identify the various trends and patterns, key points of continuity and discontinuity in UNESCO policing of literacy. The search for the metanarrative surrounding UNESCO's discourses on literacy will help us unravel this web of beliefs, moral motives, and socio-cultural considerations that sustain each one these definitions of literacy. It is

anticipated that, a better understanding of UNESCO's forms of literacy will lead to a more informed portrayal of the consequences of literacy at the national and international levels. In order to better understanding how UNESCO is developing and implementing multiple literacy policies, the following research questions are addressed:

(1) How is UNESCO as an international organization formulating renewed definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002?

(2) What discursive formations are associated with the definitions of literacy?

(3) What forms of literacy are excluded within these discourses?

(4) How can ethnographic insights be translated into a literacy policy context dominated by an economistic paradigm of development?

(5) What is the Master Narrative that creates spaces within this organization's diverging and renewed discourses on literacy?

Unraveling Notions of Literacy and Illiteracy

As one enters into the very theorizations of literacy, theoretical classifications regarding the former concept are instruments of power and oppression and constitute a central stake in the struggle between 'literates' and 'illiterates', as each one tries to gain control over the classification schemata that command to conserve the status quo or change it by altering the divergent and competing representations of literacy.

As such,the purpose of this theoretical investigation is to delineate and unravel the discourses surrounding UNESCO's various forms of literacy from 1949 to 2002. In pusuing this research journey, I realized that since the inception of the United Nations Education and Cultural Organization, the world of academia developed an increasingly scholarly focus in analyzing the traditional and monolithic conceptualizations of literacy and the economic,

cultural, social, and political considerations that surrounds this ever evolving 'theoretical object' of inquiry.

Thus, the distinction between literates and illiterates can be envisioned as a way of privileging and legitimizing a definition of literacy over another. In order to forge a more informed perspective regarding literacy education, we need to unravel the theoretical challenges and the moral motives bearing upon literacy stakeholders engaged in the literacy project and how the specific interests they pursue as authoritative agents affect the definitions of literacy they produce.

Realizing that diverging and competing discourses have been surrounding international and national debates pertaining to the complex policing of literacy definitions worldwide, I consequently wanted to understand how diverse scientific traditions, schools of thought, and socio-cultural constructions of literacy influenced UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy. As such, one paradigm was still constant as UNESCO was framing new understandings of literacy through a renewed literacy policy rhetoric unveiling the contemporary Anglophone discourse on literacy. Consequently, the Anglophone discourse on literacy seemed to reflect a major theoretical tradition resulting from scholarly debates associating various disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history. Thus, these inter-disciplinary debates set an array of theoretical investigations regarding the key components of literacy and its socio-cultural, economic, and political consequences.

The diversity and the complexity of the Anglophone discourse on literacy developed by UNESCO in unraveling the multiple meanings of literacy posited the need to deconstruct the discourses surrounding the most essential epistemological representations of literacy. Thus, the concept of literacy and its opposite concept, illiteracy needed to be questioned in order to

unravel the theoretical clusters surrounding the traditional and monolithic vision of literacy as a set of skills.

Additionally, a critical analysis of the autonomous model of literacy posits a need to refine traditional definitions of literacy by putting on the table radical representations of literacy as a reflection of instrumental power and a means of oppression therefore legitimizing powerful and dominating discourses over the inclusiveness of the particularities of local knowledge and minority languages. Drawing from these theoretical debates over which vision of literacy or illiteracy to privilege or fight against, ethnographic literacy perspectives raised essential cautions regarding the essentializing and reductive UNESCO's Anglophone discourse on literacy that couldn't take into account the multiple meanings and ever evolving processes of literacy and illiteracy.

Evolving Literacy Conceptualizations in the Academic Community

Throughout the years, theories of literacy in the academic community evolved from those focused solely on the cognitive consequences of literacy to more complex societal issues. Scholars in Linguistics emphasized the cognitive and psychological approaches to literacy (Vygotsky, 1962; Goody, 1968; Scribner & Cole, 1981) leaving out historians with investigating how Literacy conceptualizations have changed over time (Graff, 1987; Stedman &Kaestle, 1991), anthropologists focusing on cultural constructions of literacy (Heath, 1983; Reder, 1987) while education researchers were examining cultural variations of literacy across societies (Arnove& Graff, 1987; Wagner, 1993). As a result of all these theoretical investigations, conceptualizations of literacy in the international community evolved along the years to incorporate multiple views of literacy ranging from the representing literacy as the acquisition

of basic cognitive skills necessary for the sustainability of economic development to envisioning literacy as a means for personal change and social advancement.

These evolving representations of literacy at the international level posited international organizations as key elements through which the theoretical and methodological classifications of literacy are developed. As such, UNESCO was imposing itself as a leading international agency promoting authoritative understandings of literacy. In doing so, UNESCO posited itself as a 'Bank' marketizing multifaceted and symbolic literacy conceptualizations. As the leading United Nations agency specialized in the field of education, UNESCO was acting as a 'knowledge Bank' able to recommend and advocate for durable principles and key international agreements in the policing of literacy.

Thus, literacy policy analysts were left out with a major challenge in delineating the new content of adult education and literacy and promoting an international commitment to literacy worldwide as illustrated in the first international conference on adult education. UNESCO cautioned its Member States, Non Governmental Organizations, private and public literacy stakeholders, and United Nations agencies over this tremendous world challenge in reducing the number of illiterates worldwide. The Elsinore conference on adult education posited the need to develop fundamental education for the increasing number of adults who "were unable to read and write" (UNESCO, 1949, p.1). Thus, since the school systems couldn't satisfy the needs of adult learners, who "never learned to read and write", it was urgent to promote "adult literacy promotion" (UNESCO, 1949, p.4). As such, literacy was envisioned as a fundamental human right and as a means of achieving peace and equality. Further, UNESCO posited the importance of the ability to read and write as a key element of literacy education and as a means to fill the gaps in an inadequate educational system. Meanwhile, as mentioned in the Education for all

Global Monitoring Report in 2006, there were alarming figures regarding the number of illiterates in developing countries (see Table 1 and Table 2). The increasing number of illiterates in developing countries led UNESCO to distinguish between functional literacy and functional illiteracy. The latter characterized the alarming situation of many adults in westernized countries who went to school but didn't acquire enough reading and writing skills to help them cope with the demands of the new world economy.

Table 1

Global and Regional Trends in Number of Illiterates, 1950 to 2000—2004 Adults Illiterate (15 and over in Millions)

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000-2004
World						
Developing Countries	700	735	847	871	872	771
Developed and Transition Countries	……………..	…………..	804	839	855	759
			Selected Regions			
Sub-Saharan Africa			108	120	129	141
Arab States		19	48	55	63	65
East Asia and the Pacific			295	267	232	130
South and West Asia			301	344	382	381
Latin America and the			43	44	42	38

Note. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006.

Table 2

Percentage Distribution of Global Illiterate Population, by Country

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000-2004
Global Estimate of Illiterate Population (in millions)	700	735	847	871	872	771
			Distribution (%)			
Developing Countries			94.9	96.3	98.1	98.4
Developed and Transition Countries			5.1	3.7	1.9	1.6
			Selected Regions			
Sub-Saharan Africa			12.8	13.8	14.8	18.3
Arab States		2.6	5.7	6.3	7.2	8.4
East Asia and the Pacific			34.8	30.7	26.6	16.9
South and West Asia			35.5	39.5	43.8	49.4
Latin America and the Caribbean			5.1	5.1	4.8	4.9

Note. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006.

In order to get a better grasp of how UNESCO was promoting renewed definitions of literacy through the association of multiple supportive discourses this study needs to rely on major scholarly recognized theorizations of the various understandings of the concept of literacy such as Lytle and Wolfe's metaphors for literacy (1989) and the key elements brought to the table by UNESCO through the Education for All Global Monitoring Report in 2006. Lytle and Wolfe (1989) envisioned four metaphors in analyzing literacy practices and discourses: 'Literacy as skills, literacy as tasks, literacy as practices, and literacy as critical reflection'. By doing so, the two authors posited that "while these conceptual categories are not completely

exclusive of each other", they nevertheless "provide an effective means of comparing and highlighting key assumptions about what constitutes adult literacy across a wide spectrum of thought" (Walter, 1999, p.33).Conversely, according to the words of the UNESCO report, literacy can be charted into four clusters: 'literacy as an autonomous set of skills, literacy as applied, practiced and situated literacy as a learning process, and literacy as text' (UNESCO, 2006).

Besides these theoretical investigations of literacy, the challenge of eradicating illiteracy worldwide was still persistent as limited financial resources were available for education while the international community was positing the importance of universalizing primary education through a compulsory process as in Westernized countries. As such, the Education for All programme brought literacy to the table again by defining it as a key feature of basic quality education as implied the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990). This new motto reflected a strong commitment from the international community as the concept of literacy was moving beyond its traditional understanding as a set of neutral skills to a contemporary conceptualization of literacy as social practices encompassing the manifold meanings and dimensions of key competencies.

As a result UNESCO moved from a view of literacy as 'skills for development projects' (UNESCO, 1960), as a 'store of knowledge, skills, and know how' (UNESCO, 1975), as a 'myth' (Coombs, 1985), as a 'basic learning need', as an 'autonomous model of literacy' (Street, 1995), as an 'intellectual capacity' and a 'technical knowledge' (UNESCO, 1995, 1996), as a 'foundation of other life skills' (UNESCO, 1997), "multiple literacies' (2000), as the 'foundation for lifelong learning for all' (UNESCO, 2002), to finally a "complex problem

related not only to the surrounding environment, but also to the historical, cultural, political, economic, and social features of each people" (UNESCO, 2004, p.56).

An Overview of the Research Approach

Within the framework of qualitative inquiry, the study was most suited for document analysis. Document analysis can sustain an intensive description and analysis of UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy over the years. To paraphrase Merriam (1998) we can mention that document analysis can be an ideal design for understanding and interpreting international organizations' policies on literacy because we will be able to discover new meanings and insights that can influence policy, educational practices and research in the future. Finally, document analysis is advantageous in offering a comprehensive and comparative descriptive account into UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy. A purposeful sampling of UNESCO's literacy policies was used to select various UNESCO's documents pertaining to literacy definitions from 1949 to 2002.

In order to analyze the various discourses surrounding UNESCO's forms of literacy, I used the grounded theory research method along with the constant comparative approach by unitizing UNESCO's documents into meaningful units and I assigned them a code. Later, I performed what Cresswell (1998) terms axial coding, wherein categories or themes emerge from UNESCO data. Also, I designed templates (Documents Summary Forms) along with a sample coded scheme; these methodological procedures allowed me to portray specific models of literacy developed by UNESCO, a list of excluded discourses, and an array of associated discourses in order to finally discover the metanarrative sustaining UNESCO's evolving forms of literacy.

Reasons for Selecting Specific UNESCO's Documents

UNESCO has been chosen as an object of study because it is a specialized agency of the United Nations system and it plays its role in pursuing the building of peace, sustainable development, and international cooperation through education. UNESCO as an international organization has been striving to organize international gatherings regarding key educational issues in order to foster international cooperation between Member States. As such UNESCO's documents are universally accessible through a variety of sources by following the guidelines of their website (www.unesco.org). All the UNESCO standard setting instruments are accessible through their website in the six official languages of the organization along with conventions, recommendations, and declarations. Everyone who has access to internet can use UNESCO's online bookshop, archives, and library. While conducting this study I was using the UNESDOC database, one that contains more than a hundred thousand free downloadable documents in the six official languages covering all UNESCO fields of competence since its creation. Above all, UNESCO library and archives provide access to all official correspondence, publications, electronic records, references and information to the general public with an interest in UNESCO's work.

A purposeful sampling procedure was used to select various UNESCO's documents pertaining to literacy definitions from 1949 to 2002. The year of 1949 is the starting point of this study because it corresponds to the first time UNESCO organized an international conference on adult education to posit the basis and content of adult education as a field.

As such, adult education and literacy are key features of UNESCO's priority lines of action in supporting education for all. As stated in the objective of the document "one of the first tasks of adult education has been to fill the gaps in an inadequate educational system and

classes for adults were a means of fundamental education for those who were unable to read and write" (UNESCO, 1949, p.2). Again, this study of UNESCO's discursive forms has as an ending point the year 2002 because that year symbolizes the starting point of the United Nations Literacy decade and it presents various conceptual changes regarding UNESCO's discourses on literacy, and shows the influence of the Education of All movement as portrayed in the Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) goals.

Purposeful sampling allowed for sampling across various documents that represent key features in UNESCO's policies on literacy from 1949 to 2002. All of these documents portray specific literacy definitions. Included in the sample were:

Five UNESCO's International Conferences on Adult Education from Elsinore (Denmark, 1949), Montreal (1960), Tokyo (1972), Paris (1985) to Hamburg (1997), the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the eradication of illiteracy (1965), and one International Conference on Public education with one UNESCO's recommendation to the Ministries of Education concerning literacy and education. All these international conferences posited new literacy definitions through their review and evaluation of adult education policies throughout the world.

Other selected documents were related to definitions developed by UNESCO for statistical purposes and comparability of educational statistics and an evaluation of the Experimental World Literacy Programme. Among these documents, one can note the 1953 Monograph on Fundamental Education (Progress of literacy in various countries), a document promoted by UNESCO General Conference on the evaluation of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP,1975), the recommendation concerning the international standardization of educational statistics (1978), and one document regarding the methodology

for projecting literacy rates and educational attainment (1995). As such, these three documents were chosen because they posited the importance of the comparability of educational statistics in defining literacy and the new vision adopted by UNESCO in promoting functional literacy.

Additionally, two documents related to the consequences of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (1970, 1972) and a practical document (Manual) were chosen to posit the growing importance of functional literacy in UNESCO's policies.

Finally the three remaining documents were related to UNESCO's (1989, 2000, 2002) plans to eradicate illiteracy and posited the importance of the Education for All movement and the close relationship between compulsory primary education and the fight against literacy. Although all the documents mention literacy definitions, there were differences among them along the discourses that were sustaining these renewed definitions of literacy.

Apart from the chosen eighteen documents pertaining to literacy definitions, UNESCO promoted along the years various documents related to literacy in general or important reviews of literacy policies all around the world. In order to perform a thorough analysis of UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy, I decided not to include general reviews of world literacy policies or documents specifically related to a set of literacy or illiteracy data even though they may contain some information regarding literacy definitions. The proper research sample included eighteen documents as follows: (see Table 3).

Table 3

Organizational Distribution of Analyzed Texts

Organization	Title of Document	Year
UNESCO	Progress of Literacy in Various Countries	1953
UNESCO	World Illiteracy at Mid-Century	1957
UNESCO	Recommendation Concerning the International Standardization of educational Statistics	1958
UNESCO	Manual of Educational Statistics	1961
UNESCO	World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy	1965
UNESCO	Literacy	1968
UNESCO	Literacy 1969-1971: Progress achieved in Literacy Throughout the World	1972
UNESCO	Revised Recommendation Concerning the International standardization of Educational Statistics	1975
UNESCO	Experimental World Literacy Programme	1975
UNESCO	Literacy in the World since the 1965 Tehran Conference: Shortcomings, Achievements and Tendencies	1975
UNESCO	Towards a Methodology for Projecting Rates of Illiteracy and Educational Achievement	1978
UNESCO	Plan of Action to Eradicate illiteracy by the Year 2000	1989
UNESCO	World Declaration on Education for All	1990
UNESCO	Literacy Assessment and its Implications for Statistical Measurement	1992
UNESCO	Methodology used in the 1994 Estimation and Projection of Adult Illiteracy	1995
UNESCO	Education: A key to the 21st Century	1997
UNESCO	The Dakar Framework for Action: EFA for All-Meeting our Collective Commitments	2000
UNESCO	Education for All: Is the World on Track?	2002

Note. Baye Massaer Paye. 2012.

It becomes urgent then to study UNESCO's forms of literacy in order to analyze how these policies impact national and Non-governmental organizations literacy definitions.

The Need for a Study Linked to UN's Authority

UNESCO since its inception works to create the conditions for institutional dialogue among diverse civilizations and cultures by promoting the respect of commonly shared values. It is through this network of institutional partnerships that UNESCO is able to posit the common grounds of a sustainable literate environment as set out in internationally agreed developmental literacy education policies goals.

As such, it remains interesting and relevant to analyze how the issues of power and knowledge intersect through UNESCO's policing of literacy policies and how the multi-shaped identities, subjectivities, and psychologies of the literates and the illiterates are enacted and legitimized by international organizations working under the rule of the predominant United Nations Agency.

Accordingly, as a second language learner, I need to question the privileged ideological supremacy of a dominant westernized literacy model as acknowledged by UNESCO, one of the most influencing United Nations' agencies. Thus, this study is a theoretical opportunity in unraveling how, according to Street (2003), "literacy comes loaded with ideological and policy presuppositions" (p.340). Consequently, analyzing UNESCO's literacy definitions equates to delineating the surrounding values, traditions, and the socio-cultural, political, and economical consequences attached to the former literacy policies developed from 1949 to 2002.

Significance of the Study on Literacy Definitions

The rationale for this study relates to the need to unravel international organization's conceptualizations of literacy as literacy definitions represent a key strategy on the part of literacy stakeholders in addressing authoritative statements about literacy. UNESCO has been chosen as an object of inquiry due to its leading role regarding education in the United Nations

System and its positioning as a field of struggle through which literacy stakeholders seek to promote and implement state of the art representations of literacy by privileging or undermining key components of the 'literacy capital'.

The significance of this study posits the attempt to unearth the complex logic of the literacy project and 'interpretive puzzles' to be resolved rather than a mesh of theoretical battles to win in analyzing UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy. This process requires an epistemic reflexivity in our analytical gaze as opposed to the forms of narcissistic reflexivity developed by authoritative international organizations in 'policing literacy'. This new vision leads us to put UNESCO under the sociological microscope. Given the alarming figures of world illiteracy, it is important to critically analyze how literacy is positioned and practiced by UNESCO.

As Barton states, "every literacy program in the world, every literacy initiative, every government statement, every act by an aid agency has behind it a theory of language and also a theory about literacy" (1994, p.3). One can further posit the need to blend a critical discourse analysis of discursive formations of literacy with the international focus common in applied linguistics in analyzing the policing of literacy through UNESCO. By doing so, this study takes into account the growing discussion about the nature of literacy, the competing definitions that arise from the interrelationships between reading and writing, the cultural-political aspects of the practices that comprise the field of rhetoric and composition studies, and finally the cultural politics of English as a Second Language (ESL).

Assumptions

Based on the evolution of the notion of literacy in academia, drawing on theoretical and empirical research, and the expertise of international organizations involved in literacy such as UNESCO, five primary assumptions were made regarding this study. First, there is not a universal definition of literacy. Second, Literacy definitions portray the association of various discourses in the international arena and in academia; these definitions and discourses also determine how progress or achievements in overcoming illiteracy are monitored, assessed, and funded. Third, UNESCO is privileging the Anglophone discourse on literacy. Fourth, given the many faces of literacy in daily life, UNESCO is encouraging 'functional literacies' in its efforts towards achieving universal literacy. Fifth, literacy is a socially constructed discourse and portrays diverse representations of political, economic, socio-cultural realities.

Pursuing this research process of forms of literacy as acknowledged by UNESCO, I realized that I entered into the road of 'incomplete discoveries' because my findings are surrounded by complex and ever-evolving theoretical dilemmas influencing the worlds of illiteracy and literacy.

Highlights on Research Findings

Acknowledging that research is an 'unfinished business', I nonetheless realized throughout this process that my understandings of literacy definitions as portrayed in UNESCO's policies, require a detailed and in depth account of the richness, complexity, and variety of literacy practices accessible through the 'ethnographic glaze'. As such, these questionable findings portray (1) a lack of universal definitions of literacy, (2) a diversity of discourses surrounding various forms of literacy, (3), the promotion of multi-layered functional literacies, (4) the association of the competing 'economical' and 'ethnographic' paradigms in

defining literacy, and (5) the major importance of the metanarrative that sustains UNESCO's policing of literacy worldwide. Nonetheless, this research study benefited from a detailed and in deep portrayal of a review of the literature, one that posits a thorough investigation of literacy definitions.

CHAPTERTWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The word literacy has always been characterized by its conceptual complexity and its thorough investigation often reveals a wide array of definitions positing the plural meanings of the concept of literacy. The international commitment in fighting illiteracy worldwide portrays the degree of involvement of literacy stakeholders in unravelling and delineating the beliefs, traditions, and myths that surround the concept of literacy. Further, this theoretical challenge in uncovering the 'literacy myth' illustrates the importance of historical studies about literacy. Uncovering the multiple layers of the word literacy led to ongoing debates between proponents of the social and cognitive approaches to literacy. One of the most noticeable aspects of literacy research is its relatively rich body of theoretical traditions and epistemological perspectives. UNESCO's contributions in putting the literacy debate on the table and the launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) made literacy research a key issue in the way literacy stakeholders address the multiple meanings of literacy.

The purpose of this critical inquiry in the field of literacy is to examine UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy. By doing so, this study seeks to understand and dissect how literacy is positioned, practiced and construed by renewed conceptual re-coding of recurrent themes, topics. Specifically, this study will also be concerned not only with describing these processes, but also with considering their effects with respect to literacy funding, literacy assessment, literacy evaluation and educational inequalities. Thus, this study highlights the theoretical, political and economical relationships between literacy research, literacy definitions and implementations by international organizations such as UNESCO.

The review of some of the major research in the field of literacy studies will help to uncovering some of the meanings of literacy in order to reveal its multi-dimensionality and its embeddedness in social, cultural, and political contexts. The review will look at a rich body of literature raging from anthropology, psychology, history, sociolinguistics, and rhetoric. Understanding the nature of literacy necessitates examining how it is practiced, used, and defined in various contexts.

Parameters for the Study

This critical review explores UNESCO's forms of literacy by looking at a rich body of literature which portrays how literacy is understood in the world of academia and at the international level. Three major areas of literature are critically reviewed: (a) scholarly definitions and conceptualizations of literacy, (b) UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy, and (c) studies related to the discourse analysis of literacy.

A review of the literature on literacy definitions provides an understanding of the history and context under which certain definitions of literacy are legitimized while others are silenced. Literacy definitions are reviewed to provide a context for understanding what perceptions of literacy are promoted and how they are legitimized through various discourses. The relevance of the different topics selected in this literature review relies on the fact that we need to explore what constraints bear upon literacy specialists and international organizations engaged in the literacy project and how the specific interests they pursue as authoritative agents affect the definitions of literacy they produce. Thus this study portrays more an attempt to unraveling the fuzzy logic and discursive puzzles of literacy rather than delineating a clash of theoretical challenges in analyzing discursive formations of literacy through UNESCO.

This review of the literature provides a comprehensive picture of the different themes in defining literacy at the international level and throughout academia. It was also important to include practitioners- based research as well as academic literature and international organizations reports. It was very important to include the following topics in this study: Major theoretical and or research works with significance for the literacy field as far as literacy definitions were concerned, contemporary works unless they are considered milestones in the knowledge base, and international studies in order to show their comparative and illustrative significance regarding literacy definitions.

An Overview of the Literature Review Conducted

The purpose of this overview is to delineate the chronological explorations of portrayals of literacy in academia throughout the years.

Literacy Definitions in Academia

A large and rich body of literature posited multiple definitions of literacy by implying that "the construction and dissemination of conceptions as to what literacy is in relation to the interests of different classes and groups" (Street, 1985). The purpose of these historical studies was to investigate some leading definitions and delineations of the concept of literacy with the intention of exploring chronological extensions in its meanings (Behrens, 1994), investigating the literacy myth(Graff, 1979), criticizing authoritative and 'unquestionable' definitions of literacy (Bhola, 1990, Freire, 1973, Freire & Macedo, 1987, Gee, 1990, Gray, 1966, Hagel &Tudge, 1998, Heath, 1980, Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, Levine, 1982, Lytle & Wolfe, 1989, Nyerere, 1975,   and Walter, 1999), indicating the importance of reading and writing in promoting literacy (Austey& Bull, 2003, Belisle, 2004, Cambourne, 1988, Chall & Snow, 1982, Goody & Watt, 1988, Langer, 1992, Luke &Freebody, 1997, Olson, 1977, Ong, 1977, 1982, and

Scribner & Cole, 1981), reviewing historical definitions of literacy and illiteracy (Harman, 1970, Houghton, 2010, Smith, 1973, Ahmed, 2011, Kalman, 2008, Burniske, 2006, Ntiri, 2009, Street , 1985, 1995, 2005, 2011, West, 1993), correcting educational misrepresentations of literacy in the Western world (Ntiri, 2000) and expanding and redefining literacy the concept of literacy (Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, 2002, Cervero, 1985, Daley, 2003, Ediger, 2001, Gee, 1989, New London Group, 1996, Ntiri, 2009, Oxenham, 1980, Richardson, 1991, Taber, 1987). Throughout all these conceptualizations of literacy, one can notice two important ways in defining literacy: (a) literacy as a set of autonomous skills linked to the learning process and (b) the social approaches to literacy.

The traditional autonomous model of literacy. This traditional portrayal of literacy referred as casual literacy sustains literacy as an invariable element detached of any social context.

The separation between oral and written discourses. Street (1995)'s reviewing of the work of essential literacy scholars such as Goody and Watt (1963), Olson (1977, 1994), Ong (1977, 1982) and Havelock (1963) led him to conceptualize their work as a portrayal of the 'autonomous model' of literacy. According to Street (1995), literacy was envisioned as an "invariable variable supposedly detached from its social context" (p.76). Street's conceptualization of literacy posited the classic separation between the oral and written discourses that characterized the distinction between cultures having access to the written mode of communication and others that privilege the oral mode in conveying information. As much as traditional research on literacy has demonstrated the key relationships between oral and written modes of communication (Heath**,** 1982**;** Tannen, 1982; Hymes, 1974; Gumperz, 1986; Cook-

Gumperz, 1986; Bernstein, 1972) there is still a tendency to consider literacy as a decontextualized set of skills and as an isolated cognitive asset.

According to Goody and Watt (1988), Ong (1977,1982) and Olson (1977), cultures dealing with the oral tradition posited a communication arena, one in which language practices reflected socially and culturally shared meanings of essential social events. On the other side of the fence where reading and writing were privileged, the process of communicating was considered as a cognitive and solitary process. The contemporary development of writing as an essential mode of communication pushed away the oral mode as a way of 'telling' history and promoted writing as a more 'sophisticated' way in 'recording' history. According to Goody and Watt (1988), the development of writing as an essential key of communication is due to the fact that "knowledge is divided into autonomous cognitive disciplines" (p.18). Thus, humans developed new ways of uncovering truth and sustaining knowledge by adopting writing as an analytical process in objectifying their thoughts. This essential role played by reading and writing is reflected into Olson's review of the epistemological consequences attached to writing. As he states: "writing and reading played a critical role in producing the shift from thinking about things to thinking about representations of those things" (p. 177). Therefore, humans are adding a new layer of meanings in their words while privileging a rational and linear process in analyzing information.

With this traditional portrayal of literacy as the ability to read and write, new epistemologies or 'ways of knowing' (Langler, 1992) are being promoted in academia while a strong distinction arises between the 'illiterate', those who have access to the technology of reading and writing and the 'literates', those who cannot cope with the formal educational system. Proponents of this autonomous model of literacy envisioned literacy as a set of abstract

skills that need to be acquired. Associated with this skills-based approach to literacy is a "distinction between the literate who possess these skills and the illiterate who do not" (Street 1995, p.19). As such this view of literacy as a set of skills historically represented the traditional research regarding literacy education but, its "tenets still dictate educational pedagogy both implicitly and explicitly" (Ediger 2001, p.24).Yet such practices often have little affiliation with literacy in use, either in community, occupational or subsequent academic experiences.

One of the criticisms of the skills-based approach is that 'literate practice' is conceived as a "fixed, static body of decontextualized skills, rather than a dynamic, social semiotic practice varying across cultures, time and space" (Berham, 2002, p.27) while "such practices often have little affiliation with literacy in use, either in community, occupational or subsequent academic experiences"(West 1992, p.8). This skills-based approach to literacy also reveals how literacy is sharing strong relationships with the 'agendas' of organizations portrayed as literacy stakeholders (Gee, 2000) and why it is not a 'neutral' process (Lave, 1996; Luke, 1992). Thus, the autonomous model of literacy is not taking into account the fact that literacy "constitutes a patterned form of context-dependent social systems of meaning, necessitating complex interrelationships between social demands and individual competencies" (Murphy 1991, p.7). Furthermore, these static conceptualizations of the reading and writing process failed to acknowledge that these key-learning strategies cannot be "described as an internal psychological response" (Behrman 2002, p.26). Most importantly, the skills-based approach to literacy failed to illustrate how the learners can apply the acquired skills outside of the educational system. Above all, in order to uncover the multiple reading and writing challenges that the learners are facing during the learning process, it is urgent for them learn how to "respond to semantic,

syntactic, orthographic, visual, directional, spatial, and redundancy cues embedded in texts" (Anstey & Bull, 2003, p.69).

The whole language approach. Therefore, it was urgent to acknowledge that the 'theoretical and pedagogical pendulum' needed to "move from behaviourist, skills-based approaches toward a focus on the semantics of whole texts" (Basturkmen, Loewen& Ellis 2002, p.1). Along the same of vision, Richardson (1991) called for a "top-down and whole language approaches to reading" (p.171). Thus, the emerging psycholinguistic perspective regarding literacy education started to recognize and value the "significance of the reader's prior knowledge" (Coles & Hall 2002, p.106). This more informed conceptualization of literacy learning has been referred to as the 'whole language model', one pedagogical approach that "emphasized the semantic features of literacy experiences within real world literacy situations that skills-based approaches had tended to disregard" (Ediger 2001, p.23). The whole language approach, as Cambourne (1988) mentioned it, posited that the "written modes of language can be successfully taught through the reproduction of the conditions in which children acquire oral language" (Cambourne 1988, p.30). However, the whole language model has also been criticized by scholars such as Levine (1994).

Scholars criticizing the whole language approach emphasized the fact that this theoretical model regarding literacy learning didn't take into account the true and essential different epistemological perspectives and traditions that characterize non-formal and formal modes of learning. As Luke (1992) states: The "written language is a social technology entailing a set of historically evolving techniques for inscription" (p.25). Luke further admitted that the "lexico-grammatical structures of written language are different from those of speech" (Ibid. p.25). Furthermore, the socio-cultural understandings and traditions regarding literacy education

caution us to acknowledge that the "functions and uses of literacy vary greatly across literate cultures and historical epochs" because "many tribal cultures do not operate with writing systems" and with the lack of institutionalizing writing as a key element of the educational process, "children will not necessarily develop or invent reading and writing skills spontaneously" (Murphy, 1991, p.34).

  Cambourne and the learning process. A key moment in the theoretical challenges opposing the proponents of the autonomous model of literacy and the advocates of a skill-based approach to literacy was Cambourne's portrayal of the learning process in an essay entitled the *Conditions of Learning Theory (1988).* According to Anstey and Bull (2000) and Muspratt, Luke, and Freebody (1997), Cambourne's conceptualization of the learning process didn't take into account the complexity of culture as a process embedded in multiple linguistic perspectives influencing the social construction of texts as illustrated by the works of Heath (1983) and Chall and Snow (1982). Thus, Cambourne failed to emphasize a large and complex array of literacy practices and socialization processes. Therefore, his study couldn't take into account the importance of academic 'literacies' or various 'ways of learning' (Langer, 1992) in relation with the values and traditions surrounding the learning process at home.

 With the multiplicity of socio-cultural processes and the variety of linguistic repertoires surrounding the learning process scholars engaged in uncovering the true nature of literacy need to go beyond the whole language learning and teaching processes in order to acknowledge the key learning elements that are valued in mainstream society by laying an emphasis on the privileged communication forms in the educational system (Delpitt, 1988). Otherwise we are left with "implicit teaching practices advantaging the dominant cultural group over minority

ethnic groups and social class" (Anstey & Bull, 2003, p. 130). Thus, the whole language movement illustrated the complexity of 'natural learning' (Bourdieu, 1977, Heath, 1983, Street, 1984) and scholars were right when they argue that the 'natural learning movement' was "promoting a situation in which only the brightest, middle class children can succeed because of its refusal to be explicit" (Richardson, 1991, p.174).

The differences between the oral and written traditions as illustrated in the 'whole language learning' approach debate led an accrued theoretical challenge in delineating literacy and its main consequences or benefits. In uncovering what distinguishes 'preliterate cultures' with 'literate' ones, Scribner and Cole (1981) mentioned the notion of the 'great divide theory' which constitutes a 'split' between various cognitive skills developed by learners belonging to different cultures that either value the written tradition or live by the oral tradition. In their attempt to unravel the cognitive consequences of literacy acquisition, Scribner and Cole studied the Vai people of Liberia while emphasizing the difference between 'schooled literacy' and 'non- formal literacies'. Thus, particular literacy practices contributed to the development of specific skills whether in writing, speaking, or writing official or vernacular languages. Scribner and Cole study while mentioning the importance of reading and writing in those languages cautioned us that "social organization creates the conditions for a variety of literacy activities, and that different types of texts reflect different social practices" (Scribner and Cole, 1988, P.69). This led them to conclude that non-formal literacies along with 'schooled literacies' contribute both the learners' cognitive development.

Scribner and Cole's (1981) conceptualization of literacy reflects an anthropological perspective in delineating literacy as more than the ability to "read and write a particular script" but as a means to "apply this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use"

(p.236). They further state that "inquiries into the cognitive consequences of literacy are inquiries into the impact of socially organized practices in other domains" (Ibid. p.237). Along the same line of vision Gee (1990) refined Krashen's distinction between 'acquisition' and 'learning' to posit a definition of literacy that emphasizes the "ability to control the use of secondary discourses (school, work, profession) rather than simply using the primary ones of home and community" (p.77). Thus, by adding a new layer in defining literacy Gee along with the New London Group (1996) implies that "learners and teachers need a metalanguage-a language for talking about language, images, texts, and meaning-making interactions" (Ibid. p.77). Gee's theoretical challenge in uncovering the consequences of literacy were reflected in Ediger's vision that "the binary opposition between skills-based and whole language theories can be reframed through" its "helpful distinction between acquisition and learning" (2001, p.26). Consequently, Gee envisioned 'acquisition' as a "process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, practice within social groups, which happens naturally and functionally" (2000, p.113). Thus, 'learning' is a "conscious process gained through teaching and in more formal context requiring reflection and analysis" (Gee, 2000, p. 114). This view is shared by Unsworth (2002) according to whom, while "certain literacy elements are acquired subconsciously through practice, literacy learning also involves a meta-language or form-focused direct instruction to describe the conventions or rule-governed systems of communication" (Unsworth, 2002, p. 71). Accordingly, literacy in the public sphere requires an "instructional model that shifts between doing and analysis, between acquisition and learning" (Baker, 1997, p. 209).

Literacy through anthropological and sociolonguistic lenses. The theoretical challenges involved in positing the strong relationships oral and written modes of communication regarding literacy acquisition processes were also prevalent in the field of sociolinguistics and anthropology. Micro level analyses of the communication processes led to a more informed macro level understanding of the consequences attached to literacy. Consequently, scholars in these related fields were deepening our interpretations of the workings of literacy. Heath's portrayal of what he termed 'literacy events' provides a rich theoretical framework for analyzing the various processes involved during communication's interactions between learners. According to Heath (1988), a 'literacy event' reflects the 'insights of sociolinguistics" because "any piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants interactions and their interactive processes" (p.350). Heath's ethnographic perspectives on the communication process shared some common features with Hymes (1972) and Bernstein (1972)'s notion of 'speech communities'. Thus, various communities are developing multiple communities of practices by operationalizing a large array of oral and written modes of communication for different purposes according to different contexts.

Through the words of Heath (1972), one can notice that a "speech community has rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety" (p.54). In the same token, Hymes (1972) notes that "speech events are governed by rules and norms" while a speech act "implicates both linguistic and social norms" (p.57). Along the same line of interpretation of literacy practices, Bernstein (1972) invoked the notion of 'restricted dialect', one that is "heavily contextualized and based on shared identifications, exceptions, and common assumptions" (p.476). Bernstein further states that the "restricted code works against the idea of complex conceptual hierarchy for the organization and

expression of inner experience" (p. 480). Thus, the learners who are developing a schooled type of literacy by using an 'elaborated code' might be rewarded (Bernstein, 1972). As Bernstein indicates, the 'restricted codes' reflect a wide array of or what Street may call "social literacies" or the New London group (1996) "multiliteracies".

In the field of sociolinguistics, Gumperz (1982) equated the Bourdieusian notion of 'cultural capital' to the concept of schooled literacy'. By mobilizing the concept of 'conversational inferences', Gumperz posited that 'speech acts are instances in which "participants assess other's intentions based on their given responses" (1982, p.153). Thus, 'speech acts' reflect essential conventions known as 'contextualization conventions' (Ibid. P.13). By learning and acquiring the necessary skills they need in school, learners are acquiring schooled based literacy and can be rewarded if they perform well.

Additionally, Heath's (1983) ethnographic portrayal of two Carolina's White and Afro American communities posited the differences between home based literacy and school based literacy along the same line of research with Scribner and Cole (1981). Heath stressed that both communities were operationalizing various 'literacy events' by using 'interactional rules' that have "interpretive competencies on the part of the participants" (p.350). The African American community of Roadville used a 'restricted' linguistic repertoire as in the words of Bernstein (1972) while the Trackton community members knew how to differentiate the language they should use at home and the language that is rewarded in school. Heath (1988) made it clear that: "Trackton residents did not lack literacy skills" but rather "knowledge about oral language uses which would enable them to obtain information about the content and uses of written documents, and to ask questions to clarify their meanings" (p.365). On the other side of the road, "Trackton children are used to have discussions with family members and others, while in

Roadville children had very defined social roles and are taught to follow scripts defined for them by adults" (Ibid. P.365). As such, "any form of creative use of language was frowned upon" (Ibid. p.346). Consequently, one can sense that there are huge boundaries and differences between home based literacy and school based literacy. Roadville children were acquired an 'elaborated code' to paraphrase Bernstein (1972) while Trackton children literacy practices were illustrated by the use of a 'restricted' code or 'dialect'.

   Going beyond sociolinguistics and anthropology. Heath has been criticized by Street (1995) who acknowledges that the study project involving an 'upper middle class community' (Roadville) and a working class family (Trackton) didn't take into account the 'concept of middle class literacy' (p.112). Street observations posited the fact that Heath didn't take into account or didn't formally legitimize all the forms of literacies involved in this ethnographic research. Street's accounts of multiple literacy practices observations didn't invalidate Heath's research findings but they acknowledge that Heath did not integrate in his framework the concept of 'middle class literacy'. Nevertheless, it remains that Heath's work was essential in unravelling the various literacy practices or 'literacy events' that the educational system needs to take into account in order to develop a more informed literacy education programme or as Dell Hymes (1974) put it, a more "fruitful place for an ethnography of symbolic forms" (p.140). As such, school will be considered as an important place in which students need to evolve through significant and relevant communities of practices.

   One should therefore agree with Langer (1987) that it is necessary to incorporate social practices into the socio-cognitive traditions of literacy by acknowledging that "literacy as a way of thinking into the definitions of literacy" (p.2). As such literacy is not a 'set of skills' but rather a "purposeful activity related to the use of reading and writing in many contexts" (Ibid.

p.4). According to Langer, literacy is a "culturally specific phenomenon" (p.7) and one cannot fail to take into account the socio-cultural traditions and the uses of literacy.

All of these definitions have added new dimensions, layers, insights and perspectives for unravelling and delineating literacy, especially its socio cognitive traditions. These definitions might be old but they are still prevalent in the literature and the policies developed by international organizations. Examining specific social and cultural contexts of literacy may point to research questions concerning how to assimilate unrecognized or excluded literacies. Many scholars attempted to broaden literacy research perspectives by conducting cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural approaches in uncovering literacy.

Literacy as a Social Practice and a Means for Critical Reflection

When defining literacy as a social practice, UNESCO questioned theoretically the traditional portrayal of literacy as a static entity.

Challenging the canon of literacy. Many scholars emphasized the need to develop more informed analyses and interpretations of literacy as a means to question and critique available sources of information. In doing so, literacy is envisioned as a social practice and as a 'text' rather than a static means for cultural transmission of values, beliefs, and traditions. As Muspratt, Luke, and Freebody state, "the historically validated and cultural purposes of the cultural heritage position are legitimate outcomes of literacy instruction" but they "exclude a consideration of how text and textual practice work in the construction of subjectivity and production of culture" (Anstey & Bull, 2003, p.199). A critical approach to literacy is needed in challenging the 'cultural heritage model', one that "seeks the reproduction of dominant cultural values of the past, and compliance with the literate tastes of the most powerful (Muspratt, Luke &Freebody, 1997, p.297). Meanwhile, "arbitrary market decisions play a role in this selective

tradition, often resulting in only successful authors are being recognized, producing an excessively derivative and homogenized canon of literature" (Anstey & Bull, 2003, p.204). Moreover, "arbitrary value should not be given to historically ratified Anglo-Saxon cultural texts because judgements about quality and inclusiveness must be interrogated in the interests of marginalized groups, and of the diverse purposes of literacy in society today" (Hollingdale, 1995, p.249). Thus, the 'canon of literature' or 'standard literacy' should not be recognized as the unique and privileged 'cultural texts' or 'literacy practices'.

Scholars involved in literacy need to envision in terms of the 'subject matter' as Bhola (1994) suggested it and analyze the how literate are using written modes of communication through their production and utilization of texts. By looking at texts as 'discourses', sociolinguists can envision literacy as a socio-cultural mode of communication that allows, legitimize, and construct the distribution of power (Fairclough, 1991).

As Green (1997) states, "the strength of a critical approach to literacy is its attention to the social and cultural nature of literacy in which materially and symbolically unequal relationships of power are often implicated and constructed" (p.234). The acquisition of literacy skills is more than the mechanical adoption of reading and writing skills. As Freire (1973) states, the purpose of literacy is to "dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness, to understand what one reads and writes, what one understands in order to communicate" (p.48). Education is then an "active tool that liberated both the change agent and the learner in the search for knowledge" (Ntiri, 2009, p.99). Freire theoretical and pedagogical challenges rely on the association of thought and action in "allowing literacy learners to be taught to evaluate and critique their own socio cultural and political environments so empowerment would become more likely" (Ntiri, 2009, p.99). As such, Freire's portrayal of literacy as a means of

empowerment posits the political nature of literacy. This theoretical premise requires us to go beyond a monolithic view of the functionalities of literacy and envision a more informed view of literacy, one that acknowledges the potential for learners to transform their world. By better reading their world, learners are expected to better 'write their history'.

Unravelling the consequences of literacy. As West (1992) cautions us, "the history of literacy is littered with broken promises" (p.12). Many of the consequences and benefits attached to the autonomous model of literacy are not empirically verified because as West states, "literacy, the ability to read and write, is no guarantee of either freedom for the individual or economic prosperity for the nation" (Ibid. p.12). Other scholars such as Ewert (1989) and Egbo (2000) developed the portrayal of literacy as a means for development as a 'myth' and 'couldn't always posit literacy as a means for empowerment" (Ntiri, 2009, p.101). As Ntiri argues:

> Egbo's ethnographic study of the different valuation of males and females in Sub Saharan Africa provides many arguments to explain the systematic pattern of suppressing the education of women and girls for the benefit of men and boys" illustrated the fact that "males are considered prized possessions because of their potential for greater earning power in the future and thus for bringing more resources to the family. (Ntiri, 2009, p.101)

Nonetheless, it remains essential that the "ultimate goal of literacy is human liberation connected to social justice" (Ntiri, 2009, p.101). In the same line of vision, the former president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere (1975) argues that:

> The ideas imparted by education or released in the mind through education, should therefore be liberating ideas; the skills acquired by education should be liberating skills.

Nothing else can properly be called education. Teaching which induces slave mentality or a sense of impotence is not education at all. (Nyerere, 1975, p.10)

Furthermore, "the consequences of literacy should not be used as the scapegoat for economic downturns, unemployment and poverty" (Comber, 1997, p.25). As Comber cautions, "despite the contemporary claims of critical literacy, we need to ask for the evidence that supports how literacy.........challenges the existing social structures and class distinctions" (Comber, 1997, p.25). Thus, there is a need to go beyond a traditional and monolithic view of literacy as the ability to read, write, and perform calculations. The concept of multiliteracies can be envisioned as a means to portray a more informed view of literacy.

Ethnographic perspectives regarding literacy education revealed how it is urgent and essential to unravel and delineate the socio cultural, political, and ideological parameters that surround literacy. Many scholars such as Graff (1995), Heath (1982, 1983, 1988), Street (1984, 1987, 1995), and Langer (1987, 1992) posited the importance of the so called 'multiple literacies' or 'social literacies'. These literacy studies combining the anthropological model associated with a sociolinguistic framework have been referred to as the 'New Literacy Studies' by Street (1995), Gee (1999), and Barton and Hamilton (1999). For Street (1995), "the concept of multiple literacies is critical in challenging the autonomous model" (p. 134).Thus, the concept of multiliteracy need to be challenges by unravelling the underlying postulates that sustain such a concept.

By taking a prominent stand on 'multiliteracies', the New London Group (NLG)(1996) posit that there is an "increasing array of communication channels and multi-modal, semiotic systems that extends literacies as writing and speech to include audio, visual, gestural, and spatial modes of communication and multi-modal combinations of these elements" (p.65). Thus,

literacy scholars need to go beyond a narrow understanding of literacy and widen their theoretical scope by incorporating and integrating the socio cultural and linguistic parameters in defining literacy. This new critical dimension of literacy reinforces the role of teachers as ethnographers, ones who should teach to their students how to develop a 'critical framing' tool or 'metalanguage' in order to "interpret the social and cultural context of particular designs of meanings and postulate an ability to develop a critical perspective on the context" (NLG, 1996, p.88). Thus, the concept of critical framing needs to be challenges as well.

The epistemological roots of the concept of 'multiliteracies' are strongly related to the concept of 'cultural globalization' (Featherstone, Lash, and Robertson, 1995), the transformations brought by 'hybrid digital literacy tools' (Bigum And Green, 1993;Reinking, 1997) and the fact that "language has a multiplicity of purposes and the repertoires of linguistic resources available to different cultures (Cazden, 1972, p.xxii). Thus, the discourse on 'multiliteracies', acts as a framework for the teaching and learning of literacy. This theoretical framework is informed by the 'linguistic plurality' as envisioned by Cazden (2000), Kalantzis and Cope (1999), and the pedagogical narratives of the New London group (1996) positing new understandings of literacy education. The theoretical convergence between these new understandings and interpretations of literacy indicates that literacy stakeholders need to acknowledge a variety of discourses that are embedded in complex social practices and that call for a new 'identity kit' (Gee, Hull, &Lankshear, 1996) for the learners engaged in this evolving 'cultural globalization' process. Thus, it becomes urgent and essential to unravel the concept of 'multiliteracies' by keeping in mind that one should not "replace print based literacy" (Unsworth, 2002, p.63).

UNESCO's Conceptualizations of Literacy

Since UNESCO's inception, literacy occupied an essential role in its activities. Throughout the years, UNESCO developed renewed definitions of literacy through a large array of conceptualizations ranging from the autonomous model of literacy to multiliteracies. This ever evolving commitment to literacy was viewed as a type of 'technical universalism' (Jones, 1988) open to the social, cultural, and political dimensions of literacy. This 'technical universalism' can also be viewed as UNESCO's attempt to standardize educational statistics worldwide. In doing so, UNESCO strived to make Member States realize the strong relationships between literacy and economic development.

The reviews of UNESCO's policies on literacy go along with a critique of the United Nations' organization because international organizations are the central medium by which legitimate literacy classifications are accomplished and imposed and become therefore authoritative conceptions of literacy. UNESCO in its leading role regarding educational policies has promoted multiple definitions of literacy in its continuous attempts to develop a standardization of educational statistics worldwide. Various document have been produced throughout the years and they reflect the ever- changing discourses and paradigms in defining and refining literacy. In doing so, UNESCO has promoted international gatherings and pleaded for more commitment to literacy through its international conferences on adult education (1949, 1960, 1972, 1985, 1997), a strong willingness to achieve the objectives inscribed in the millennium development goals, the Dakar and the Jomtien Declarations (1990, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005) and a constant call for a more informed standardization of educational statistics (1953, 1957, 1958, 1975, 1978).

UNESCO's International Conferences on Adult Education

Since the early fifties, UNESCO initiated multiple international gatherings in questioning the notion of adult education.

The Elsinore conference. UNESCO has been playing a leading role regarding adult education and literacy education since its inception. During the first International Conference on Adult Education in Elsinore, Denmark, due to the increasing and alarming figures of world illiteracy and its devastating consequences in the Least Developed Countries (LCDs), UNESCO recommended to its Member States to posit a declaration of principle instead of a definition of adult education in order to "fill the gaps left by lack of opportunity for, or inadequacies in formal education" (1949, p.4). This first Monograph on Fundamental Education intends to promote a new content for adult education and an international basis for the fight against illiteracy worldwide. Thus it aims to "aid and foster movements which aim at creating a common culture to end the opposition between the so-called masses and the so-called elite" (Ibid. p.4). During this international gathering UNESCO Member States promoted an essential declaration of principle positing that adult education has the "task of satisfying the needs and aspirations of adults in all their diversity" (Ibid. p.4).

The Montreal conference. A second international conference on the same topic clarified the content and purposes of adult educational worldwide. An illustration of this conceptual clarification can be found in the Montreal report in which UNESCO states that the role of adult education is to: "Contribute largely towards improving the professional qualifications of the individual; it should also allow scope for reflection on the values attaching to human life, which it is the duty of social progress to uphold, in every age, with a view to their ultimate triumph" (UNESCO, 1960, p.2).

Another example of this conceptual clarification can be found in the same report when UNESCO recommends Member States to:

Provide an opportunity for free discussions, between participants with different educational, social or professional backgrounds, on the role of science and technology in the development of our society and on the idea that men should form of this role so as to ensure the continued advance of mankind. (Ibid. p.2)

A further illustration of this conceptual refinement can be also found in the same report when UNESCO states that there is a need to:

Recognizing that the wider provision of education for children and young persons which has taken place in most countries during the last century has been accompanied by the development of an increasing demand for education by adults, this Conference urges governments to regard Adult Education not as an addition, but as an integral part of their national system of education. (UNESCO, 1960, p.5)

An essential and key component of this report is reflected in UNESCO's recognition of the importance of literacy education. An example of this conceptual engagement can be found in the same report when the organization states that: "Literacy education is an integral and organic part of every national system of education, and that it should therefore receive within the system the attention and economic resources which this status justifies, in proportion to the necessities of each country" (Ibid. p.5).

Nevertheless, UNESCO while acknowledging the importance of adult education recognizes that "whatever the criterion used, it can be readily conceived that the illiteracy rate is itself a possible cause of systematic bias" (UNESCO, 1965, p.2). Thus, the concept of illiteracy needs to be challenged in order to unravel the true nature of the opposite concept, literacy.

The Paris and Tokyo conferences. UNESCO kept on attempting to convene a gathering of national representatives on a multinational basis in order to posit a retrospective international survey on adult education. This led to the Tokyo (1972) and the Paris (1985) Conferences on Adult Education. The Tokyo Conference posited the importance of adult education in association with the concept of lifelong learning as illustrated in the Faure Report (1972). Education was viewed as a lifelong process and was considered as a fundamental human right. An illustration of this definitional concept can be found in the the Paris Report (1985) in which UNESCO states that the: "right to learn is the right to read and write, the right to question and analyze, the right to imagine and create, the right to read one's world and to write history, and the right to develop individual and collective skills" (UNESCO, 1985, p.67).

The Hamburg gathering. Twelve years later UNESCO convened another international conference to discuss the evolution of the concept of adult education. *The Hamburg Declaration: The Agenda for the Future* was born. Adult education was still viewed as a right. An example of this definitional constancy can be found in the same report when the organization acknowledges that adult education is a "fundamental right in every society" (UNESCO, 1997, p.3). Thus, literacy is 'broadly conceived' as the "basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world, a necessary skill itself and one of the foundations of other life skills" (Ibid. p.3). The report added that literacy was also a "catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political, and economic activities and for learning throughout life" (Ibid. p.3). While the Conference recognizes that "UNESCO was the lead agency in the field of education in promoting adult education as an integral part of a system of learning" (UNESCO, 1997, p.6), Members States also declare that "indigenous peoples and nomadic peoples have the right of access to all levels and forms of education" (Ibid. p.4). Therefore, education should be

"linguistically and culturally appropriate to their needs and should facilitate access to further education and training" (Ibid. p.4) in order to allow students from a different cultural and linguistic background to improve their literacy skills.

UNESCO, Literacy, and The Standardization of Educational Statistics

UNESCO has a constant purpose in trying to improve a legitimate comparability of educational data worldwide through many international gatherings.

The 1953 statistical study. While convening international gatherings in unraveling and delineating the concept of adult education and literacy education UNESCO was attempting to associate its Member States in its role of promoting the comparability of educational data worldwide. In 1953 UNESCO engaged a statistical study of available censuses data since the 1900 through its Statistical Division. According to UNESCO, the "collection and diffusion of information and the preparation of studies on education problems is a continuous part of its prerogatives" (1953, Preface). Thus, it was obvious in the words of UNESCO that the "different methods of assessing literacy and illiteracy, the methods of analyzing results and computing percentages of either category, must be known before comparisons can be made or conclusions drawn at the international level (1953, Preface).

Realizing that it was very difficult to compare literacy data worldwide UNESCO, in 'spite of all these limitations' acknowledged that "such census data on illiteracy constitute the most useful information available for an historical analysis of the progress of literacy in various countries in the world" (1953, p.11). UNESCO further recognized that there is a "basic need for assessing the educational development of countries" through the "compilation and analysis of statistical information relating to education in all its aspects" (1957, Preface) in order to improve the relevance of such statistics.

A need to improve the comparability of literacy data. During UNESCO's General Conference in its Tenth Session a recommendation concerning the international standardization of educational statistics was adopted. The Conference found it highly desirable that the "national authorities responsible for the compilations and reporting of statistics relating to education should be guided by certain standard definitions, classifications and tabulations, in order to improve the international comparability of their data" (UNESCO, 1958, p.3). By doing so, the Conference recommended the following definition of literacy, one that should be used for 'statistical purposes'. An illustration of this conceptual engagement can be found in a 1958 report in which UNESCO states that a person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO, 1958, p.4). The above definition should be used as a method of measurement of literacy rates. The Conference added that the following methods should be used in order to measure educational attainment: "census or survey of the population, estimates based on data from previous surveys or censuses, and record over a number of years of school enrollment, of examinations and school leaving certificates" (Ibid. p.4).

In 1995 UNESCO's Division of Statistics in its review of the methodology used in the 1994 estimation and projection of adult illiteracy confirmed the operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes by using the same definition adopted by UNESCO in 1958. It remained essential for UNESCO to make its Member States acknowledge that: "Adult literacy is a key indicator for international monitoring and comparison of development particularly with regard to human resources. It is one of the four main indicators used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for deriving the Human Development Index" (1995, p.1).

After acknowledging the 1958 definition of literacy, the Conference added that at a 'conceptual level', literacy reflects a: "basic state of development of the intellectual capacity of a human being in his/her ability to make use of the written words to learn and to communicate" (Ibid. p.1). Also, from an anthropological perspective, UNESCO also acknowledges that: "The human race could draw upon the knowledge techniques and wisdom accumulated over the ages to further develop the intellectual capacities of its members so as to contribute to the further development of human societies and accumulations of knowledge. (Ibid. p.1)

UNESCO is still acknowledging the importance of the acquisition of the abilities to read and to write as key components of literacy but recognizes also that literacy has "close linkages if not also causal-effect relationships to other socio-economic-cultural development phenomena and indicators" (Ibid. p.1). Nevertheless, it remains constant according to UNESCO that: "As an indicator, literacy rate is intrinsically easy to understand and interpret, methodologically easy to derive, significant for international comparisons, and like many demographic indicators, relatively free from abrupt fluctuations over long periods of time. (Ibid. p.2)

UNESCO's Portrayal of Functional Literacy

UNESCO has been developing since its inception multiple portrayals of functional literacy.

The Tehran conference. During the entire first decade after its inception UNESCO has been promoting renewed definitions of literacy. While doing so UNESCO acknowledged that with a changing world economy learners needed to acquire new skills to cope with the demands of their groups and communities. According to UNESCO, literacy, by its very nature, is "inherently functional" (UNESCO, 1965, p.4). UNESCO adds that the function of 'adult literacy' was to "enable individuals to become functional in their own cultures and then learn about other cultures to understand the common humanity of all human beings and to contribute

to international understanding" (UNESCO, 1965, p.6). The Teheran conference on the eradication of illiteracy acknowledged the importance of functional literacy. UNESCO portrayed functional literacy as an "essential element in overall development….closely linked to economic and social priorities and to present and future manpower need" (UNESCO, 1965, p.29). The Report acknowledges that "literacy was necessary for learning new skills for increased productivity both in the farm and in the factory and, therefore, should be central to any development strategy for alleviating poverty" (UNESCO, 1965, p.12). Therefore, functional literacy should be an educational tool in allowing learners to overcome their lack of essential skills in order to cope with the demands of the new world economy.

Deepening the Concept of Functionality in Defining Literacy

UNESCO further elaborated the concept of functionality by acknowledging that the essential elements of the new approach to literacy should be "linked with economic priorities and carried out in areas undergoing rapid economic expansion" (UNESCO, Asian Model, 1996, p.97). Therefore, literacy programmes should promote the "increase of labor productivity, food production, industrialization, social and professional mobility, creation of new manpower, diversification of the economy (Ibid. p.97). As acknowledged by UNESCO, functional literacy should be taken to mean: "Any literacy operation conceived as a component of economic and social development projects" (1970, p.9). Thus, functional literacy is different from 'traditional literacy' because it is "no longer an isolated or distinct operation" (Ibid. p.9).

In 1972 UNESCO decided to review the UNDP and UNESCO experience in operationalizing functional literacy through the Experimental World Literacy Programme. UNESCO was still recognizing that the goal of functional literacy was to: "Assist in achieving specific economic objectives by making men and women receptive to change and innovation

and by helping them to acquire new skills and new attitudes" (1972, p.2). While the "teaching of reading and writing along merely provides access to written communication, functional literacy aims at a more comprehensive training of the illiterate adult which is related to his role both as a producer and a citizen" (Ibid. p.2). Thus, 'in its simplest terms', functional literacy is "literacy integrated with specialized training, usually of a technical nature" (Ibid. p.2). This economic functionality of literacy was also acknowledged by UNESCO's International Symposium for Literacy in 1975. According to UNESCO, literacy is envisioned as "enhancement of popular participation in social, economic and political life" (1975, p.8), as a part of "national development projects" (p.9) and as a means in "improving health, agriculture, and general living conditions, rising at the same time civic consciousness" (p.10). Later, UNESCO developed a practical guide to functional literacy as a method of training for development. As mentioned by UNESCO, the purpose of the report is to: "Disseminate, in circles directly concerned with the theory and practice of functional literacy training, the fundamental principles and essential pedagogical methods yielded by the pursuit of UNESCO's Experimental World Literacy Programme" (UNESCO, 1973, p.2.)

UNESCO Expanded Vision of Literacy

By adding an economistic component to its traditional definition of literacy, UNESCO included the concept of economic functionality.

The inclusion of economic functionality. While UNESCO was refining its conceptualizations of literacy by adding an economic functionality to its definitions of literacy the worldwide illiteracy figures were alarming especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Since its General Conference in Paris in 1989 UNESCO decided to implement a plan in eradicating illiteracy by the year 2000. But the eradication of illiteracy has always been one of

UNESCO's main roles inside the United Nations System. UNESCO was still struggling with an interesting and complex dilemma: promote literacy or eradicate illiteracy. Meanwhile UNESCO acknowledged that both actions were simultaneous in order to posit a "recommitment to basic education" and "serve the basic learning needs of all" (1990, p.1). A new vision in the fight against illiteracy and the implementation of effective literacy policies was essential in realizing education for all.

The emergence of sociocultural and political parameters in defining literacy. UNESCO needed to integrate in its definitions of literacy the socio-cultural and political parameters that surround the concept of literacy. Indigenous peoples and nomadic peoples were marginalized by the mainstream educational systems worldwide and were left out with no perspectives. By promoting a manual on functional literacy for indigenous peoples UNESCO developed more informed definitions of literacy. According to UNESCO, literacy means to "break the code, participate in the meanings of text, know how to use written texts functionally, and be able to analyze texts critically" (1999, p.3). The mentions of literacy as text and critical reflection reflected a Freirian conceptualization of literacy, one that can integrate the particularities of indigenous peoples and nomadic peoples. Acknowledging that literacy is a "characteristic acquired by individuals in varying degrees", UNESCO recognized also that "it is not really possible to speak of literate and illiterate persons as two distinct categories" (Ibid. p.3). Thus, a person is viewed as functionally literate when he or she has:

Acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him/her to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his/her group or community, and whose attainments in reading, writing, and arithmetic make it possible

for him/her to continue to use these skills towards hi/her own and the community's development. (UNESCO, 1999, p.4)

Meanwhile, the concepts of functional literacy and functional illiteracy were acknowledged to "distinguish the higher-order level of abilities that separates those who are barely able to read and write (basic illiterates) from those community, and at home (functional literates)" (UNESCO, 1999, p.4). Thus 'effective literacy' practices are "intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic" while "involving the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing" (Ibid.p.4). UNESCO concluded by mentioning that the concept of literacy was experiencing epistemological changes and that it "in addition to reading, writing and numeracy skills" the new learners now need "technological and computer literacy, environmental literacy and social competence" (Ibib. p.5).

Integrating the concept of basic learning needs. In expanding its conceptualizations of literacy UNESCO was adding new layers in its definitions of literacy having in mind that one of its most essential objective was to "reduce adult illiteracy rate one half of its 1990 level by the year 2000" (UNESCO, 2000, p.7). By initiating a thematic study on literacy and adult education during the World Conference on Education for All UNESCO (2000) acknowledged that the 'basic learning needs or competencies (BLCs)' "comprise both essential learning tools such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving and the basic learning content such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes" (p.8). The concept of BLCs encompasses literacy and other essential skills needed by the learner.

UNESCO was still struggling in trying to promote a more informed perspective on literacy definitions, one that all Member States will acknowledge as the most important one in order to achieve the comparability of literacy data. Meanwhile, UNESCO mentioned that there

are various definitions of literacy relating at their 'core' to an "individual's ability to understand printed text and to communicate through print" (UNESCO, 2000, p.11). Thus, there are multiple forms of literacy such as "numeracy and technological literacy" (Ibid. p.11). UNESCO further added that conceptualizations of literacy needed to be "sensitive to skills needed in out of school contexts, as well as school-based competency requirements" (Ibid. p.11). UNESCO's efforts in unraveling and delineating the concept of literacy were revitalized through its Global Initiative towards Education for All (2001). All along the report, UNESCO acknowledged that it was urgent to increase external finance for basic education and monitor the progress towards the goals and targets of Education for All. The theoretical challenges and the need to bring back illiteracy as an international issue that need to be resolved led UNESCO to initiate another key project: The *United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All* (2002, Resolution 56/116).

Delineating the Research Space on Literacy

UNESCO's policies and the organization workings have been studied critically by many researchers (Hoggart, 1978; Holly, 1981; Bhola, 1984, 1989, 1994; Jones, 1990; Lind and Johnson, 1990; Wagner, 1999; Limage, 1999, 2007; Wickens and Sandlin, 2007; Leye, 2009; stromquist, 2002). All these empirical studies focused attention on how literacy education is being spread across the globe through international organizations such as UNESCO and took critique of critical literacy researchers as their starting point. However, because of the importance of the process of cultural globalization in shaping literacy education, they assume that literacy education in least developed countries reflects the oppressive forms of the former neocolonial powers. Most of these critical reviews of UNESCO's policies in literacy have failed to bring out the interconnectedness between UNESCO and other United Nations agencies in their continuous 'policing' of the literacy concept. As mentioned by Stromquist (2002), there is

an "ongoing globalization of educational policy and practice, and it is the Western paradigm of what constitutes good educational practice that prevails" (p. 186). Nonetheless, critical literacy researchers were able to posit the key importance of the relationships between economy and education and how least developed countries were influenced by the institutions financing literacy programmes worldwide.

Also, the limited critical research which has been conducted on literacy as far as international organizations are concerned has provided insights into the world of adult education and literacy education worldwide while unraveling the important consequences of literacy and the urgency to implement sound pedagogies. As such, the conception of literacy as a web of practices might well serve as an essential framework to understanding the multiple visions of literacy and delineating the socio-cultural, economic, and political parameters that surround this ever evolving concept. Thus, UNESCO as the leading United Nations agency in education cannot advocate for only one model of literacy but rather should posit the concept of multiliteracies, ones that are linguistically and culturally responsive.

As literacy educators we need to pay more attention to acknowledging the role and influence of the ethnographic perspective as an organizational framework in uncovering the concept of literacy. Discourse analysis can be an essential tool of analysis to understanding the value of experimental research as value by international organizations and key literacy policy makers and the complexity of the theoretical challenges that UNESCO is facing in unraveling and delineating the multilayered concept of literacy. UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy can be envisioned as a web of cultural and linguistic motives and as such can be subjected to critical analyses and to the uncovering analytic processes of these forms of literacy definitions.

Investigating Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has essentially its roots in the work of Foucault (1980), Fairclough (1995), van Dijk (1998) who acknowledged that discourses are expressive tools used by individuals and organizations to portraying a web of complex meanings and claims legitimizing or excluding various types of knowledge. Poole (1996) and Rex et al. (2010) posited breakthrough reviews of literacy issues which have been investigated through discourse analysis and for what purposes. Both made a distinction between studies of 'discourse processes' and studies employing 'discourse analyses'. The review of the literacy in this study will only take into account the second category of studies.

As Blunt (2004) argues, critical discourse analysis is a way to "probing texts and discourse practices to make explicit underlying meanings, assumptions and structures in order to reveal the operations of influence and social power and to reveal how dominance and inequality are produced and reproduced" (p.8). As such, critical discourse analysis helps to reveal how ideology "functions as an interpretive system" (Ibid. p.7). As Hall (1996) states: "Ideology reflects the "mental frameworks-languages, concepts, categories, images of thought, and the systems of representations-which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works" (p.26). Many researchers attempted to delineate the way that discourses become institutionalized as discursive formations and posit a 'social construction of semantics' through a web of complex assumptions, beliefs, traditions, and practices.

Blunt (2004, 2008), Edwards & Potts (2008), Gilette (1999), Hoggart (1978), Iyer (2007), Leye (2007), Newman (2005), Olson (2007), Ouane (2006), Rogers (2004), Rogers & Mosley (2006), Taylor (2008),Wagner (1989, 1992, 2008) attempted to uncover how various

national and international organizations are promoting a multilayered notion of literacy by illustrating how the meanings of literacy are socially produced, communicated, and mediated. An argument is made by these researchers in establishing a literacy discourse analysis perspective to help the voiceless be heard during international or national gatherings regarding literacy education and question policy development processes. As such, the major aim of these studies was to analyze official literacy documents at both the micro and macro level while focusing on text, discourse practices, and social practices using the CDA methodology.

Critical Analyses of Literacy Policies

As illustrated in the work of Taylor (2008) and Edwards and Potts (2008) it was urgent and essential to provide critical analyses of adult literacy curricula at the national level and to consider how they have been used to 'legitimize' a mainstream adult literacy policy based on cultural, political, and economic rationales. A same line of approach was used by Blunt (2004) to 'make space at the policy table' while uncovering the various consultations between higher education professionals and researchers involved in adult education to show the policy gatherings outcomes were surrounded by the multiple discourses instrumentalized by the various literacy stakeholders. Multilayered discourses were being 'institutionalized' as discursive formations, ones that reflect instrumental and strategic delineating of particular linguistic repertoires, socio-cultural, political, and economic practices. Throughout these institutional gatherings regarding literacy education, various assumptions, traditions, beliefs, and ideologies may be rendered invisible or intrinsically covered with authoritative legitimacy in order to privilege or exclude the multiple beneficiaries of the 'literacy myth'. As Blunt (2004) argues, discourses are used as a "means to exert social authority and to determine whose interests will prevail and who will be privileged in particular social contexts" (p.6). This social

construction of literacy discourses was rendered obvious through the work of Ouane (2006) and Leye (2007) in their examination of UNESCO's roles and motives in promoting international cooperation in literacy, non formal education and adult education worldwide. UNESCO's literacy documents were examined as texts of development, ones that construe and construct particular discourses such as the human right discourse, the information society discourse, and the knowledge-based economy discourse as promoted by the 'Knowledge Bank (World Bank). The focus was unveiling largely unquestioned ideological assumptions that determined overall the social positioning of different levels and forms of literacies.

At the same time other researchers attempted to unveil the intricacies of the strong relationships between literacy and identity formation (Ivanic, 1998; Olson, 2007) and posit the differences between home and school-literacy practices (Blommaert et al. (2005); Cairney& Ashton (2002); Edelsky et al. (2002); Johnson, 2002) and White (2002). A common and central theoretical and methodological theme in these studies was revealed through their exploration and examination of classroom literacy practices and valued knowledge. These authors explored how certain educational practices earned the stamp of 'authoritative literacy practices'. Through these studies of school-based literacy practices, certain literacies were rendered 'invisible' while institutional stereotypes about the 'illiteracy evil' were reinforced. As such, mainstream discursive practices were legitimized through the reinforcement of the positive values and the rich economic returns attached to them while other discourses were portraying a 'deficient' vision of illiteracy (Dworin & Bomer, 2008).

All these scholars involved in the literacy process acknowledged that there is no single theoretical lens, organizational framework or methodology that reflects the true nature of literacy. Nonetheless, most of the research on literacy has been carried out by Western scholars

who somewhat promoted and privileged an Anglophone discourse on literacy. But one should recognize and truly acknowledge that each theorization regarding adult education and literacy education contributed to more informed understandings of the concept of literacy.

CHAPTERTHREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore UNESCO's forms of literacy from 1949 to 2002. I believe that a better understanding of the discourses surrounding UNESCO s literacy definitions would allow educators and policy makers to proceed from a more informed perspective in terms of design and development literacy policies worldwide. In seeking to understand this phenomenon, the study addressed five research questions:

(1) How is UNESCO as an international organization formulating renewed definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002?

(2) What discursive formations are associated with the definitions of literacy?

(3) What forms of literacy are excluded within these discourses?

(4) How can ethnographic insights be translated into a literacy policy context dominated by an economistic paradigm of development?

(5) What is the Master Narrative that creates spaces within this organization's diverging and renewed discourses on literacy?

The Rationale for Privileging Qualitative Inquiry for this Study

The process of engaging in qualitative research is an exploration in which researchers are embarking in a quest for meaning making and this journey is "full of muddy ambiguity and multiple trails as researchers negotiate the swamp of interminable deconstructions, self analysis and self disclosure" (Finlay, 2002, p.209). Qualitative research in the words of Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) is "grounded in an essentially constructivist philosophical position, in the sense that is concerned with how the complexities of the sociocultural world are experienced,

interpreted, and understood in a particular context and at a particular point of time" (p.80). The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to study a social phenomenon by allowing the researcher to interact with participants and attempt to pursue an informed and holistic rather than a reductionist perspective in trying to understand the social construction of reality (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Locke and al., 2000; Patton, 1990). Qualitative methodology is characterized by the search for meaning and understanding while the researcher is the conducting data collection and analysis through an inductive investigation strategy in a challenging descriptive process. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated: "qualitative research does not belong to a single discipline nor does it have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own" (p.6).

The key to understanding qualitative research lies in the idea that its methodology implies "an emphasis on discovery and description, and the objectives are generally focused on extracting and interpreting the meaning of experience" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p.80). Qualitative inquiry posits the fact that meaning is socially constructed by individuals "entering the world of others" (Ibib.p.80) knowing that the reality is not static, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that is assumed to be in quantitative research. Instead there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality that are at work and that change overtime. As Bruner (1993) put it: "meaning is radically plural, always open" (p.1). The purpose of qualitative research is to question and disrupt the social construction of reality and these objectives as stated by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) are "contrasted with those of quantitative research, where the testing of hypotheses to establish facts and to designate and distinguish relationships between variables is usually the intent" (p.80).

Studying UNESCO's forms of literacy is an effort to understand this phenomenon in its "uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there" (Barton, 1985, p.1).

Barton (1985) went on to say that "this understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting" (p.1). Thus, qualitative inquiry is always striving for depth of understanding. Therefore purely quantitative methods were unlikely to elicit the rich data necessary to address the proposed research purposes. Often, qualitative inquiry is undertaken because there is a lack of theory to explain a phenomenon. Therefore the researcher will gather data to look at concepts or theories rather than implying hypotheses to be tested. Finally, the fundamental assumptions and key elements that posit what it means to do qualitative inquiry fit well with an exploration of UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy. These key elements include as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1995): (1) a clear survey of the different processes at stake, (2) a description of a poorly understood phenomenon, (3) an understanding of differences between stated and implemented theories or policies, and (4) a discovery of unspecified contextual variables. These key features of qualitative research will be challenged by the adopted interpretive stance and a flexible research design by critically challenging UNESCO's literacy policies from 1949 to 2002.

Rationale for Document Analysis

Within the framework of qualitative inquiry, the study was most suited for document analysis. An entire study can be built around a thorough analysis of documents. For example, Abramson's (1992) case study of Russian Jewish immigration is based solely on his grandfather's diaries written over a twelve-year period. Document analysis can sustain an intensive description and analysis of UNESCO's definitions of literacy over the years. To paraphrase Merriam (1998) one can argue that document analysis can be an ideal design for understanding and interpreting international organizations' policies on literacy because we will

be able to discover new meanings and insights that can influence policy, educational practices and research in the future. Finally, document analysis is advantageous in offering a comprehensive and comparative descriptive account into UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy.

Information Needed to Conduct the Study

This qualitative inquiry focused on 18 documents regarding literacy definitions published by   UNESCO from 1949 to 2002. High profile UNESCO's publications were studied, ones indicating that actions will be undertaken under UNESCO's domains of competence and which represent references for Member States, private and public literacy stakeholders, and United Nations agencies. In seeking to unravel the discursive formations employed by UNESCO, five research questions were explored to gather the information needed in order to conduct this study. The information needed to answer these research questions was determined by the conceptual framework and fell into three categories: (a) multiple definitions and diverging discourses, (b) the marketizing of literacy, and (c) the review of the literature. The conceptual framework developed for this study helps to focus and shape the research design, informing the methodological design and influencing the data collection instruments to be used. The Conceptual framework provides the basis for the chosen coding scheme in analyzing UNESCO and WB's definitions of Literacy. As such, this framework provides an organizing structure both for reporting this study's findings as well as the analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of these findings.

Each of the categories of the conceptual framework is directly derived from the study's research questions as outlined in Chapter 1. The first research question seeks to determine UNESCO renewed definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002. The second research question is

pertaining to the discursive formations associated with these definitions while the third research question deals with the discourses that are excluded throughout these renewed definitions of literacy. Therefore the logical conceptual category to capture responses to these three questions would be "Multiple definitions and diverging discourses". Research questions Four and Five attempted to understand how ethnographic insights can be associated with a prominent economistic paradigm and what is the master narrative behind these renewed definitions of literacy; thus, "the marketizing of literacy" is an appropriate category.

Analytical subcategories representing major findings figure under each one of these two conceptual categories. The multiple definitions and diverging discourses conceptual category has two subcategories: (1) description of various definitions and (2) Visible and hidden discourses. The second conceptual category (the Marketizing of literacy) has two subcategories: (1) Multiple meanings of functionality and (2) A Comprehensive Model of Literacy. This information included:

- A review of the various definitions of literacy provided by UNESCO from 1949 to 2002 and the conceptual and discursive changes operated throughout these renewed visions of literacy.

- The way UNESCO was promoting these literacy definitions to marketize its vision and policies and the narrative that is underlying all these renewed discourses.

- A continuous review of the literature reflects the theoretical basis for the study.

Following this list of information needed for this study is a more in-depth discussion of each of these steps.

Getting Ready to Collect the Data

Preceding the actual collection of data, I conducted a selected review of the literature to study the contribution of other researchers in the broad areas of literacy theories in academia, literacy critical discourse analysis studies, and international organizations' definitions of literacy.

Reviewing the Data

I conducted an ongoing review of UNESCO database in order to purposefully collect documents pertaining to literacy definitions according to the sample conceptual framework as described in Chapter one. The grounded theory research method along with the constant comparative method allowed me to unitize various UNESCO documents into meaningful units and I assigned them a code. I then performed what Cresswell (1998) terms axial coding, wherein categories or themes emerge from the data. Templates for the documents summary form (models of literacy, lists of discourses, excluded discourses, an array of associated discourses) were designed along with a sample coded scheme (see Table 4).

Table 4

UNESCO's Literacy Policies Sample Coding Scheme

Survey of Literacy Definitions	Discursive Formations of Literacy	Excluded Discourses	Association between Ethnography And Economics	UNESCO Master Narrative
P 1 Most Prevalent P 2 Somewhat Prevalent P3 Least Prevalent	E1 Most Established E2 Somewhat Established E3 Least Established	C1 Most Common C2 Somewhat Common C3 Least Common	N1 Most Noticeable N2 Somewhat Noticeable N3 Least Noticeable	T1 Most Typical T2 Somewhat Typical T3 Least Typical

Note. Massaer Paye. 2012.

Following this same line of exploration of UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy a summary table for every finding was designed.

Analyzing the Data

To analyze the data I drew from grounded theory combined with various analytical lenses such as metaphor analysis, intertextuality, recontextualization and multivocality.

Textual Discursive Analysis

I examined UNESCO's definitions of literacy from a social constructivist standpoint, assuming that language is not neutral and not external to the reality it 'depicts' but both construes and constructs (Berber and Luckman, 1966). Also, Fairclough' textual discursive analysis helped me in unraveling the ideological orientations behind UNESCO renewed visions of literacy because as in the words of Fairclough (2003), "detailed text analysis is a form of qualitative social analysis" (p.6).

Following Fairclough guidelines, I attended to the three domains of analysis: description, interpretation, and explanation, as well as three domains of discourse: the local, the institutional, and the societal. First, I analyzed the selected documents for their linguistic structures (text-level convention). Second, I analyzed how UNESCO was shaping its discourse (histories and trajectories of the documents). Third, assuming that language works at an ideological level, I looked at how identities and subject positions (literate, illiterate) are created, maintained, negotiated, and transformed through discourse. As Fairclough (1995) states: "a range of properties of text is regarded as potentially ideological, including features of vocabulary, metaphors, grammar, generic structure and style" (p.2). Accordingly, I coded the data according to the CDA domains (local, institutional, societal) and I looked at the relationships between documents across the years.

Intertextuality

Knowing that discourses are more than statements (Griffith and Smith, 2005); I tried to unravel the relationships between UNESCO's discourses and literacy theories promoted in

academia. The interrelationships between these different texts (intertextuality) govern their meaning in that any text is the absorption and transformation of another (Kristeva, 1984, p.35) and external discourses as in academia are internalized by UNESCO in its renewed visions of literacy (recontextualization).

Multivocality

Phillips and Jorgenson's (2002) concept of multivocality helped me to study the association of discourses in UNESCO's literacy definitions in order to learn about changes in discourse formations and how ethnographic insights are associated with an economistic model of literacy through UNESCO policies throughout all these years. Above all, each analytical framework used in this study was intended to complement the weaknesses of the other.

Metaphor Analysis

I also examined the official notions of literacy as outlined through the various UNESCO's inquiries into literacy for the period 1949-2002 using metaphor analysis. Metaphor analysis provided me a means for analyzing discourses about literacy in each of the documents in order to interpret the underlying ideology. I realized that metaphor was both pervasive in, and integral to, language and literacy. As Seaman and Terry put it: "metaphor helps with understanding the surrounding world and acts as a scaffold to assist the understanding of new ideas, concepts and experiences" (p.187). I considered these official constructs of literacy within the competing and wider notions of literacy in UNESCO policy debates and the tensions that exist in defining literacy. In the absence of specific definitions of literacy within the government documents, examination of the use of metaphors associated with literacy helped me in identifying the construction of literacy within the documents. Examination of the metaphors associated with

literacy within the documents provided me also a means for analyzing the official constructs of literacy in each of the reports and policies as well as any change over time.

Literature Review

A continuous and selective review of the literature was conducted to proceed with this study. Three topics were identified: literacy definitions in academia, studies about critical discourse analysis of literacy, and international organizations policies on literacy definitions. The focus of the literature review was to posit a more informed understanding of UNESCO divergent and renewed visions of literacy, how literacy was envisioned by education specialists and researchers, and the way UNESCO was marketizing its literacy policies by looking at the metanarrative that was sustaining various literacy definitions.

Analysis of the Gaps in the Literature

The gaps in the literature were analyzed by examining the content of the relevant literature and by looking at the various trends by time period. I looked for trends by time period. Throughout the review of the literature I realized that definitional and conceptual issues not only foster effective debates on matters of substance, but they also cause well-meaning specialists and literacy activists to mis-communicate and misunderstand one another. The pluralisation of key words in the literacy arena suggests the potential for confusion of terms and multiplicity of meanings.

Data Collection Methods

The collection of the data was made easy by the fact that UNESCO has a database called UNESDOC, one website that positions its policies on literacy for researchers and the general public. I was able to access all UNESCO standard setting instruments, recommendations, conventions, declarations, and documents about UNESCO international conferences on adult

literacy. In order to operate this selection of documents I used various key words pertaining to literacy definition and literacy discourses. Among the key words used we can mention 'literacy', 'illiteracy', 'literacies', 'functional literacy', 'alphabetization' (literacy in French), 'analphabetisme' (illiteracie in French), and 'litteraties '(literacies in French). A purposeful selection of the documents was operated not taking into account UNESCO's reviews on literacy definitions. I utilized also 'adult education' and 'compulsory education' as key words because there is a strong relationship between these two concepts and literacy in UNESCO's vision of education. I also used a document summary form for every document to posit the objective of the document, the key words, concepts and discourses pertaining to literacy while pointing to every given definition of literacy throughout the document. Additionally, I regrouped the documents according to their objectives for example: Statistical definitions for the purpose of comparing educational statistics throughout the world, Manuals and guides for education practitioners and NGOs working on literacy, recommendations and official UNESCO declarations about literacy, and literacy policies with a strong emphasis on Education for All.

Making Sense of the Data

The biggest challenge throughout data collection and analysis was to gain a more informed and thorough knowledge of large amounts of data, unitize key elements, identify categories, themes, and patterns and build a conceptual framework in this regard. As Merriam (1998) states: "data collection and data analysis are a simultaneous activity in order to avoid the risk of repetitious, unfocused, and overwhelming data". In order to make sense of the data I assigned alphanumeric codes according to the two categories and descriptors of the study's conceptual framework. I also prepared sheets to identify the descriptors under the respective categories of the conceptual framework. As the process of coding the key elements proceeded,

new sheets were prepared to make sense of themes and concepts as they emerged. I shared samples of the coded documents with colleagues in order for them to confirm the designations I chose. Also, I was keeping a journal to better explore the key coded elements; this journal allowed me to analyze in depth the data and perform a second analysis.

As a final step, in order to verify whether new variables will emerge and posit similarities or differences, I tested the coded data along with the sample summary finding table that I designed. This process allowed me to get a better grip of the data doing cross-case analysis. At the same time, the coding procedures divided the documents into different categories, allowing me to look at every key element in detail and at the end putting these elements together to posit a more informed explanation process. The overall purpose of these procedures was to find themes and patterns that shared some key features or purported differences or similarities. As mentioned by Bloomberg and Volpe (1998), a "thorough examination, description and analysis of the data was performed by exploring and comparing patterns across and within categories while situating the work being done with respect to prior research and issues raised by the broader literature in academia" (p.84). These analysis procedures were continuously performed throughout the entire process.

The analysis and synthesis performed throughout this study allowed me to make more sense of the potential explanations and posit broader implications for this qualitative inquiry about UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy. This ongoing process was the basis for formulating more informed conclusions and developing sound-based and research-related recommendations.

Controlling Potential Biases throughout the Study

In qualitative inquiries, the concept of trustworthiness is mobilized to posit the traditional quantitative problems of validity and reliability. As Guba and Lincoln (1998) posited it, in qualitative inquiries, "the terms of credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability" are used in order to mark the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Above all, as Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) put it: "qualitative researchers must continue to seek to control for potential biases that might be present throughout the design, implementation, and analysis of the study" (p.85). All along the study, I tried to acknowledge some of the methodological and analytical biases I might have regarding my second language learner status and accordingly I followed an accurate description of UNESCO's literacy policies from 1949 to 2002.

As such, I realized that credibility is a key element in qualitative inquiry because it posits the fact that the researcher's findings should be "accurate and credible from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the reader" (Bloomberg and Volpe, 1998, p.86). The richness and usefulness of the research design are sustained by the criterion of validity or credibility. Accordingly, I designed a research format that allowed me to thoroughly organize an accurate review of UNESCO's policies and the use of a sample coding scheme that helped to go through specific levels of findings. As such, the findings that I reached needed to be questioned by looking at the relationship between the research questions, the findings, and the explanations that I proposed.

The key elements of methodological validity "direct attention to the quality and rigor with which the researcher interprets and analyzes data in relation to the researcher design" (Mason, 1996). In order to improve the validity of my research design, I needed to clarify my assumptions in the beginning of the study and clearly show all the steps that were undertaken in

collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the findings. My purpose was to eliminate inconsistencies in the findings and lessen his subjectivities and biases. But as Widdowson stated, "interpretation will always be a function of the relationship between text, context, and the scholar's pretext- here defined not as an ulterior motive, but as the reason for textual study" (2004, p.166).

Limitations of the Study

Most of the limitations in this study are pertaining to the traditional critiques of qualitative research techniques in general and the chosen research design in analyzing UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy. The social location of the researcher is a key element in analyzing the methodological validity of the study. It is assumed that because textual analysis doesn't involve human subjects, there is less attention to the quality and rigor with which the researcher interprets and analyzes the data in relation to the research design. However, the political nature of texts according to the foundations of discourse analysis posits the problem of subjectivities and biases. My own stance as I analyzed literacy definitions through UNESCO policies was shaped not only by my research interests that emerged from my educational, cultural, and linguistic experiences, but by my own experiences about the way literacy policies are molding our educational systems. My interests in the politics and the economics of literacy are shaped by this tension as it was by my desire to comprehend the complexities of policy making through international organizations.

While I engaged throughout this journey in a critical analysis of UNESCO's discourses on literacy- that somewhat promote social inequality by normalizing and privileging what counts as good (being literate) and what count as bad (being illiterate) - I found myself participating in these same discourses. I found myself caught in the contradictions between the

intent of critical discourse analysis, which is to reveal and challenge social inequalities, and the methodological limits of qualitative research methods.

One can notice that analyzing a social phenomenon rests with the difficult and challenging choices that the researcher must make. I needed to be conscious about my own subjectivities and hidden or visible biases. As such, one of the limitations in this study is the issue of subjectivity because I belong to a community of practices that portrays a certain vision of literacy and I was a victim of these policies designed by international organizations because I am a second language learner and I view myself as a 'potential illiterate' in some situations in which my linguistic and cultural backgrounds posit me as an outsider.

I recognized these limitations and I didn't limit myself in only realizing that they exist but I pushed myself to overcome them by assessing their influence in my research findings and my attempted explanations all along this study and by sharing my thoughts with my colleagues creating therefore an environment conducive to more attention to quality and rigor in my research design and the interpretation of the patterns and underlying themes that I discovered during this ongoing process of collecting and analyzing the data.

Another limitation of this study has to deal with the fact that the research sample was restricted to eighteen documents. The number of documents selected and analyzed might not be enough to construct an informed perspective about UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy. I nonetheless tried to give my readers a thorough description of my journey in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data and positing the difficulties I faced in going through various changes, modifications in focus, remodelling of the research design. I kept a journal throughout the research process. The journal was in the words of Lincoln and Guba (1985) 'an audit trail' of the decisions and intentions throughout the research process. In this

journal I documented my continuous data analysis, insights, theories, questions, and uncertainties.

This chapter posited a detailed description of the research design in conducting a study of UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy. Two methods common to qualitative inquiries were chosen-grounded theory along with the constant comparison model and textual analysis- to illustrate how UNESCO an organization affiliated to the United Nations System was portraying renewed and divergent discourses on defining literacy from 1949 to 2002. Eighteen UNESCO documents were chosen according to the key features of purposeful sampling. The collection and analysis of the data were an ongoing process and were conducted simultaneously. The variety of the documents selected, their thorough analysis, and the detailed explanation of the conceptual framework helped in creating an environment conducive to rigor and a lessening of subjectivities and biases. Above all, the implementation of a detailed research design enabled key findings to emerge as we were able to posit conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore UNESCO, the WB and affiliated Organizations discursive formations of literacy. I believe that a better understanding of these discursive formations on would allow policy makers and educators to proceed from a more informed perspective in terms of improving the implementation of literacy programmes, the assessment and monitoring of national and international literacy projects. This chapter presents (1) the findings obtained from a deep and thorough analysis of UNESCO documents on literacy conceptualizations and (2) how they can be interpreted. Accordingly, five major findings emerged from this study:

Finding 1: A Plurality of Definitions of Literacy

There is no standard, universal definition of literacy but rather a plurality of definitions presented by UNESCO from 1949 to 2002. The concept of literacy has been subjected to constant redefinitions to reflect a large array of economic, political, social, and cultural expectations. The overwhelming majority of the documents (12/18) indicated that literacy is a learning process and an autonomous set of skills while a relative amount of documents presented a functional definition of literacy (9/18). At the same time, few UNESCO documents (5/18) defined literacy as a social practice.

Finding 2: Multiple Discursive Formations of Literacy

The functionalist perspective to literacy and the human right approach are the most important discourses in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy. Twelve out of eighteen documents position literacy as a skill while 11/18 documents posit literacy as a right. Near half

of the documents mention the discourses of lifelong education (7/18), the transformative approach to literacy (8/18), the poverty reduction and development discourses (7/18), and the compulsory education discourse (8/18). Few documents present various conceptualizations of illiteracy (6/18) and posit the medical discourse of literacy (4/18) while the discourse of literate environments appears in 3/18 documents.

Finding 3: Excluded Discourses in UNESCO's Policies on Literacy

The least prevalent discourse in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy is the discourse of literacy as a text which is not mentioned in any document. Few documents (2/18) mention the francophone discourse of literacy and the discourse on indigenous literacy.

Finding 4: The Association of Ethnography and Economics in Defining Literacy

The most prevalent association of discourses in defining literacy throughout UNESCO documents posits the relationships between the different functionalities of literacy and the portrayal of plural literacies (literacy with multiple meanings). Twelve documents portray that relationship between the functional vision of literacy and the view of literacy as a social practice. Also ten documents portray the relationship between literacy as a skill and the development discourse along with the concept of the relevance of experimentation in literacy research.

Finding 5: The Metanarrative Sustaining UNESCO's Policies on Literacy

The most prevalent discourse that surrounds UNESCO's multiple conceptualizations of literacy is a holistic approach to literacy definitions, one that posits an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes and sustaining at the same time the multiple meanings of literacy. The concept of literacy for all as in education for all is valued in associating literacy with schooling in order to meet the Dakar and the millennium development goals.

Following is a discussion of the findings with details that support and interpret each finding. Through the process of a thick description of the study undertaken, I set out to document a broad range of conceptualizations of literacy throughout UNESCO's policies, and thereby provide an opportunity for the readers to enter into this study and better understand the discursive formations taking place through the various documents reviewed for the purpose of this critical study of literacy conceptualizations. Following is a further discussion that includes a thorough portrayal of the different findings.

A Plurality of Definitions of Literacy

The primary and overriding finding of this study is that there is a plurality of literacy definitions. This finding is highly significant in terms of the overwhelming number of UNESCO documents which presented a variety of definitions of literacy. Based on the documents reviewed, one can argue that UNESCO presented renewed, divergent, and conflicting definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002. Thirteen documents out of eighteen mentioned the autonomous and ideological model of literacy privileging an operational and statistical definition of literacy. The functional literacy model is mentioned in eleven documents while the concept of functional illiteracy is mentioned in three documents. Few documents (4/18) present the 'multiliteracies' model.

The Autonomous and Ideological Model of Literacy

The overwhelming majority of the documents indicated that literacy is a learning process and a set of skills. Literacy presented as a set of decontextualized skills represents what Street (1995) calls an 'Autonomous model of literacy'. This definition of literacy gives no attention to "social structures within which the concepts and philosophies of specific cultures are formed" (Street, 1995, p.85). Accordingly, the autonomous model of literacy was promoted by UNESCO

since its inception, one that privileges the traditional view of literacy as the ability to read and write. This vision of literacy appears rather straightforward and obvious in UNESCO's definitions of literacy.

This vision of UNESCO's portrayal of literacy as an autonomous model valuing the ability to read and write can be found in one of its declaration during the first international conference on adult education which took place in Elsinore, Denmark (1949) which states that: "Classes for adults were a means of fundamental education for those who were unable to read and write" (UNESCO, 1949, p.1). This definition of literacy as the basic ability to read and to write was reflected during the early fifties as a reflection of what was termed 'fundamental education'. Fundamental education remained in the early fifties and sixties a way to develop adult education by allowing illiterate adults to acquire the basic skills of reading and writing.

Thus, "since a large part of the world's population, especially in the colonized countries, have been bypassed by the school systems and never learned to read and write, adult education in these areas got equated with adult literacy promotion" (UNESCO, 1949, p.4). Literacy, according to UNESCO, equated the ability to read and write. As such, literacy kept on being defined as "the ability to read and write", a basic tenet of UNESCO's policies, and the prerequisite of "elementary freedom as a matter of basic unity and basic justice" (UNESCO, 1949, p.5). As such, the importance of the ability to read and write was also stressed in the army, a place that people frequently join "without being able to read and write" (UNESCO, 1949, p.2). Throughout this definition of literacy as the ability to read and write, the first task of adult education or literacy according to UNESCO was to fill the gaps in an inadequate educational system and provide fundamental education for those who were lacking the abilities to read and write.

An example of one of this definition of literacy as the ability to read and write can also be found in UNESCO's Statistical Revision report from 1951. In this report, from a committee of experts convened by UNESCO, the autonomous model of literacy was privileged through the introduction of the following concepts portraying literacy and semi literacy: "A person is considered literate who can both read with understanding and write a short statement on his everyday life; a person is considered semi-literate, who can read with understanding but not write a short statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO's Statistical Division, 1951). This UNESCO's definition of literacy as the mastery of the basics of reading and writing reflected also the vision of the United Nations Population Commission (1952) which defines literacy as the "ability to read and write a simple message in any language" (p.25). As such, the definition of literacy as the ability to read and write as portrayed by the leading UN educational organization was also shared by other UN partnerial agencies such as the Population Commission.

Consequently, the definition of literacy as the ability to read and write was also prevalent in a document published by UNESCO in 1953. The document entitled The *Progress of Literacy in Various Countries* brought together issues related to illiteracy and literacy by examining the types of questions in the various population censuses. As mentioned in the report, this study was "considered of value to all those concerned with the study of literacy and the efforts being made to achieve progress in it" (UNESCO, 1953, p.8). Again, the definitions of literacy and illiteracy provided in these populations' censuses privilege the ability to read and write as an essential component of literacy.

Accordingly, UNESCO was still promoting a vision of literacy correlated with the acquisition of the basic skills of reading and writing when it states that the problem of illiteracy

will still persist "so as long as a sizeable portion of the world population remains without the rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing" (UNESCO, 1953, p.9). Further, UNESCO still argues that the abilities to read and write are equally important to "pubic administrators, demographers, statisticians, educators, and economic planners who need to know the number and proportion of men and women who cannot read and write" (UNESCO, 1953, p.8).

Additionally, UNESCO is stressing the importance of acquiring the basic elements of reading and writing when it recognizes that in industrialized countries "the number of persons not able to read and write is confined to an irreducible minimum composed mainly of the mentally incapable" (UNESCO, 1953, p.9). Thus, one of the most important points of focus in this UNESCO's document is the fact that literacy education is equated with the ability to read and to write because the principal sources of literacy data were marriage registers, military records and population censuses. This definition of literacy as the ability to read and to write can be signaled in the list of census questions. In the Argentinean population census in 1947, people were asked the following questions: "Do you know how to read? Do you know how to write? Return (No) for persons who can only write numerals or sign their names" (UNESCO, 1953, p.13). According to UNESCO, the abilities to read and to write symbolized the basic tenets of the world of literacy as shown in the Argentinean example and in most of the populations' censuses in the early fifties around the world.

A first example indicating a major change in UNESCO's definition of literacy as the ability to read and write can be found in its second monograph entitled World Illiteracy at Mid Century (1957).Through this report, UNESCO defines literacy as "a characteristic acquired by individuals in varying degrees and there is no need to introduce a third category such as semi literate, placed between literate and illiterate" (UNESCO, 1957, p.17). These three

conceptualizations of literacy (literate, semi-literate, and illiterate) show how UNESCO is presenting literacy as a very flexible concept, one that can be "stretched to cover all levels of ability" (Ibid. p.18). Nonetheless, the acquisition of reading and writing skills is still associated with literacy because the report stated that " as long as more than the two fifths of the world population cannot read and write in any language", they are thus " deprived of their full participation in the cultural life of mankind" (Ibid. p.1). As such UNESCO is adding new layers to the conceptualization of the traditional and autonomous model of literacy by complexifying the Anglophone discourse on literacy definitions by implying the importance of acquiring the ability to read and to write in any language.

Accordingly, UNESCO adds a new conceptual layer in refining the autonomous model of literacy by stating that, at a minimum level, literacy can be defined as "the ability to read and write in a language" (UNESCO, 1957, p.19). According to this definition of literacy, UNESCO is still privileging the importance of acquiring the basic skills of reading and writing by implying that other definitions of literacy could not deny the fact that literacy at a minimum level requires the acquisition of basic skills such as reading and writing. As such, the UNESCO 1957 report concluded that " the method using reading and writing tests is more reliable for assessing the extent of illiteracy than any method depending on a simple declaration"(UNESCO, 1957, p.23). Thus, being literate is more than just a matter of a formal and official declaration of someone's literacy abilities as in populations' censuses. A common way of assessing literacy through reading and writing tests remains a reliable way to compare literacy data internationally. Thus, there is a converging point between the definitions of literacy provided through most of the population's censuses and UNESCO's attempt to improve the comparability of educational statistics.

A second example indicating a change in UNESCPO's definition of literacy can also be found in its 1958 recommendation concerning the standardization of educational statistics promoting a definition of literacy that recognizes the importance of the acquisition of reading and writing skills by stating in the same token how these basic skills can help adults accommodate with public life. As such UNESCO is adding a new layer to the traditional definition of literacy as the ability to read and write by attaching socio-cultural consequences to the act of being literate. But at the same time UNESCO is equating minimum literacy with basic literacy because both concepts require adult learners to acquire the basic skills of reading and writing. An example of this conceptual refinement can be found in the International Conference of Adult Education convened by UNESCO in 1965. During this international conference, UNESCO was promoting a recommendation to the ministers of education concerning literacy and education for adults by emphasizing the importance of the economic consequences attached to the acquisition of reading and writing skills in sustaining basic literacy. According to UNESCO, the best way to prepare adults for a more productive and better paid work is to focus on "reading and writing classes which are of immediate concerns to the adults" (UNESCO, 1965, p.14). Again, another UNESCO document published a year later documents and adds a new conceptual layer in emphasizing the importance of reading and writing in acquiring literacy skills by stating that: "literacy programmes must impart not only reading and writing, but also professional and technical knowledge, thereby leading to fuller participation of adults in economic and civic life" (UNESCO, 1966, p.97). Thus, according to UNESCO adults need more than basic reading and writing skills if they intend to fully participate in public life. As such, UNESCO realized the limitations and shortcomings of traditional literacy work based on "straightforward reading and writing" (UNESCO, 1970, p.8). Nonetheless, UNESCO

recognizes that «learning to read and write remains an opportunity for acquiring information that can immediately be used to improve living standards" (UNESCO, 1975, p.1). Again, UNESCO is adding new layers in refining the traditional and autonomous model of literacy by equating the basic acquisition of reading and writing skills to the acquisition of technical and professional knowledge allowing adult learners to cope with real life.

At the same time, UNESCO was still struggling to push member states to adopt a uniform adoption of the traditional and autonomous model of literacy through the development of basic reading and writing skills by trying to establish criteria for the harmonization of literacy statistics on an international basis, thus allowing for a better comparability of educational data. As such, UNESCO still considers that "literacy, the ability to read and write" is still a "matter of general interest" (UNESCO, 1978, p.3). An example of this continuous portrayal of literacy as the ability to read and write can be found in one of its recommendation during the 1978 General Conference during which UNESCO recommended that member states should for the purpose of international reporting adopt the following definitions of literacy: (1) "A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.(2) A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life"(UNESCO, 1978, p.3).This definition of casual literacy promoted in this revised recommendation concerning the international standardization of educational statistics can relate to UNESCO's 1951 and 1958 recommendations on literacy definitions in which UNESCO states that "a person is considered literate who can both read with understanding and write a short statement on his everyday life; a person is considered semi-literate, who can read with understanding but not write a short statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO's Statistical Division, 1951). But there is a slight change in the definition of literacy because UNESCO

started to promote literacy as more than a statiscal measure of someone's reading and writing skills. As such, this new conceptual layer added by UNESCO implies the obligation for adult learners to acquire at least basic reading skills in order to be considered as 'semi-literate'.

Later, a new vision of a 'culturalized literacy model' is being promoted by UNESCO through the1985 International *Conference on Adult Education* which promotes the "teaching of reading and writing" but one "integrated in a cultural context" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56).Five years later, reading and writing skills remain the basic tenets of literacy when UNESCO promotes a definition of literacy that relates to its vision of an autonomous model of literacy as in the world conference on Education for All (1990). Again, Reading and writing skills are still important components of literacy education. In the 1990 report, the following definition is used by adding the importance of another basic skill related to the acquisition of mathematical competences. As such, "literacy refers to the ability to read and write with comprehension, as well as to make simple arithmetical calculations in an expanded sense" (UNESCO, 1990, p. ix). Again, UNESCO is adding a new conceptual layer that equates basic literacy with the acquisition of traditional competences usually acquired in school such as reading, writing, and math. As such, through this 1990 report, literacy is defined as the junction of reading, writing, and mathematical skills.

Another conceptual refinement of the traditional and autonomous model of literacy is operated again in 1995 when UNESCO argues that literacy reflects the development of learning and communicative skills by considering that, at the conceptual level, "literacy reflects a basic state of development of the intellectual capacity of a human being, in his/her ability to make use of the written words to learn and communicate" (UNESCO, 1995, p.1). As such, this new definition of literacy through UNESCO's terms does not take into account reading and

mathematical skills as in the 1990 report. But UNESCO is not putting away the basic tenets of literacy because it still considers that literacy while being a "catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political, and economic activities and for learning throughout life", is also "the right to read and write"(UNESCO, 1997, p.4). An example of the continuous importance of the traditional and autonomous model of literacy can be found in a new UNESCO document published in 2000, one in which UNESCO states that: "many definitions of literacy relate in some ways, at their core, to an individual's ability to understand printed texts and to communicate through print" (p.4). Finally, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics decided to take into account the definition of literacy given in 1958 and revised in 1978. An example can be found in one document published by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics in 2008 in which the following definition of literacy relates to the "percentage of the population for a given group that can read and write with understanding a short statement on his/her everyday life" (UIS, 2008, p.13). While equating literacy to reading and writing abilities, UNESCO was promoting along the years different definitions of literacy reflecting general skills needed for community life. Thus, UNESCO started to promote literacy as a skill during the early sixties.

Defining Literacy as a Skill

An example of the definition of literacy as a skill can be found in the second Montreal international conference on adult education in 1960. Along the document, UNESCO considers that adults need to "acquire the knowledge and skills they need for the new patterns of community living" (Ibid. 13).Again, UNESCO recognizes the importance of literacy as a skill when it states that: The "acquisition of skills of learning is primarily literacy" (UNESCO, 1960, p.35). Another example of the definition of literacy as a skill can be found in a 1970 UNESCO's report which states the importance of the acquisition of skills for development projects by

assuming that literacy is related to the "acquisition of technical skills and knowledge of direct utility in a given environment" (UNESCO, 1970, p.9).

The same line of vision can be retraced through the review of the United Nations Development Program and UNESCO activities on functional literacy. An example can be found in the 1972 report in which UNESCO states that adults are "producers and citizens who need a new type of literacy, one with specialized training, usually of a technical nature" (UNESCO, 1972, p.2). According to this definition of literacy, "men and women need to be receptive to change and innovation and acquire in the same token new skills and new attitudes" (UNESCO, 1972, p.2). Another illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found later in the report when UNESCO states that:

> A literate person is someone who needs to acquire reading and writing skills but also specific technical and professional skills in order to perform better in the new world economy. Therefore, literacy education should help adult learners to acquire an "integrated store of knowledge, skills, and know how. (UNESCO, 1975, p.8)

In the same document, UNESCO considers another definition of literacy as skills, one in which "performative skills allow adult learners to acquire vocational skills" (UNESCO, 1985, p.50) for their economic growth and social development and accommodate to the purposes of lifelong learning by "continuing to acquire skills" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56). At the same time, UNESCO is still promoting the traditional and autonomous model of literacy. Consequently, according to the terms of this adult international conference on adult education, UNESCO (1985) is equating "basic skills to reading, writing, and arithmetic" (p.57). As such, UNESCO is adding a new conceptual layer by affirming the emergence of the concept of lifelong learning in acquiring and sustaining basic literacy skills.

Furthermore, in 1990, UNESCO widened the description of literacy as a skill by introducing the concept of basic learning needs. An example of this conceptual refinement can be found in a UNESCO 1990 report in which basic learning needs are described as follows: "The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary for people to survive, improve the quality of their lives, and to continue learning" (UNESCO, 1990, p.ix). An illustration of this new conceptualization of literacy as skill can also be found in a different part of the document in which UNESCO states that: "without the skills to participate in a literate, technological world and the knowledge to transform their environment, people will remain on the margins of society, and society itself will lose their vast potential contributions" (UNESCO, 1990, p.8). Thus, the basic learning needs represent a set of practical tools that help adults to fight against social marginalization and participate in the transformation of their environment. UNESCO added a new layer in its definition of literacy as a set of basic learning needs by stating that the possibility for adults to deal with social hardship "depend on their knowledge and problem-solving skills" (UNESCO, 1990, p.9). Therefore, according to UNESCO, the definition of literacy needs to take into account the fact that, "basic education allows providing immediate knowledge and skills for dealing with the effects of social inequalities (Ibid.p.9). As such, the acquisition and development of literacy skills have positive consequences in allowing literate people to transform the socio-political sphere.

UNESCO's references to basic skills and basic learning needs in discussing about literacy widened the traditional and autonomous definition of literacy. An example of this conceptual refinement through the imposition of new theoretical layers can be also found in the Jomtien conference (1990) which characterizes another definitional aspect of literacy through

the broadening of the discussion of the concept of basic learning needs and competencies. An illustration of this definitional change can be found in the following UNESCO (1990) statement:

> Basic learning encompasses literacy and basic learning needs comprise both essential learning tools such as (literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as (knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. (UNESCO, 1990, p.11)

Another example of this refined definition of literacy as a skill can be found through the following UNESCO statement in the 1990 report: "literacy education will translate into meaningful development when adults will be able to incorporate useful knowledge, reasoning ability, skills, and values" (UNESCO, 1990, p.35). As such, UNESCO is stressing the positive benefits of acquiring skills bettering adult learners' lives. But, UNESCO is still equating literacy to a skill by stating that: "it is a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of other skills….Other needs can be served by skills training apprenticeship and formal and non formal education programs" (Ibid. p.36). As such, UNESCO implies that literacy is the basic and most important foundation of other learning skills and argues that literacy is different from learning.

Through these UNESCO's definitions of literacy as a skill, UNESCO is adding a new layer to its conceptualizations of literacy by recognizing the importance of the role of basic learning skills acquired in traditional primary schools, ones that still cope with the autonomous model of literacy. An illustration of this definitional refinement can be found in the same 1990 report when UNESCO states that: "pupils who do not have basic literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills shouldn't graduate" (UNESCO, 1990, p.46). Additionally, UNESCO is

promoting a new key concept in widening the definition of the concept of basic learning needs. An example of this new line of conceptualization of literacy can be found in the 1995 UNESCO's report. An illustration indicating this conceptual change can be found through UNESCO's use of the concepts of "advanced abilities" and «life skills" (UNESCO, 1995, p.14). Through this conceptual refinement of the term 'skill', UNESCO is stressing the importance of lifelong education. Another example of definitional refinements regarding UNESCO's literacy policies can be found in the fifth international conference on adult education report in Hamburg (1997 in its declaration entitled the *Hamburg Agenda for the Future* in which the UN leading educational organization stresses the importance of lifelong education by defining literacy as "the basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world; in every society, literacy is a necessary skill in itself and one of the foundations of other life skills" (UNESCO, 1997, p.4). Another example of a definitional change of the concept of literacy skill stressing the importance of lifelong skills and the notion of income generation can be found in UNESCO1997 report which states that:

> Literacy and numeracy skills need to be developed as a part of a set of skills that enable the learner to access and utilize information from a variety of sources and continue to acquire new knowledge and skills over a life time. Adult literacy programmes that contributed also to income generation and other development objectives generally proven more effective than those that have a narrow focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. (Final Report, p. 37)

In this new definition of literacy, UNESCO is promoting the concept of lifelong skills, ones that are more beneficial than the acquisition of reading, writing, and mathematical skills alone. But two years later, UNESCO, through its manual on functional literacy in 1999 stresses

again the importance of the traditional and autonomous view of literacy as the "recognition of numbers and basic mathematical signs and symbols within texts; this skill is called numeracy" (p.1). Consequently, numeracy, according to UNESCO, is defined as a skill, a tool to "make a particular sense of the world" (UNESCO, 1999, p.1).Through this new definition developed by UNESCO, there is a broadening of the concept of basic learning needs through the conceptualization of mathematical skills as numeracy, a key element in reading the world.

Later, UNESCO is adding a new layer in identifying a broader conceptualization of basic literacy skills in the Dakar Framework for action: Education for All (2000). As such, UNESCO is respecting the same definitional motto and states the "access to skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in society" (par.5) in order to reach universal literacy and educate the large amount of marginalized people. Through these recurrent definitions of literacy as a skill, one can realize the attempts of UNESCO in trying to improve the tenets of literacy education worldwide and to posit the basis of functional literacy.

A Functionalist View of Literacy

An example of a definition of functional literacy can be found in UNESCO's first international conference on adult education in 1949. An illustration of this definitional change figures in UNESCO's reference to functional educational when it states that: "education before becoming general is functional" (p.7). UNESCO didn't employ the word literacy in this report UNESCO but rather states that the "purpose of the adult is first the acquisition of skills in order to experience satisfaction" (p.3). But later in the report UNESCO states that "reading, writing, and arithmetic should be focused on topics which are of immediate concern to the adults: preparing for more productive and better paid work, improving the living conditions within the community setting (health, diet, leisure), civic and social training, etc" (UNESCO, 1965,

p.14).Through this functionalist portrayal of literacy, one can suggest that UNESCO is equating adult education with literacy by promoting the necessity for adults to acquire reading and writing skills. As such, UNESCO is valuing functional living skills that will allow adults to participate in public life and improve their living conditions.

It started to become obvious that the function originally assigned to adult literacy by UNESCO has been a matter of assigning functionality to literacy and adult education programmes. An illustration of this conceptualization of literacy can be found in a 1965 UNESCO report in which literacy, by its very nature, is considered as "inherently functional" (UNESCO, 1965, p.4). As such, UNESCO refines this conceptualization of literacy by stating that the function of adult literacy was to "enable individuals to become functional in their own cultures and then learn about other cultures to understand the common humanity of all human beings and to contribute to international understanding" (UNESCO, 1965, p.6). Another illustration of this definitional change is illustrated through the Teheran conference of 1965 when UNESCO positioned functional literacy in an arena in which economic functionality is the focus of international literacy programs worldwide. An illustration of this change or refinement of the definition of literacy by UNESCO is reflected through the 1965 report when UNESCO states that functional literacy "becomes an essential element in overall development….closely linked to economic and social priorities and to present and future manpower need" (UNESCO, 1965, p.29). Another example of this new portrayal of functional literacy is illustrated through UNESCO's words when it states that: "literacy was necessary for learning new skills, increased productivity both in the farm and in the factory and, therefore, should be central to any development strategy for alleviating poverty" (UNESCO, 1965, p.12). Again, functional literacy should be a means in allowing illiterates to become better integrated in a changing world by

acquiring the appropriate functional skills. Another example of this conceptual change can be found in a 1966 UNESCO document in which it states and refines the concept of functionality by implying the relationships between the acquisition of literacy skills and the positive economic consequences attached to it. Briefly stated, the essential elements of UNESCO's new approach to literacy are the following:

(1) Literacy programmes should preferably be linked with economic priorities and carried out in areas undergoing rapid economic expansion

(2) The literacy programmes of this new kind should aid in achieving main economic objectives, i.e., the increase of labor productivity, food production, industrialization, social and professional mobility, creation of new manpower, and diversification of the economy. (UNESCO, Asian Model, 1966, p.97)

Through the 1966 report, UNESCO recognizes that there is a 'literacy of a new kind' that is represented through the functionality of literacy in order to promote economic development. Accordingly, twelve years later, another refinement of the conceptualization of functional literacy can be found in a 1978 UNESCO report in which the organization posits its attempt to develop international standards of measuring literacy as in the 1951 and 1958 definition of literacy. As such, UNESCO proposes a definition of functional literacy, one which states that: "A person is functionally illiterate who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation" (UNESCO, 1978, p.4). Consequently, this UNESCO notion of functional literacy can also be found in a common publication of UNESCO and the United Nations Development Program which designed the Experimental World Literacy Programme initiated at the 1965 General Conference on Education. It was

obvious that the purpose of this program was to provide the acquisition of literacy skills through experimentation and a work-oriented process.

Another example of this conceptual change in defining literacy can be found in UNESCO's portrayal of the link between illiteracy and under-development when it recognizes the limitations and shortcomings of a traditional definition of literacy based on the teaching of reading and writing. As such, UNESCO proposed the following definition:

> Literacy work should be taken to mean any literacy operation conceived as a component of economic and social development projects. It is no longer an isolated or distinct operation-let alone an end in itself- but makes it possible to treat the illiterate as an individual in a group context, in relation to a given environment and with a new view to development. By its nature, a functional literacy programme is related to precise collective and individual needs. Thus, literacy is related to the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge of direct utility in a given environment. (UNESCO, 1970, p.9)

Another example of a conceptual change regarding UNESCO's traditional and autonomous definitions of literacy can be found in a 1972 UNESCO report in which it proposes a more refined definition of functional literacy. As such, functional literacy in its simplest terms according to UNESCO is "literacy integrated with specialized training, usually of a technical nature" (1972, p.2). Again, UNESCO keeps on refining its conceptualization of literacy when it states that literacy is directly related to development and the goal of literacy is to: "assist in achieving specific socio-economic objectives by making men and women receptive to change and innovation and by helping them to acquire new skills and new attitudes" (Ibid.p.2). Putting apart again the teaching of reading and writing, UNESCO states that functional literacy "aims at a more comprehensive training of the illiterate adult which is related to his role both as producer

and as a citizen" (ibid.p.2). Therefore, UNESCO is engaging in a new 'semantic battle' by stating that functional literacy represents "a first step in the education of adults who were engaged in the process of lifelong education and learning" (Ibid.p.3) and above all, investment in functional literacy represents "a good investment of limited resources by a developing country" (Ibid.p.4).

Throughout these new UNESCO's conceptualizations of functional literacy, one may envision two components in this definition because "(1) they are centered on vocational training and the provision of manpower and (2) they foster broad social and cultural development" (UNESCO, 1972, p.11). UNESCO realized that a more informed perspective on functional literacy requires the need for flexibility in order to achieve economic development. An example of this definitional refinement of literacy conceptualizations can be also found in the 1972 report in which UNESCO states that there is a need to "clarify the idea of functional literacy" (Ibid.p.12). An illustration of this conceptual refinement is reflected through the promotion of a new definition of functional literacy. As such, functional literacy is defined as "the ability to master the skills and means needed to take one's place in working, social and family life and to participate actively in the life of the community" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56). Therefore, UNESCO is implying a shift of interest from basic literacy to functional literacy which is commonly understood as to imply more "advanced abilities to beneficially use the 3Rs in one's daily life, such as being able to read and follow simple practical instructions and to apply these skills in the workplace" (UNESCO, 1995, p.14). Again, UNESCO acknowledges the practical need to acquire the basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills while recognizing that it is better to promote literacy circles in which adult learners will apply these skills in order to better their lives and improve their economic opportunities.

Later, an example of a more informed perspective on functional literacy is posited by UNESCO in its manual on functional literacy for indigenous people (1999) in which it introduces the distinction between functional literacy and functional illiteracy. An illustration of this conceptual change in defining functional literacy figures in the 1999 report when UNESCO states a «distinction between the higher order level of abilities that separates those who are barely able to read and write (basic illiterates) from the functional literates" (UNESCO, 1999, p.4). As such UNESCO defined functional illiteracy as the "inability to master the skills and means needed to take one's place in working and to participate actively in the life of society" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56). By doing so, UNESCO 1985 report differentiates between functional literacy and social literacy. An example of this conceptual refinement can be seen in the way UNESCO defines functional literacy as a training process, "which in addition to inculcating learning skills, should help workers to achieve greater mastery of their occupations, increase their theoretical and practical knowledge, advance in their careers and continue with their education" (UNESCO, 1985, p.58). At the same time, UNESCO defines social literacy as a means for the acquisition of the tools of further mastery of the written world and a "tool to pave the way for the integration of the newly literate into their cultural, social, and political environment" (Ibid.p.58). Both conceptualizations of literacy (functional and social literacy) add new layers to the traditional and autonomous model of literacy.

Literacy as Social Practices

Conceptualization of literacy as a plural notion started in the early 1980's. An example of this conceptual refinement can be found in UNESCO's international conference on adult education convened in Paris in 1985 in which UNESCO posited the "need for a new conceptualization of literacy in relation to changes in social demand regarding adult education"

(UNESCO, 1985, p.56). Another illustration of this conceptualization of literacy as a social practice is promoted further in the document when UNESCO states that literacy is viewed as a "complex problem related not only to the surrounding environment, but also to the historical, cultural, political, economic, and social features of each people"(Ibid.p.56). Therefore, UNESCO states that the "teaching of reading and writing should be integrated into a cultural context" (Ibid.p.56). It becomes obvious that UNESCO is still acknowledging the importance of reading and writing skills in defining literacy. In the same report, UNESCO is developing a refined definition of literacy by arguing that literacy can be seen as "an essential prerequisite for national, social, economic, and cultural development" (Ibid.p.56). In the same line of vision, UNESCO went on to adopt a civilizational concept of literacy, the aim of which is to:

Raise the individual to an educational and cultural level that enables him to acquire the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic and to participate in the development of his society and the renewal of its structures, so that he will have the social and cultural incentives to go on learning and to improve the quality of life. (Ibid.p.57)

An example of this civilizational conceptualization of literacy responds to a definition of a social literacy concept, one meant to allow the "acquisition of the tools of further mastery of the written world and pave the way for the integration of the newly literate into their cultural, social, and political environment" (Ibid.p.58). Throughout this statement, UNESCO acknowledges again the need to master the basic reading and writing skills in order to better adult learners' lives. Another example of this conceptual refinement can be also found in a 1990 UNESCO report in which UNESCO promotes a new vision of literacy different from the previous monolithic view of literacy as a static process and an autonomous model. As such, an illustration of this conceptual change figures in UNESCO's portrayal of literacy as a social

practice when it argues that literacy can be viewed as a «set of educational, social, and economic factors that cannot be radically changed in short periods of time" (UNESCO, 1990, p.4). As such UNESCO is promoting a plural vision of literacy by stating that "there is no single level of skill or knowledge that qualifies a person as 'literate', but rather that there are multiple levels and kinds of literacy (e.g. numeracy and technological literacy)" (Ibid.p.4). Again, UNESCO is adding new layers to the monolithic and traditional view envisioning literacy as a static acquisition of reading and writing skills.

Later, UNESCO is furthering its diversification of its conceptualization of literacy as a social practice in its 1997 *Hamburg Declaration: The Agenda for the Future*. In doing so, UNESCO developed a new vision of literacy, one conceived as the "basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world and as the catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political, and economic activities" (UNESCO, 1997, p.4). An illustration of this conceptual change can be seen in the way member states commit themselves in "replacing this narrow vision of literacy by learning that meets social, economic, and political needs and gives expression to a new form of citizenship" (Ibid.p.16). As such, literacy envisioned as a social practice is a new model that improves the drawbacks of a traditional vision of literacy, one centered in the sole acquisition of reading and writing skills. Another illustration of this change in defining literacy as a social practice can be also found in the way UNESCO envision the creation of "literate societies responsive to different cultural traditions" and how it recognizes that "literacy is embedded in social practices" (Ibid.p.17). Further in the document, UNESCO states that in order to "enrich the literate environment", one needs to "enhance the use and retention of literacy through the production and dissemination of locally-relevant, gender-sensitive and learner-generated print materials" (Ibid.p.18). In essence, it is illustrated that "all

cultures are literate and that literacy is universal but is realized in culturally specific ways" (UNESCO, 1999, p.2). Above all, UNESCO states further that literacy is no longer seen as a singular concept, but rather as plural literacies. UNESCO illustrates again this conceptual change by stating that these "literacies differ according to purpose, context, use, script, language and institutional framework and as individuals, we all use multiple literacies" (UNESCO, 2000, p.60). Among the plural literacies recognized by UNESCO, one can cite the concept of functional literacy which is the "expansion of primary education" (Ibid.p.60). Another illustration of this conceptual refinement can be seen in the way UNESCOUNESCO recognizes that "literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals in their community" (UNESCO, 2002, p.3) and mention media literacy and legal literacy without defining them.

Again, the United Nations Literacy Decade clearly states the need for a renewed vision of literacy if real progress is to be made in enabling the excluded to gain access to the means of written communication. An example of this conceptual refinement figures in the way in which the United Nations(UN) posit a vision of literacy that goes beyond earlier conceptions of literacy, echoing the message of the Jomtien conference that an expanded vision of basic education must be the basis for education for all. An illustration of this conceptual change can be found in the way the UN defines literacy as a concept that encompasses the educational needs of learners. An example can be found in the 2002 United Nations Literacy Decade document which states that:

> Literacy is central to all levels of education, through all delivery modes-formal, non-formal and informal. Literacy for all encompasses the educational needs of all human beings in all settings and contexts, in the North and the South, the urban and the rural,

those in school and those out of school, adults and children, boys and girls, men and women. (UNLD, 2002, p.4)

Another illustration of the portrayal of literacy as a social practice can be found later in the document when the United Nations Literacy Decade report states that: "Literacy for all has to address the literacy needs of the individual as the family, literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in society and in the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries" (UNLD, 2002. p.4).Thus, literacy as a social practice is related to the conceptualization of literacy as a plural notion. An example of this definition can be found in a 2004 UNESCO document entitled *The Plurality of Literacy and its Implications for Policies and Programmes*. An illustration of this conceptual refinement resides in the way UNESCO posits a view of literacy in which it refers to the plural visions of literacy. As such, literacy is more than a set of technical skills but rather a plural notion. An illustration of this change relates to the way in which UNESCO states that: "The plural notion of literacy latches upon these different purposes and situations. Rather than seeing literacy as only a generic set of technical skills, it looks at the social dimensions of acquiring and applying literacy"(UNESCO, 2004, p.13.).This portrayal of literacy as a plural notion posits a conceptual relationship between the various UNESCO statements which keep on refining the definition of literacy.

Multiple Discursive Formations of Literacy

An informed perspective in positing various forms of literacy can be analyzed through the patterns among a various array of UNESCO's statements and the values and traditions that

explicit these conceptualizations of literacy. In trying to delineate what surrounds UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy, one is left with the choice to analyze the correlations between literacy policies and the discourses that gave birth to renewed definitions of literacy. Accordingly, Mills (1997) states that a discourse is a "set of sanctioned statements that have institutional force-a profound influence on how individuals think and act" (p.62). As such, UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy posit a link between these policies envisioned as texts to larger world views. In UNESCO's policies on literacy the definition of this concept as reading and writing visible in texts across the years indicates somewhat forms of literacy. Again, various forms of literacy relate to UNESCO's statements viewing literacy as a skill and literacy as a social practice. As such, one can distinguish various forms of literacy regarding UNESCO's policies on literacy from 1949 to 2002 by looking at the various conceptualizations of literacy such as the individual localization and the social meanings of literacy. One of the most prevalent forms of literacy is the one positing literacy as a human right while sustaining the autonomous model of literacy. One should acknowledge the view of literacy as a human right goes along with the valorization of lifelong education in UNESCO's policies on literacy. In the same token, when literacy is envisioned as a key element in fighting poverty reduction is currently a strong institutional paradigm in UNESCO's policies regarding literacy along with a human rights framework. As such, UNESCO's literacy promotion is linked integrally to these of literacy practices through the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Ideology of Literacy and Developmental Issues

When the second session of UNESCO's General Conference held in Mexico City in 1947 and the Third session in Beirut in 1948 decided to call the first international conference on

adult education, the emphasis was on Western Europe and North America but as stated in the report. Accordingly, the report states that "the delegates came from all parts of the world and ensured that attention was given to problems peculiar to regions where institutions or methods of adult education may be less developed" (UNESCO, 1949, p.3). The conference didn't come up with a unique definition of adult education but rather with a declaration of principle which "may apply to all countries and to all types of experiments" (Ibid.p.4). An illustration of this conceptual orientation of literacy can be found in the report when UNESCO states that "the role of adult education to close the gaps between the so called masses (illiterates) and the so called cultured people (literates)" (Ibid.p.8). Further in the document, UNESCO states that "adult education takes at its starting point the real conditions of life, and aims at enabling each individual to live as full and rich a life as possible because "the least educated of men can possess as genuine a culture as the scholar"(Ibid. p.23). The universality of this declaration is revealed in this following statement in which the report added that "functional education enables everyone to assume, not merely in his workshop or trade union, but also in the town, his responsibilities as a free citizen" (Ibid.p.4). Thus, "education is a vital factor in the social, economic, and political development of all people and a process essential to the implementation of the principles of the universal declaration of human rights" (UNESCO, 1960, p.5). An illustration of this conceptual orientation valuing the universality and the economic functionality of literacy can be found in the Montreal International Conference on Adult Education (1960), which recognizes that,

> Amongst the needs of various countries, the highest priority should be given by governments and United Nations agencies to economic development, particularly in the underdeveloped countries. The Conference invites the attention of governments and

United Nations agencies to the urgency of preparing the minds of adults in these regions to take full advantage of and participate in these measures for furthering economic development. It further urges governments and United Nations agencies to treat Adult Education as a part of economic and multipurpose development and of the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance for economic development. (p.5)

UNESCO posits at the same time that education is a lifelong activity and a right for every individual. As such the ideological discourse of literacy as portrayed by UNESCO is rendered obvious in the 1960 report when UNESCO states that "education is a process that continued through the whole life, it was at once, the right of every individual and the responsibility of mankind" (UNESCO, 1960, p.10). Again, UNESCO is portraying literacy as a lifelong process and a strong human right.

Further, while stating the importance of education for civic purposes, UNESCO posits also the relevance of acquiring basic reading and writing skills by acknowledging the importance of the traditional and autonomous model of literacy. An example of this conceptual mix of various forms of literacy can be found in the 1953 and 1960 reports when UNESCO states that "adult education was very important for the purposes of "civic and social education" (UNESCO, 1960, p.13). As such, " as long as a sizeable proportion of the world population remains without the rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing, the problem of illiteracy will continue to be of interest" (UNESCO, 1953, p.9). Later, in 1965, UNESCO states again the universality of literacy by privileging the human right approach as envisioned in the United Nations' declaration. An illustration of this human right paradigm can be found in a 1965 document in which UNESCO considers that the "campaign against illiteracy finds its justification in the universal declaration of human rights, according to which, in article 26,

everyone has the right to education" (UNESCO, 1965, p.3). Therefore, "literacy education for the masses is an essential factor in the economic, social, political and cultural progress of individuals as well as of communities" (Ibid.p.3). As such, this comforted line of vision is still connected with UNESCO's vision of development and lifelong education as the objective of these international conferences on adult education was to "expand educational opportunities within integrated lifelong education systems" (UNESCO, 1972, p.2). An example of this programmatic and ideological vision can be found in the 1972 report when UNESCO states that: "the eradication of illiteracy is a key factor in development" because "literacy is a cornerstone of adult education" (Ibid.p.16). Another illustration of this conceptual orientation of UNESCO's actions on literacy can be found in the same Faure report when UNESCO states that "adult education forms an integral part of lifelong education and is inseparable from the goal of expanding educational opportunities for all" (Ibid.p.38). As such, by recognizing the universality of literacy, UNESCO states that "literacy should provide learning opportunities for all citizens and education for cultural fulfillment" (Ibid.p.40).UNESCO articulated its vision on two ground-breaking reports on lifelong learning (*Faure Report*, 1972; *Delors Report*, 1996) illustrating fundamental principles of this renewed concept.

An example of this conceptual refinement privileging the human right and development frameworks can be found in the 1972 report in which UNESCO states again the universality of literacy along with a conceptual refinement of the concept of lifelong learning. Accordingly, UNESCO acknowledges that:

The idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society. The lifelong concept covers all aspects of education, embracing everything in it, with the whole being more than the sum of its parts. There is no such thing as a separate 'permanent' part of

education which is not lifelong. In other words, lifelong education is not an educational system but the principle on which the over-all organization of a system is founded, and which should accordingly underlie the development of each of its component parts. We propose lifelong education as the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries. (UNESCO, 1972, p.181)

Later in the report, UNESCO forwarded some key ideas on lifelong education by stating the tremendous importance of this concept for all individuals. Literacy, according to UNESCO is a lifelong process and a strong human right. An illustration of this ideological engagement can be found in the same report in which UNESCO states that:

Every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life. The idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society. The lifelong concept covers all aspects of education, embracing everything in it, with the whole being more than the sum of its parts. There is no such thing as a separate permanent part of education which is not lifelong. In other words, lifelong education is not an educational system but the principle in which the over-all organization of a system is founded, and which accordingly underlies the development of each of its component parts. (Ibid. p.182)

While the concept of lifelong learning is a key conceptual element in UNESCO's literacy recommendations, the poverty reduction discourse related to the discourse of development is also relevant as regard to illiteracy. An example of this refined conceptualization can be found in the 1972 report when UNESCO states that «one of the factors of illiteracy resides in low economic growth, social tensions, and political stability" (UNESCO, 1972, p.48). Another example can be found in UNESCO's review of the narrowly technical/economic

concept of functional literacy adopted in the work-oriented pilots' projects in which it states that:

> The concepts of functional literacy must be extended to include all its dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural. Just as development is not only economic growth, so literacy must aim above all to arouse in the individual a critical awareness of social reality, and to enable him or her to understand, master and transform his or her destiny. (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976, p.191)

An illustration of the key importance of literacy throughout life can be found in the 1985 UNESCO report in which it states that "education is a right for all, throughout life" and "lifelong education is an absolute requirement for social, economic, scientific, and technological development" (UNESCO, 1985, p.43). Another example of this conceptual refinement of UNESCO's policies on literacy can be found in the same report valuing the relationship between education and the world of work through lifelong learning" because, as UNESCO states, "those who will be the victims of economic deprivation are illiterates" (UNESCO, 1985, p.44). UNESCO furthers its conceptualization of literacy by stating also that it is the "right of minority peoples to determine their own language and cultural development through adult education" (Ibid.p.49). Furthermore, the relationship between lifelong learning and economic functionality is valued in the way UNESCO posits the link between the "development of vocational skills, economic growth, and social development" (Ibid.p.50).

Another example of this conceptual refinement can be found through the same UNESCO 1985 report in which it states that literacy still remain a "basic individual right and a fundamental duty of the State" because it is an "essential prerequisite for national, social, economic, and cultural development" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56). In order to sustain the

development of literacy and strive for economic development, UNESCO considers that member States should therefore "incorporate literacy training and basic education for adults into comprehensive development plans" (Ibid.p.57) because the "right to learn is the right to read and write, the question and analyze, the right to create and imagine, the right to read one's world and to write history, the right to have access to educational resources, the right to develop individual and collective skills" (Ibid.p.67). Further in the 1985 document, UNESCO states that all these rights are not a "cultural luxury" (Ibid.p.67) and the "right to learn is considered as important for the survival of humanity" (Ibid.p.67). As such, UNESCO finally acknowledges that the right to learn is an "instrument for economic development' and must be recognized as one of the fundamental rights" (Ibid.p.67). Again, UNESCO is developing various forms of literacy surrounded by strong discourses emphazing in the same token the importance of the development framework and the lifelong and poverty reduction paradigms.

Another document entitled the World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting basic Learning Needs (1990) in its preamble recognized that "education is a fundamental right for all people" and it helps "ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic, and cultural progress, tolerance, and international cooperation" (p.68). An illustration of this theoretical vision can be found in the 1990 UNESCO document in its article 1 in which the declaration recognizes the right for "every person- youth and adult -to be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs" (UNESCO, 1990, p.69). Further, UNESCO posit a conceptual refinement of the concept of basic learning needs by implying that "meeting basic learning needs constitutes a common and universal human responsibility" and it requires "international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic

disparities" (UNESCO, 1990, p.74). The same line of vision figures at the end of the declaration in which member States "reaffirmed the right of all people to education" realizing that this was "the foundation of their determination to singly and together, ensure education for all" (Ibid.p.75). The same determination is reflected in the *Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All* (2000) in which the right to education is reaffirmed in its paragraph 3. "Commitments to basic education" will help "grant youth and adults access to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and full participation in their societies" (UNESCO, 2000, par.5). Above all, UNESCO is stating again the strong relationship between literacy and development by affirming that "education is recognized as a fundamental right and it is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalization" (UNESCO, 1990, par.6). As such, UNESCO is privileging a literacy approach promoting the development framework, one that entails how adult learners need to cope with the demands and needs of the new world economy.

Refining its theorization of the concept of basic learning needs UNESCO affirms that the "basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency and achieving EFA goals should be postponed no longer" (Ibid.par.6). By affirming the importance of acquiring basic learning needs, UNESCO is privileging forms of literacy that acknowledge basic reading and writing skills as a key element of economic development. Again, another UNESCO 2002 document recognizes the relationship between literacy as a universal right and economic development when UNESCO General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2002 positing the "right of every individual to education as provided in the Universal declaration of human rights and the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights of the child" (p.1). An

illustration of this conceptual refinement positing the economic drawbacks of illiteracy can be found further in the report when UNESCO states that:

> Whatever measure of poverty is used, the gap between rich and poor continues to grow. Moreover, a map of areas of high illiteracy in the world corresponds quite closely with a map of high levels of poverty, and literacy competence is an essential learning outcome contributing to economic development. In this perspective, it is not literacy on its own that makes a difference, but rather what it enables people to do in order to benefit from new freedoms and address poverty. Literacy is one of the features – but a universal one – that is linked with poverty reduction, economic growth and wealth. (United Nations, 2002, p.3)

UNESCO is convinced that "literacy is crucial to the acquisition, by every child, youth and adult, of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life, and represents an essential step in basic education, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of twenty-first century. An illustration of this vision can be found in the 2002 report when UNESCO is affirming that "the realization of the right to education, especially for girls, contributes to the eradication of poverty" (Ibid.p.1). Again, the poverty reduction discourse as envisioned by most of the United Nations Agencies such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund is attached to a human right framework as portrayed in the UN declaration of human rights. Along with the human right framework and the development paradigm, UNESCO is developing in the same token a literacy approach privileging military and medical imageries.

The Discourse on The Eradication of Illiteracy (Medical and Military Discourses)

UNESCO's theoretical representations on the eradication of illiteracy can be found in the Montreal International Conference on Adult Education (1960) in which UNESCO makes it obvious that "action should be taken to create within the competent organizations of the United Nations, including itself, a special fund derived from increased contributions from member states, for the specific purpose of eliminating illiteracy in the developing and newly independent countries" (UNESCO, 1960, p.8). An illustration of this official engagement can be found in the report when UNESCO reviews the development of adult illiteracy and formulate plans to meet the needs of the future because "adult education was a vital factor in the social, economic, and political development of all people and a process essential to the implementation of the principles of the universal declaration of human rights" (Ibid.p.5). A second illustration of this conceptual refinement can be seen in the way UNESCO views education as a "process" and considers it as the "right of every individual and the responsibility of mankind" (Ibid.p.10). Again, UNESCO recognizes that adult education is important for man's survival and realizes that with the "help of developed countries, illiteracy could be eradicated" (Ibid.p.13).

Consequently, literacy campaigns remain important methods in fighting and combating illiteracy according to UNESCO. An illustration of this UNESCO's ideological engagement can be found in a UNESCO 1960 report in which "literacy campaigns are considered as the most important and the most pressing of the overall problem of adult education and they should not cause us to lose sight of the need for each individual continually to adapt himself to a rapidly changing world" (UNESCO, 1960, p.19). Another illustration of this official engagement of UNESCO is found later in the report when UNESCO along with the United Nations and the

other specialized agencies (in particular the International Labor Organization), and with appropriate Non Governmental Organizations realize that they should:

> Make effective arrangements for the speediest possible eradication of ignorance throughout the world. To this end, further aid should be given to the countries in process of development and the experience of those states in which illiteracy has already been abolished should be made available to all. (UNESCO, 1960, p.20)

Later, UNESCO recognizes that literacy education for the masses is an essential factor for economic development and cultural progress (UNESCO, 1965) and that Member States should promote the "eradication of mass illiteracy" (UNESCO, 1965, p.4). An example of this new orientation can be found in the report when UNESCO states that should "eliminate one of the most regrettable and most striking aspects of inequality in regard to education in order to make illiterate adults literate"(Ibid.p.5). This UNESCO commitment is still prevailing in its plan of action to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000. UNESCO renewed its willingness to help Members States to eradicate illiteracy. An illustration of this commitment can be found in a 1989 report in which UNESCO states the necessity to «create a literate world" and give "absolute priority to the struggle against illiteracy" (UNESCO, 1989, par.1-2). Another illustration of this conceptual refinement is obvious in the report when UNESCO states that the "heart of the literacy programme is a global approach to combating illiteracy through the education of out-of-school youth and adults and the promotion of universal primary education" (UNESCO, 1989, par.32). As such, UNESCO realizes that there is a strong relationship between the eradication of illiteracy and schooled literacy. Nonetheless, UNESCO recognizes that with the "universalization of primary education, adult literacy can be eradicated" (UNESCO, 1995, p.4). By privileging the universalization of primary education, UNESCO is acknowledging the

importance of acquiring basic reading and writing skills through the lowest educational level in order to eradicate literacy.

An obvious illustration of this strong UNESCO commitment can be found again in a 2000 report in which UNESCO adopted a new position by mentioning that it will "no more" use a "monolithic view of illiteracy as a disease in which the germs might be eradicated with appropriate drug or vaccination", rather "literacy is now more broadly viewed as a product of educational, social, and economic factors that cannot be radically changed in short periods of time" (UNESCO, 2000, p.4). At the same time, UNESCO is acknowledging a strong relationship between adult education and schooled literacy.

The Discourse of Compulsory Education or Schooled Literacy

An illustration of the strong relationship between adult education and schooled literacy can be found in an early 1949 report in which UNESCO acknowledges that "the least educated of men can possess as genuine a culture as the scholar" (UNESCO, 1949, p.3). At the same time UNESCI is recognizing that the problem of illiteracy is different between under developed and developed countries. According to UNESCO, in 'developed countries' education has long been compulsory and almost universal and the number of persons not able to read and write is confined to an irreducible minimum, composed mainly of the mentally incapable. In other areas, progress in the reduction of illiteracy has been slow, owing to the lack of sufficient means to provide educational opportunities for the whole population. An example of this specific conceptualization of literacy can be found in a 1953 monograph on adult education in which UNESCO states that "the problem of illiteracy may be considered of little importance in some countries of western Europe especially when the population is increasing faster than the facilities of education" (UNESCO, 1953, p.9). Another example of the relationship between

primary education and illiteracy can be found in the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy (1965) in which UNESCO states again "the relationship between primary school enrollment and the struggle against illiteracy"(1965, p.4). The recognition of this relationship is made more obvious in the Paris International Conference on Adult Education (1985) in which "one of UNESCO's priority lines of action in the field of education is to promote the development and improvement of primary education, a prerequisite for any kind of eradication of illiteracy and to promote literacy work for young people and adults as a vital component of any development" (UNESCO, 1985, p.45). Another illustration of this relationship resides in the UNESCO commitment to link literacy to a universal access to basic education in order to: "Eliminate illiteracy at its source by enrolling all children in basic education and development programs to ensure that they will not relapse into illiteracy and provide the newly literate with opportunities for lifelong education" *(UNESCO, 1985, p.58.*

Another strong illustration of this UNESCO commitment can be found in a 1989 report in which UNESCO is still positing the importance of compulsory primary education in fighting against illiteracy by stating that "universal primary education belongs to the "global approach to combating illiteracy along with the education of out-of-school youth and adults" (UNESCO, 1989, par.32). Again, UNESCO illustrates this relationship by stating that:

> Information on literacy should be complemented by more detailed statistics on the percentage distribution of the population by the highest level or grade of education attained, so as to provide additional and finer indications on the educational composition of the population that are essential to the planning of socio-economic and cultural development. (UNESCO, 1995, p.14)

Another illustration of this relationship between illiteracy and primary education can be found in the UNESCO commitment through the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000 which states that members States are committed to "ensure that, by the year 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys would have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all" (UNESCO, 2002, p.2). As such, UNESCO through its international commitment to literacy for all sustains the fact that educational achievement has to be used as a proxy to determine illiteracy rates all around the world. An example of this conceptual orientation favoring the comparability of literacy statistics can be found in a 2008 report in which the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) states that: "Educational attainment data can be used as a proxy for determining the illiterate population of a given country. These data are typically available from censuses and most socio-economic household surveys" (UIS, 2008, p.12). As such, the traditional and autonomous model of literacy is viewed as a strong means in evaluating basic reading and writing skills in order to ease the comparability of educational statistics. Another example of this orientation can found in the 2008 report in which the UIS stated that: "Although research indicates that primary education is not always a reliable predictor of literacy skills, educational attainment data is used as a proxy to impute literacy rates for countries for which the regular "dichotomous" literacy data are not available" (Ibid.p.12). Again, UNESCO is equating educational attainment through primary school with basic literacy. As such, UNESCO acknowledges that educational attainment can be an important means in fighting against illiteracy. It remains that the UNESCO still defines illiterates as: "Those persons who reported their highest educational attainment level as having "no schooling", "some primary school" or having "not completed primary

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school" (Ibid. p.12). Thus, it becomes obvious that school is a strong way in achieving literacy because it allows learners to acquire the basic reading and writing skills that cope with the traditional form of literacy acknowledged by UNESCO.

A strong illustration of this relationship can be found in the same 2008 report in which the UIS states that "literacy represents a potential for further intellectual growth and contribution to the economic-socio-cultural development of a society". Again, the UIS is making it clear that: "Literacy rates show the accumulated achievement of primary education and literacy programmes in imparting basic literacy skills to the population, thereby enabling them to apply such skills in daily life and to continue learning and communicating using the written word. (Ibid.p.13). As such, the commitment of UNESCO in privileging schooled literacy goes along with an equal interest in promoting a literate environment.

The Literate Environment Discourse

An example of this conceptual orientation privileging the literate environment framework can be found in an early 1949 document in which UNESCO developed the concept of "living culture", one in which "adult education aims at enabling each individual to live as full and rich a life as possible; this does not mean a distribution of knowledge, but an initiation in the art of living everyday life" (UNESCO, 1949, p2). Another example of this commitment can be found in the report when UNESCO acknowledges that adult education is allowing individuals to "understand how they fit in with the laws of production and consumption" (Ibid.3) in a living culture. UNESCO used again the concept of a literate environment in its 1989 plan to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000. Another illustration of this conceptual refinement in positing a literate environment can be found in the report when UNESCO states that "absolute priority should be given to the struggle against illiteracy and the creation of a

literate world by the end of the century" (UNESCO, 1989, par.1). As such, UNESCO acknowledges that the fight against illiteracy will help build "literate societies responsive to the different cultural traditions" (UNESCO, 1997, p.17) and "enrich the literacy environment by enhancing the use and retention of literacy through the production and dissemination of locally-relevant, gender-sensitive and learner-generated print materials" (Ibid.18). A strong illustration of this commitment in promoting literate environments can be found in a 2002 report in which UNESCO reaffirms that:

> Literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.(UNESCO, 2002, Art.7)

As such, in order to sustain more dynamic literacy policies, UNESCO acknowledges that in countries with low literacy rates, member States need to create and sustain "dynamic literate environments" (UNESCO, 2002, p.4). While promoting the development of literate environments, UNESCO portrays at the same time specific discourses on illiteracy.

The Discourses on Illiteracy

UNESCO developed along the years various conceptualizations of the term illiteracy through its use of the dichotomous model in defining literacy. During the first international conference on adult education in Elsinore, Denmark (1949), UNESCO was portraying a distinction between the 'so called masses' who represented the masses of illiterates, and the so called cultured people who represented the literate minorities. This distinction is still relevant in UNESCO's discourse through the development of the concept of '*literacy for the masses*' during the Tehran meeting on the eradication of illiteracy (UNESCO, 1965). The concept of

literacy for the masses is relevant in under developed countries according to the prevalent UNESCO's discourse stating that the problem of illiteracy is of little importance in developed countries where compulsory primary education has been present since decades therefore undermining the scores of illiteracy. An example of this discourse can be found in 1953 UNESCO report in which, according to UNESCO, in these developed countries, *the "mentally incapable"* (UNESCO, 1953) represent the illiterates. Many years later, UNESCO (1978, 1985) developed and positioned the concept of functional illiteracy to sustain the difference of 'illiteracies' between under developed and developed countries.

The concept if functional illiteracy goes along with the concept of 'basic illiteracy' developed later by UNESCO (1999). An example of this conceptualization of illiteracy can be found in two reports: The World Conference on Education for All and the World Education Forum (2000). Through these two documents UNESCO posits that the international community is no longer using the "monolithic view of illiteracy as a disease in which the germs might be eradicated with an appropriate drug or vaccination" (UNESCO, 2000, p.4). Again, in a 2002 report, UNESCO is assimilating the illiterates as the "marginalized people" and affirms they relate to the "excluded pockets of literacy" (UNESCO, 2002, p.4). While affirming various discourse formations of literacy, UNESCO tends to exclude specific discourses.

Excluded Discourses in UNESCO's Policies on Literacy

One of the least prevalent discourses in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy from 1949 to 2002 remains: (a) The discourse of Francophone literacy, (b) the Indigenous discourse on literacy, (c) and the discourse of literacy as text.

All UNESCO documents posited the prevalence of an Anglophone discourse of literacy and didn't take into account other conceptualizations of literacy in Francophone countries.

Nonetheless, one can notice that during the first international conference on adult education, the French experts representing their country during this international meeting of adult education specialists stated that the" expression adult education is not used in France. It is called "popular education or education populaire" (UNESCO, 1949, p.10). An example of this official position can be found in a 1949 UNESCO document in which the French experts acknowledge that "popular education is much wider and expresses the will to include all social classes in the cultural work" (Ibid.p.10). As such the concept of adult education which has a close relationship with literacy was absent in the francophone arena.

Three UNESCO documents mentioned the discourse of indigenous literacy (1997, 1999, and 2002). UNESCO while stating the relationship between lifelong learning, health and environmental sustainability mentioned the importance of indigenous education and culture and the right of indigenous people and 'nomadic people' to "access all levels and forms of education provided by the state" (UNESCO, 1997, p.5). An illustration of this importance of indigenous literacy can be found in the same document in which UNESCO states that "education for indigenous people and nomadic people should be linguistically and culturally appropriate to their needs and should facilitate access to further education and training"(Ibid.p.5). Another illustration of the inclusion of indigenous literacy in UNESCO's discourse can be found in the same document in which the organization states that «literacy programmes in indigenous communities need to be perceived by the people of the local cultures as an expansion of their existing skills rather than the remedy for the lack of skills" (UNESCO, 1999, p.2). Again UNESCO recognizes this importance of indigenous literacy by stating that, in essence, "all cultures are literate and literacy is universal but is realized in culturally specific ways" (Ibid.p.2). Another obvious illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 2002

document in which UNESCO recognizes that "literacy was no longer seen as a singular concept but rather as plural literacies differing according to purpose, context, use, script, language, and institutional framework" (2002, p.60). This literacy vision according to UNESCO led to recognize that "literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty"(2002, p.3). In the same token, the conceptualization of literacy as a text was not mentioned in any of the UNESCO's documents from 1949 to 2002 but the EFA Global Monitoring Report (2006) posited the concept as one of the key features of conceptualizations of literacy in academia.

The Association of Ethnography and Economics in Defining Literacy

UNESCO's definitions of literacy shifted from a functional literacy grounded in basic functioning and survival to a socio-cultural perspective based on personal and social empowerment and that understands literacy as embedded in specific contexts requiring different practices. A definition of literacy that only integrates cultural and economic skills might be considered as inadequate because literacy has multiple meanings and can be understood as a means to read the world in a Freirian sense and can lead to social transformation and empowerment. Also, with the influence of the new literacy studies in the 1980's and 1990's, literacy is viewed as a social practice rather than simply a set of neutral technical skills.

In the 1960's, UNESCO started to define literacy in functional terms explicitly associated with economics and the labor market (UNESCO, 1965). Functional literacy was presented as a key element of the development process (UNESCO, 1965). As such, the teaching of reading and writing serve various individuals in allowing them to be better prepared for the world of work. Although the various UNESCO documents from 1949 to 2002 include multiple constructions of literacy, the functional view of literacy is still prevalent.

As Mosse (1998) states, "since the 1980's 'anthropologists began to be employed by development agencies as problem solvers" (p.14) and started to use what has been termed as the "ethnographic perspective" (Street, 2001) into international organizations' policies on literacy education and development. Nonetheless, there subsists a complex methodological dilemma in associating the ethnographic perspective with literacy policies surrounded by an economistic perspective. As such, researchers in the field of adult literacy are experiencing some difficulties in making their research findings meaningful to policy makers. An example of this theoretical position can be found through the work of Robinson-Pant (2004) in which he mentions that there is a "practical dilemma around how to avoid simplifying lengthy ethnographic analysis into bullet points or generalizing statistically from tiny unrepresentative samples" (p.781).

This methodological dilemma in associating the multiple meanings of literacy with quantifiable data in measuring literacy progress is visible in the constant renewed UNESCO's definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 1985 report in which UNESCO states that the "teaching of reading and writing must be integrated into a cultural context" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56) while at the same time, UNESCO acknowledges that literacy remains an "essential prerequisite for national, social, economic, and cultural development" (Ibid.p.56). In the same document, UNESCO is promoting a new conceptualization of literacy known as the 'civilizational' concept of literacy while distinguishing between functional literacy and social literacy. Another example of this change regarding UNESCO literacy policies can be found in a 1997 document in which UNESCO is asking the Member States to "replace the narrow vision of literacy by learning that meets social, economic and political needs and gives expression to a new form of citizenship" (UNESCO, 1997, p.16). At the same moment UNESCO is promoting an operational definition of literacy as

the ability to read and write for the purposes on establishing an international basis to the comparability of educational statistics. An illustration of the promotion by UNESCO of the comparability of literacy statistics at the international level can be found in a 1999 report in which the organization acknowledges that, "although literacy has wider meanings, understanding, critical awareness, and the capability of entering into the culture of literate practices are built on a mastery of the essential practices of reading and writing" (UNESCO, 1999, p.2). According to UNESCO, the autonomous model of literacy is used for statistical purposes and will allow policy makers to study the progress of literacy in conformity with the Education for All goals and the millennium development goals. An illustration of this commitment to this literacy model can be found in a 1990 report in which UNESCO states:

> While the criteria used to determine whether a person is literate or not can differ between countries, there is a clear trend for the countries to use the definitions recommended by UNESCO whereby an illiterate is a person "who cannot with understanding both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life. (UNESCO, 1990, p.2)

The association of an operational definitional- for statistical purposes- with functional literacy- directly related to the development process- posits the importance of the concept of experimentation in UNESCO's discourse. But it remains difficult to find and promote a technique to measure plural literacies. An illustration of this conceptual difficulty can be found in a 1972 report in which UNESCO states:

> Experimentation is not an academic exercise but is the instrument to discover and improve the links between literacy and development. Underlying the experimental approach is the purpose to determine a set of conditions under which investment in functional literacy represents a good investment of limited resources by a developing

country" (UNESCO, 1972, p.4). While member states are struggling to find available funding to finance their literacy programmes UNESCO stated that "literacy is no longer seen as a singular concept, but rather as plural literacies. (UNESCO, 2002, p.60)

It remains that the more difficult task is to tell the Member States how to measure plural literacies.

The Metanarrative Sustaining UNESCO's Policies on Literacy

While it might seem that there is a 'rhetoric of errantry' in UNESCO's policies on literacy, a thorough analysis of its constant renewed conceptualizations of literacy through divergent and complementary discursive formations reveals that UNESCO is portraying a holistic approach to literacy by privileging an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes and promoting at the same time a plural vision of literacy. Above all, it remains that the metanarrative that sustains UNESCO's policies on literacy can be viewed as 'Learning and Literacy for All' because the most important target for UNESCO since the Jomtien Conference in 1990 is to meet the Millennium development goals of achieving universal completion of primary education. An example of this metanarrative constantly associating literacy with schooling can be illustrated by an UNESCO 2002 document in which the organization makes constant reference to the six Dakar goals:

(1) Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;

(2) Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;

(3) Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;

(4) Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for adults;

(5) Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015;

(6) Ensuring that measurable outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills. (UNESCO, 2002, p.7)

Through these outcomes developed by UNESCO, one can notice the political and education implications of a literacy policy oriented towards the notion of schooled literacy.

Interpreting the Findings

The purpose of this study is to analyze UNESCO's forms of literacy from 1949 to 2002, with the purpose of locating specific forms of literacy definitions within a broader socio-historical framework. In order to unravel the political, social, cultural, economic, theoretical, and methodological complexities as cohesively as possible, I have structured the interpretations of the findings according to what has been revealed through a thorough analysis of UNESCO's forms of literacy by tracing the shifting meanings ascribed to literacy definitions during that period of time. My purpose in conducting this study was to trace the regularities and discontinuities in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy from 1949n to 2002 and to unravel the theoretical and political frameworks that surround these renewed definitions of literacy. More specifically, I was interested in researching and analyzing the intertextual relationships between the various conceptualizations of literacy in academia and the UNESCO arena in order to localize common patterns, trends and what I termed 'theoretical acquaintances'. Finally, the

main purpose of this study was to look at promising insights into the ways in which the 'policing' of literacy definitions are historically situated as far as UNESCO was concerned.

Realizing that the conceptualizations of literacy through UNESCO policies was a good starting point in analyzing the theoretical, economic, cultural, political, and social frameworks surrounding these renewed discourse on literacy, it was necessary to first look the patterns and trends characterizing the multiple and divergent definitions of literacy portrayed by UNESCO in the literacy arena in order to reveal the metanarrative that sustains the regularities and discontinuities in literacy conceptualizations that one might find in trying to deconstruct the 'policing of literacy' by UNESCO from 1949 to 2002. 1949 is a good starting point because it is related to the introduction of the discourse of fundamental education and the rising concerns about the ins and outs of adult education as a westernized concept and the deep problems of high illiteracy rates that the under developed countries were dealing with. In the same token, 2002 is a memorable year in the literacy arena because it reveals and sustains the international commitment to literacy, Education for All, and the millennium development goals through their need to deepen the relationships between literacy and schooling.

This historical analysis of UNESCO's forms of literacy posit how the various concepts and themes emerging from UNESCO's multiple literacy conceptualizations start to be associated or perceived as *"truth" or as a "*problem" as Gale (2001, p.385) mentioned it. While presenting an exhaustive account of UNESCO's forms of literacy, my aim remain to proceed through an unfolding process of the diverse 'pockets of literacy definitions' from 1949 to 2002 in order to generate through a thorough analysis of UNESCO's definitions of literacy a complex web of theoretical relationships regarding literacy definitions in academia and in UNESCO's policy arena.

This historic investigation of specific forms of literacy starts with the conceptualizations of literacy portrayed by UNESCO from 1949 to 2002. An important source for this study was the UNESCO database (UNESDOC). I searched for the recurrent references to literacy definitions across UNESCO policies on literacy to identify different patterns and trends in magnifying an, legitimizing, and excluding various literacy discourses. I was trying to identify a web of meaning making throughout UNESCO 'policing' of literacy in order to reveal the theoretical ideals surrounding the social construction of literacy definitions from 1949 to 2002. I realized that the bulk of literacy definitions posited recommendations, declarations of principles, methodological guidelines, and educational support for Member States, policy makers, researchers, and nongovernmental organizations. The purpose of this study as mentioned in the earlier chapters was to unravel the definitional shifts in UNESCO web of definitions of literacy in order to understand why literacy became a flexible and ever evolving concept in what I characterized as UNESCO' rhetoric of literacy errantry'.

A critical approach to UNESCO's forms of literacy policies views this notion not as a static concept or themes but as a dominant discourse or 'theoretical input' that legitimize or exclude political, economic, cultural, social, and pedagogical constructions of literacy practices and literacy events. The data were coded, organized, and analyzed first by research questions and then by categories and sub categories guided by the conceptual framework, as mentioned in Chapter Three.

These five research questions guiding this study were largely satisfied by the findings presented in the beginning of chapter Four. The overriding finding in this study revealed that: The Anglophone discourse of literacy is still prevalent in the international arena and in academia. There is no standard, universal definition of literacy through UNESCO's policies

throughout the years. Instead we have a plurality of definitions of literacy (Finding One) that perform the different functionalities of the concept of literacy and legitimize the autonomous model of literacy and the conceptualization of literacy as a social practice; this theoretical diversity of UNESCO's policies shows us that there are multiple discursive formations of literacy (Finding Two). At the same time there are excluded discourses in UNESCO's policies on literacy (Finding Three) such as the Francophone discourse on literacy, indigenous literacy, and the concept of literacy as a text. As a consequence, UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy are striving to associate ethnography and economics in defining literacy (Finding four)therefore positing various functionalities of literacy and responding to the demands of the global economy by promoting a metanarrative sustaining the organization's policies on literacy (Finding five). In order to analyze, interpret, and synthesize the findings, I will use the following analytic categories:

(1) A plurality of definitions of literacy (Finding one)

(2) The multiple discursive formations of literacy (Finding two)

(3) The excluded discourses in UNESCO's policies on literacy (Finding three)

(4) The association of ethnography and economics in defining literacy (Finding four)

(5) The metanarrative sustaining UNESCO's policies on literacy (Finding five)

Literacy can be characterized as a complex and flexible 'research object' that can be presented, analyzed, and interpreted in various ways. As such, views on literacy reflect the major theorizations of this concept through academia, the international community, and our cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy have evolved from positing literacy as a set of neutral skills related to the cognitive approaches to learning, to various and constant functional purposes of literacy in a close relationship with the

demands of a globalizing market economy. As a result of these multiple theoretical constructions, literacy is evolving in'magma of social constructions of reality' and is presenting multiple facets influenced by the consequences we attach to the chosen definitions across the years.

UNESCO's Framing of a Plurality of Definitions of Literacy

It is a common measure of research in academia across various disciplines such as economics, history, linguistics, anthropology, and psychology that there is a highly contested debate over the multiple meanings and conceptualizations over the concept of literacy. These theoretical debates rely to sustained traditions and understandings of literacy that influence the way literacy is portrayed all over the world. In trying to analyze and interpret UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy from 1949 to 2002, this study relies also on two theorizations of the various understandings of the concept of literacy: (a) Lytle and Wolfe's metaphors for literacy (1989) and (b) the discrete categories envisioned by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report in 2006. Lytle and Wolfe conceptualizations of literacy espoused various UNESCO's forms of literacy from 1949 to 2002.

Accordingly, Lytle and Wolfe (1989) presented four metaphors in describing literacy: Literacy as skills, literacy as tasks, literacy as practices, and literacy as critical reflection. The authors argue that "while these conceptual categories are not completely exclusive of each other, they nevertheless provide an effective means of comparing and highlighting key assumptions about what constitutes adult literacy across a wide spectrum of thought" (Walter, 1999, p.33). In the same token, literacy, according to the EFA Global Monitoring report, can be characterized into four different categories: literacy as an autonomous set of skills, literacy as

applied, practiced and situated literacy as a learning process, and literacy as text (UNESCO, 2006).

As such, these two theorizations of literacy might seem to be different in their presentation of the different conceptualizations of literacy but they share multiple commonalities regarding the content of these different literacy categories. The concepts of literacy as skills and literacy as tasks share some key features with the conceptualizations of literacy as an autonomous set of skills and literacy as a learning process because these various categories present literacy as a set of measurable skills that are related to the cognitive approaches of learning. The category of literacy as critical reflection shares some key features with the concept of literacy as applied practiced and situated because both categories present literacy as a way of interpreting the world of the individuals. The only difference resides in the categorization of literacy as a text. Nonetheless, this study will take into account all these categories of literacy in analyzing and interpreting UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy.

One can notice in one hand a mutual influence between these evolving theories and in another hand the theoretical complexities that UNESCO is dealing with in trying to accommodate with various theorizations of literacy in academia and in the international arena. For example, from the 1950's to the 1960's UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy needed to take into account the international commitment to eradicate literacy until the need to develop massive literacy campaigns become urgent in order to better grasp the Freirian model of literacy as transformative (1970's). An example of this conceptual orientation can be found in an UNESCO 1985 document in which literacy remains a "basic individual right and a fundamental duty of the State" because it is an "essential prerequisite for national, social, economic, and cultural development"(UNESCO, 1985, p.56). Another illustration of this

conceptual refinement can be found in the same document in which UNESCO states that its purpose is to: "Eliminate illiteracy at its source by enrolling all children in basic education and development programs to ensure that they will not relapse into illiteracy and provide the newly literate with opportunities for lifelong education" (UNESCO, 1985, p.58).

But, during the 1980's, one can notice that adult literacy programmes didn't benefit from sufficient funding because the main focus of the international community was to promote universal completion of primary education through the acquisition of basic learning needs. An example of this conceptual refinement can be found in a UNESCO 1990 in which UNESCO states that the definition of literacy needs to "take into account the fact that, "basic education allows providing immediate knowledge and skills for dealing with the effects of social inequalities" (UNESCO, 1990, p.9). Thus, the definition of literacy started to be broadened to incorporate the notion of basic competencies. Later, during the 1990's literacy resolved around the realization of the Millennium Development goals and the achievement of schooled literacy. An example of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 2002 UNESCO document entitled the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000 in which the organization states that members States are committed to "ensure that, by the year 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys would have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all" (UNESCO, 2002, p.2). Nonetheless, it remains important to remember that:

> Education plays a major role in the development of self-identity (learning to be) in relation to a collective setting where individuals experience sharing their lives with others (learning to live together), enabling them to continuously improve and expand

their capacities (by learning to know), which would translate into their capability to act in different domains of the world (learning to do). (UNESCO, 2009, p.13)

Thus, literacy is viewed as a key element of the educational system, one which guarantees all individuals the acquisition and the development of the fundamental skills of reading, writing, and calculation. In recognizing these key features of education in general and literacy in particular, UNESCO has been engaged in the process of delineating the multiple understandings of literacy and has been developing various conceptualizations of the concept from 1949 to 2002. The major statements made by UNESCO regarding literacy definitions can be summarized as follows:

1) The ability to read and write a simple message in any language" (UNESCO, 1952, p .25)

2) A person is literate who can, with understanding, both read and write a short   simple statement on his or her everyday life (UNESCO, 1958, p.17);

3) A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development (UNESCO,1978, p.3);

4) Literacy is now more broadly viewed as a product of educational, social, and economic factors that cannot be radically changed in short periods of time (UNESCO, 1990, p.4);

5) Literacy is conceives as the basic knowledge and skills needed by all in a rapidly changing world and as the catalyst for participation in social, cultural, political, and economic activities (UNESCO, 1997, p.4);

6) Literacy for all is the foundation for lifelong learning for all and a tool for empowering individuals in their community (UNESCO, 2002, p.3).

Throughout all the UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy, literacy is sometimes viewed as a set of autonomous skills and conversely represented as a range of various practices embedded in different cultural, political, and social contexts. These diverging and competing conceptualizations of literacy posit the theoretical challenge that UNESCO is facing in delineating the social and individual constructions of literacy in order to achieve a literate environment (UNESCO, 2004). These ever evolving conceptualizations of literacy are taking into account the role and the importance of oral and written modes of communications in representing diverse literacy practices and the manifold aspects of the socio-cultural contexts of literacy education. A thorough analysis of UNESCO's definitions of literacy shows that the concepts that cluster around these literacy definitions are linked to various theoretical traditions in academia and reflect the evolving debates in the international community regarding the standardization of educational statistics. One can notice that the first finding found in this study relates to the plurality of literacy definitions throughout UNESCO's policies. As such, the definition of literacy as the capacity to read and write remains one of the most important characteristics of UNESCO's policies.

Literacy as the Ability to Read and Write (Casual Literacy)

The most common understanding of literacy in academia and in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy is that the concept in itself is viewed a set of the cognitive skills of reading and writing associated with arithmetic or calculation. In order to clarify how I interpreted the various findings throughout this study, I decided to frame each form of literacy through a specific theoretical label. As such, the form of literacy envisioning the concept as the

ability to read and write will be called 'Casual Literacy'. As mentioned in Chapter Four, UNESCO since its inception privileges the traditional view of literacy as the ability to read and write. An illustration of the UNESCO's conceptual engagement in privileging 'casual literacy' can be found in a 1949 UNESCO document in which the organization states that "classes for adults were a means of fundamental education for those who were unable to read and write since most of the populations in the under developed countries were left out by the school system" (UNESCO, 1949, p.1). UNESCO is privileging schooled literacy in stressing the importance of acquiring basic reading and writing skills for those 'left out' by the traditional school system. As such, adult education classes are needed for those who didn't go to school and didn't have the opportunity to assimilate fundamental reading and writing skills. At the same time, UNESCO is not acknowledging other skills acquired by adults who were left out by the school system. Adults in remote areas might not have the opportunity to go to school but they nonetheless acquired various life skills allowing them to cope with the needs and demands of their community. As such, UNESCO's portrayal of 'casual literacy' is wrong in "equating adult education with adult literacy promotion" (UNESCO, 1949, p.4). Accordingly, UNESCO was prompt to develop literacy policies promoting the ability to read and write and rendered casual literacy as an important right for the populations and as a means for civic participation. As such, adult education or 'fundamental education' as stated in the 1949 report was a means of transferring these essential skills.

A quite strong example of this conceptual refinement positing casual literacy as a strong literacy policy can be found in Lytle and Wolfe's metaphor of literacy as skills, one category that refers to the "academic skills of reading, writing, and math, skills measurable through standardized achievement testing and often seen as comparable to years of schooling" (1989,

p.33). One can realize that UNESCO's traditional view of literacy relate to the most prevalent conceptualization of literacy in academia. As such, an operational definition of literacy equating literacy with the acquisition of math, reading, and writing skills is the best means in comparing educational data worldwide. Again, primary school achievement equates literacy acquisition because learners were supposed to have mastered key skills. Again, according to Lytle and Wolfe, "the ability to read and write and the completion of adequate years of schooling "qualify individuals as literates" (Ibid.p.33). One may ask himself if literacy can only be acquired through the traditional school system.

Consequently, the promotion of casual literacy privileging basic math, reading, and writing skills can be problematic because "these skills are often reduced to a very basic ability to read and write, often self reported" (Ibid.p.33). This characterization of literacy as skills is obvious in the EFA Global Monitoring Report of 2006 in which literacy is presented as a "set of intangible skills-particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing-that are independent of the context in which they are acquired and the background of the person who acquires them" (UNESCO, 2006, p.149). This vision of literacy is shared by the United Nations Population Commission (1952) which works to improving the comparability of census results.

An illustration of the casual literacy framework can also be found in a UNESCO 1952 document in which the commission states that literacy should be defined as "the ability to read and write a simple message in any language" (p .25). Again, this traditional and static view of the literacy process takes into account the importance of the learner's native language in acquiring basic literacy skills such as reading and writing. The same view is reflected in the UNESCO portrayal of literacy in its document entitled Progress of Literacy in Various Countries (1953) in which UNESCO is analyzing various populations' censuses and bringing

together the issues of literacy and illiteracy. An illustration of this specific conceptualization of casual literacy can be found in a 1953 document in which the organization states that illiteracy is a persistent world problem as long as "a sizeable portion of the world population remains without the rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing" (UNESCO, 1953, p.9). The main purpose of UNESCO was to show to under developed countries and western countries that even if the illiteracy rates were different between these two parts of the world, it remains that most of the populations didn't have the ability to read and to write. As such, the conceptualization of literacy as the ability to read and write needed to be promoted if one wishes to fight again the constant increase of literacy rates all around the world. It remains obvious that UNESCO's purpose was dominated by the need to ease the comparability of literacy statistics by applying uniform evaluation of literacy capabilities of all learners all around the world. As such, UNESCO needed to privilege an operational definitial of literacy because it remained very difficult to imagine a uniform method in evaluating the social practices of literacy.

Consequently, the promotion of casual literacy as a set of measurable skills was persistent with the methodological measures of literacy used in order to classify the populations as literates or illiterates. This vision of literacy as skills was used as an operational definition for statistical purposes. Nonetheless, UNESCO recognizes in its document entitled *World Illiteracy at Mid Century (1957)* that the concept of literacy is very flexible and that it can be "stretched to cover all levels of ability" (p.18). But casual literacy is still privileged because literacy is still equated to the ability to read and write. An example of this conceptual vision can be found in a 1957 document in which UNESCO states: "As long as more than the two fifths of the world population cannot read and write in any language, they are thus deprived of their full participation in the cultural life of mankind" (Ibid. p.1).Accordingly, literacy is defined as "the

ability to read and write in a language" (UNESCO, 1957, p.19). One can notice that this conceptualization of literacy as the ability to read and write remains constant as one of the major UNESCO's literacy education priorities. As such, UNESCO's purpose during the fifties was to bring awareness of the crucial problem of illiteracy in the developing world and push the momentum of privileging the comparability at an international basis of educational statistics.

As such, the two monographs on literacy brought in the literacy international community in 1953 and 1957 posited the need for an operational definition of literacy in order to assess the progress in literacy education in various parts of the world. There was a convergence of views between the definitions of literacy presented in population censuses and the conceptualizations of literacy by UNESCO. Most of the statistics analyzed by UNESCO were done through nations' self report of the state of literacy worldwide but these reports couldn't hide the fact that the educational systems throughout the world were inadequate in transferring the key essential skills of reading, writing, and calculation to the marginalized populations of third world countries and the western part of the world. It was necessary to bring a consensus on the alarming figures of illiteracy worldwide. The best way to achieve this was conduction worldwide surveys on the state of illiteracy by pointing to the necessity to improve the facets of adult literacy because at that time most of the western countries were applying compulsory education as a key educational motto in fighting against illiteracy.

But, under developed countries were far too long behind and it was essential to promote a new 'literacy agenda' in order to improve the comparability of literacy data worldwide. In order to so, UNESCO is trying to posit a new operational definition of literacy having in mind that educational statistics needed to be standardized. An illustration of this conceptual vision privileging casual literacy, one that positions reading and writing skills as key elements of

literacy are obvious in a 1958 document in which UNESCO states that: "A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (her) everyday life. A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his (her) everyday life" (UIS, 2008, p.17).According to UNESCO, reading and writing skills represent key features of what has been termed as 'basic literacy'. As such, the purpose of literacy education is to help adults acquire the basic skills needed for the world of work.

This operational definition of literacy can be found in a 1965 document in which UNESCO states that "reading and writing classes should be focused on topics which are of immediate concerns to the adults" (UNESCO, 1965, p.14). But it doesn't seem obvious that the sole acquisition of reading and writing skills is a legitimate and strong factor for adult learners who need to accommodate with the demands of the world economy. In third world countries, the fight against the alarming figures of illiteracy remains based on the promotion of schooled literacy but a large part of the population became literate without a job. As such, UNESCO couldn't prove the correlation between literacy acquisition and economic development.

But UNESCO realized that the organization needed to go beyond its static form of literacy by renewing its definition of literacy through the introduction of a 'taste of functional literacy' because adults have specific needs in the world of work. An illustration of UNESCO's functional literacy conceptual vision is obvious in a 1966 UNESCO report in which the organization states that "literacy programmes must impart not only reading and writing, but also professional and technical knowledge, thereby leading to fuller participation of adults in economic and civic life"(UNESCO,1966, p.97). But UNESCO was still constant in implying that reading and writing skills are essential elements of the traditional view of literacy. As such,

UNESCO realizes that it was necessary to widen the traditional and rudimentary definition of literacy as the ability to read and write. Thus, UNESCO was consequent in trying to posit an international basis for the comparability of literacy data by promoting in the international community an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes.

Accordingly, UNESCO is equating literacy skills to the very basic ability to read and write. Another example of casual literacy can be found in the *International Conference on Adult Education* (1985) which states that the"teaching of reading and writing should be integrated in a cultural context" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56). UNESCO recognizes that the autonomous model of literacy was a key element of its policies along with the acquisition of mathematical skills but the literacy acquisition process needed to take into account the socio-cultural values that surround the promotion of basic reading and writing skills. UNESCO's new socio-cultural approach of literacy remains related to the conceptualization of literacy as a learning process because literacy is a process rather than a product. As such, UNESCO's definition of literacy recognizes and acknowledges the cognitive aspects of literacy while accommodating with the cultural values that influence the learning process. UNESCO's new refinement of casual literacy is illustrated in its 1991 policy document through its current definition of functional literacy implying that "a functional illiterate is a person who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community, and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development" (UNESCO, 1991, p.38). As such, UNESCO realized that it was urgent to move beyond the frontiers of basic or casual literacy by incorporating to the static definition of literacy new layers allowing learners to cope with civic and economic life in order to develop their communities.

UNESCO's portrayal of casual literacy as the ability to read and write can also be analyzed through Cheffler's (1960) conceptualizations of the different types of education in his classic text *The Language of Education*. Scheffler's purpose was to analyze "non scientific discourses in which educational concepts were mentioned such as curriculum statements, programmes and objectives of education addressed to the general public, in debates over educational policy" (p.12). Accordingly, Scheffler initiates a "distinction between scientific and general definitions implying that the former is being closely associated to research and requiring a specialist linguistic repertoire while the latter reflects the reproduction of scientific ideas into public and official statements" (p.12-13). The author proposed three types of 'general definitions': Stipulative, descriptive, and 'programmatic. As such, *a* "stipulative definition refers to some term to be defined and giving notice that is to be taken as equivalent to some other exhibited term or description, within a particular context"*(p.13).*Scheffler further states that these definitions can "neither be fairly justified nor rejected by consideration of the accuracy with which they mirror predefinitional usage" (p.15). 'Descriptive' definitions posit terms by reference to their prior use so there may be multiple meanings for a term according to various contexts. 'Programmatic' definitions in contrast portray moral and practical questions, they "call for evaluation of practice, for appraisal of commitments, for the making of extra linguistic decisions" (p.21). As such, the following statement represents the summary of his theorizations: "the interest of stipulative definitions is communicatory, that is to say, they are offered in the hope of facilitating discourse; the interest of descriptive definitions is explanatory, that is, they purport to clarify the normal application of terms; the interest of programmatic definitions is moral, that is, they are intended to embody programmes of action" (p.22). Thus, one can notice that discourse sustains the notion of literacy.

UNESCO's definitional conceptualizations of literacy can be envisioned as 'programmes of action' because literacy is posited as a "purposeful human activity and as such implies some form of commitment to certain values or ideals (Soltis, 1978, p. 10). Definitions of literacy proposed by UNESCO posit moral questions about the values of literacy and are somewhat quests for the right and best policy statements and as such a recommendation for certain conceptualizations of literacy. As in the words of Soltis, "definitions of literacy as the ability to read and write are "likely to be so vague as to be of little use to anyone" (p.10-11). But it remains that UNESCO's operational definitions of literacy for statistical purposes are likely to be useful for the comparability of educational statistics worldwide while these definitions cannot hide the fact that some beliefs and traditions are surrounding conceptualizations of literacy rendering them social constructions of a 'hidden' reality. As such, UNESCO's definitions of literacy cannot legitimize the true nature of literacy because literacy is a 'moving theoretical object' in the sense that it is a mix of traditions developed in a westernized ideology of Christian salvation molded in a 'state of grace' that portray literacy as something indefinitely positive for those who possess the skills of reading and writing.

Also, UNESCO's definitions of literacy as the ability to read and write can be viewed as a "mixture of values, objectives, methods, contents, and skills" (Lind, 2008, p.43). These definitions can be envisioned as 'descriptive' to in the words of Scheffler because they have an essential nature due to the way the word literacy is used in the singular form and corresponds to a form or a discourse of reading, writing, and calculation. As such, descriptive definitions as ones envisioning literacy as the ability to read, write, and calculate position the operationaliztion of literacy for statistical purposes. Again, UNESCO is recommending Member States to adopt an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes by positing prescriptive statements or

'programmatic' statements because its literacy policies are surrounded by a moral perspective of enlightening those who do not possess the skills of reading and writing. As Scheffler (1960) states: "programmatic definitions are intended to embody programmes of actions such as population's censuses or traditional literacy education programmes" (p.22). An illustration of the casual and operational definition of literacy as a combination of practical competences can be found in a 1958 UNESCO document in which the organization states that "a person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO, 1958, p.4) . As such, the following methods should be used in order to measure educational attainment: "census or survey of the population, estimates based on data from previous surveys or censuses, and record over a number of years of school enrollment, of examinations and school leaving certificates" (Ibid. p.4). Again, these statistical methods posit a redefinition of the concept of literacy by creating a link between schooling and literacy levels.

Consequently, Scheffler's theorization of definitional concepts are similar to the way UNESCO is presenting prescriptive statements in defining literacy by positing an ideal of literacy and the 'ideal literate', one who possess the skills of reading and writing. An illustration of the idealization of literacy through prescriptive statements can be found in a 1957 UNESCO document in which the organization states that "as long as more than the two fifths of the world population cannot read and write in any language", they are thus " deprived of their full participation in the cultural life of mankind" (UNESCO, 1957, p.1). As such, UNESCO considers that at a minimum level, literacy can be defined as "the ability to read and write in a language" (Ibid. p.19). Thus, the illiterate individual has good reasons to become literate because there are positive consequences attached to literacy. But a problem remains because

UNESCO while establishing an operational definition of literacy through a moral perspective is unable to prove the realism of positive consequences attached to the acquisition of literacy.

If one considers the participation of Africa in the political and economical life of mankind as envisioned by the United Nations, one tends to remain cautious about the consequences attached to literacy and the negative consequences attached to illiteracy. As such, when UNESCO proposes an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes it remains a pernicious moral perspective because the arguments attached to the positive consequences of literacy cannot justify the absolutist and ethnocentric ways in which United nations organizations are spreading literacy so that people from Africa would acquire reading, writing, and calculation skills alone without positing political, economic, and social inequalities which render these positives consequences attached to literacy invisible.

Consequently, the real purpose of the colonizers trying to achieve their missionary objectives was not to help Africans become better readers and writers but rather to excel in reading and understanding the bible or whatever hidden objective attached to programmatic and prescriptive idealizations of the literacy process. Therefore, literacy cannot stand alone in these perspectives as a neutral set of skills. It was always 'literacy for something'. As such, our role as second language learners and researchers is to try to unmask the moral perspective surrounding the idealization of literacy by United Nations' organizations such as UNESCO. Such a role responds to the ideas of Walter (1999) when he argues that the "the first task of the researcher, educator or policy maker involved with issues of adult literacy is to make his or her definitions of literacy and the scope of each definition's application explicit" (p.1). Again, critical views about the idealization of literacy left UNESCO with only one choice therefore it remains necessary to mold the traditional view of literacy as the ability of reading, writing, and

calculation by adding explicit explanations about the kind of skills necessary in moving toward the benefits of literacy.

Functional Literacy and Functional Illiteracy

During the early sixties, UNESCO intended to refine its traditional view of literacy by mentioning the specific skills needed by adult learners in order to improve their ways of life. An example of this conceptual refinement in defining literacy can be found in the role given to the international committee of experts on literacy which was created in 1963 along with the international consultative committee for illiteracy to look at the possibilities of extending the traditional view of literacy as reading and writing.

A concrete illustration of the conceptual refinement of the definition of literacy as the ability to read and to write can be found in an UNESCO 1965 document related to the eradication of illiteracy in which the organization defines the concept of functional literacy positing its relationships with economic development. As such, UNESCO realizes that literacy can have positive consequences when it becomes functional. Again, UNESCO acknowledges that a simple operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes is not enough to bettering the lives of the supposed 'literates'. Consequently, UNESCO initiated the concept of functional literacy at the general conference on education in 1965 in Teheran through the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) which was funded by the United Nations Development Program in its attempt to provide literacy acquisition through experimentation and work-oriented literacy.

The EWLP project intended to provide international visibility to the concept of functional literacy through the training of literacy specialists such as policy makers, planners, programmers and adult literacy teachers. The 1965 conference posited functional literacy as a

variant of economic functionality worldwide. An illustration of this conceptual vision of functional literacy can be found in the report when UNESCO states that "literacy by its very nature is inherently functional" (UNESCO, 1965, p.4), thus, "functional literacy was an essential element in overall development" and was also "closely linked to economic and social priorities and to present and future manpower needs" (UNESCO, 1965, p.29). Another illustration of this conceptual refinement of functional literacy can be found in the same report when UNESCO states that literacy was necessary for "learning new skills for increased productivity both in the farm and in the factory and, therefore, should be central to any development strategy for alleviating poverty" (UNESCO, 1965, p.12). As such, UNESCO intended to help illiterates accommodate with the new world economy. An example of this engagement can be found in the same report when the organization states that literacy by its 'very nature' is considered as "inherently functional" (UNESCO, 1965, p.4). But the promotion of functional literacy cannot elude the fact that there are some people who can function effectively in their communities and relate to other cultures while they did not acquire the basic skills of reading, writing, and calculation. It remains obvious that UNESCO only refined its operationalization of a traditional and casual literacy vision by adding a functional layer to its former definition.

Nonetheless, the function originally assigned to adult literacy by UNESCO is still that of engendering the most 'generalized functionality' among adult learners. An illustration of this conceptual engagement valuing functional literacy can be found in the Tehran Report when UNESCO states that the function of adult literacy was to "enable individuals to become functional in their own cultures and then learn about other cultures to understand the common humanity of all human beings and to contribute to international understandings" (UNESCO,

1965, p, 6). As such, UNESCO's vision about functional literacy was echoing through the words of Gee when he portrays a 'culturalization' of the concept of literacy. An example of this conceptual vision addressing functional literacy can relate to Gee's understanding of the same concept. In Gee's (1990) words, "different societies and social groups have different types of literacy, and literacy has different social and mental effects in different social and cultural contexts" (p.168). In Gee's words, literacy was then envisioned as a moving theoretical object, one which is follows the socio-cultural tray of any given society. As such, UNESCO's portrayal of functional literacy is not familiar with theoretical trends of the moment as UNESCO is considered as a leading United Nations agency acting as an institutional facilitator in engaging the world community to accept its portrayed definitions of functional literacy.

As such, these theoretical positioning of functional literacy show that UNESCO was not alone in wrestling with literacy conceptualizations. Historically, education specialists struggled in mapping discourse trends in the definitions of literacy by mentioning the various economic and cultural demands of every culture throughout history. An illustration of these theoretical battles can be found in the words of Hagel and Tudge, (1998) when they state that "literacy is composed of culturally relevant skills that change overtime and between cultures, possibly between people" (p.164). The same conceptualization of literacy can be found in Ntiri's words when he states that "in medieval England a literate person was one who could speak Latin, whereas literacy for Americans in the Civil War meant signing names and comprehending military instructions" (p.98).Ntiri and Gee were portraying when can be termed as a 'subtle culturalization' of the literacy process. Ntiri and gee's visions of literacy shared the same theoretical orientations with the way Gray (1966) defines functional literacy. An illustration of this conceptual positioning of functional literacy can be found in his own terms when he states

that a "person is functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his culture or group" (p. 3). Gray understood that functional literacy needs to go along with universal primary education in order to eliminate illiteracy worldwide. Gray's definition of functional literacy was similar to the definition given to this concept in 1975 by UNESCO. An illustration of this conceptualization of literacy can be found in a 1975 UNESCO report in which literacy is defined as follows: "A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his (her) group and community and also for enabling him or (her) to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his (her) own and the community's development" (UNESCO, 1975, p.12).

Functional literacy was now defined as economic functionality and represented an essential element in overall development, one closely linked to economic and social priorities and to community participation. During the Tehran conference debates, the delegates accepted the new concept of functional literacy, which implies more than the traditional view of literacy as the ability to use reading and writing that is often inadequate to the state of the new world economy. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in the Tehran report in which literacy education is aims to enable individuals who didn't acquire the skills of reading and writing and who were left behind, to become "socially and economically integrated in a new world order where scientific and technological progress calls for ever more knowledge and specialization" (UNESCO, 1965, p. 29). As such, the functional literacy concept as envisioned by UNESCO and academia created a bigger theoretical divide between literates and illiterates. Thus, it seems that individuals who even acquired the skills of reading and writing alone could be considered as illiterates because they were not trained to use these kills in order to improve

their lives and their communities. Therefore, some discordant voices at the Tehran Conference implied the fact that literacy education efforts should also be directed towards helping individuals achieve a more informed human and cultural integration. An illustration of this theoretical battle can be found in the words of the delegates who acknowledged that "literacy work should not be regarded as an end in itself but as an indispensable means of promoting the general, harmonious development of illiterate masses" (UNESCO, 1965, p.29).

Another UNESCO document elaborated the concept of functionality. The key features of the new approach to literacy associated literacy with economic and social development and posited the fact that literacy was an integral part of the overall development process. An example of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 1966 UNESCO document in which the organization states that literacy programmes should be: "Incorporated into and correlated with economic and social development plans while the eradication of illiteracy should start within the categories of populations which are highly motivated and which need literacy for their own and their country's benefit" (UNESCO, 1966, p.97.). Another illustration of this conceptual refinement resides in the way the 1966 report portrays literacy programmes. As such, literacy programmes should preferably be: "linked with economic priorities and carried out in areas undergoing rapid economic expansion" (Ibid.p.97) and literacy must be:

> An integral part of overall education plans of each country and the literacy programmes
>
> of this new kind should aid in achieving main economic objectives, i.e., the increase of
>
> labor productivity, food production, industrialization, social and professional mobility,
>
> creation of new manpower, diversification of the economy. (Ibid.p.97)

The theoretical debates were still prevalent until a renewed vision of functional literacy was presented in the table to start settling the complex underpinnings of this 'functionalizing

process' of literacy. A theoretical widening of the concept of a more informed functional literacy was presented, one that combined literacy, functionality and self fulfillment along with a more accrued awareness of the social benefits of literacy. Thus, literacy was viewed as a continuing life skill and a key element for personal development and self sufficiency. Literacy is now associated with the concept of life skills and was deemed to purport oral and written communication in order solve practical life problems. An illustration of this conceptual refinement of literacy can be found in a 1978 UNESCO document in which a person is viewed as functionally illiterate when he can "engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development" (UNESCO General Conference, 1978, p. 4). Another illustration of this new conceptualization of functional literacy can be found almost a decade later when UNESCO (1985) introduces a new conceptualization of literacy by recommending member States to promote a 'civilizational concept of literacy', one aiming to:

> Raise the individual to an educational and cultural level that enables him to acquire the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and to participate in the development of his society and the renewal of its structures, so that he will have the social and cultural incentives to go on learning and to improve the quality of life. (UNESCO, 1985, p.57)

Through the 1985 report, UNESCO posits two new conceptualizations of literacy by differentiating between functional and social literacy. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in the definition of functional literacy which "in addition to inculcating learning skills", should "help workers to achieve greater mastery of their occupations, increase their theoretical and practical knowledge, advance in their careers and continue with their

education"(Ibid. p.57). Another illustration can be found in the way UNESCO contrasts social literacy with functional literacy. An example of this conceptualization of functional literacy can be found in the way UNESCO defines the latter concept by stating that social literacy means the "acquisition of the tools of further mastery of the written word and pave the way for the integration of the newly literate into their cultural, social and political environments"(Ibid.p.57). Later, another document posited functional literacy as a means for a wider and more learning process along with a better mastery of information technologies that are prevalent in the new world economy (OECD, 1997). An example of this new conceptualization of literacy can be found in the report when the organization states that literacy is viewed as a key element of the four pillars of education as expressed in the Delors report: 'learning to know', learning to do', learning to live together', and 'learning to be' (UNESCO, 1996).

Another illustration of this functionality of literacy can be found in a UNESCO 1997 report in which literacy is envisioned as an important right and a key skill sustaining other life skills (UNESCO, 1997). A thorough example of this conceptualization can be found in the final report when the organization states that literacy and numeracy skills needed to be developed as:

A part of a set of skills that enable the learner to access and utilize information from a variety of sources and continue to acquire new knowledge and skills over a life time. Adult literacy programmes that contributed also to income generation and other development objectives generally proven more effective than those that have a narrow focus on reading, writing and arithmetic. (UNESCO, 1997, p. 37)

Again, this conceptualization of functional literacy is valued by UNESCO when it states that literacy can also be defined as:

A particular capacity and mode of behavior: the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential. Differences in levels of literacy matter both economically and socially. Literacy affects inter alia, labor quality and flexibility, employment, training opportunities, income from work and wider participation in civic society. (OECD, 2000)

These multiple visions of functional literacy developed by UNESCO and some developmental agencies as OECD shared some theoretical commonalities with the way literacy was viewed in academia. An illustration of this conceptual positioning of literacy in academia can be found in the portrayal of literacy as tasks as in Lytle and Wolfe (1989) metaphors for literacy when they posit that literacy became "dependent on an adult's life context or functional domains of existence" (p.33). Wolfe and Lytle definition of literacy legitimizes a dominant view of a more westernized view of the skills and knowledge needed in a globalizing economy. As Walter states it: when we define literacy as a set of skills or tasks, we are "valuing the dominant literacy in society at the expense of the literacies of less powerful groups of people" (1989, p.35). This theoretical and political leveling process of literacy' widens the gap between 'literates' and 'illiterates'. Thus, we have now two types of illiterates, those who cannot read and write ('illiterates by essence') and those who master the reading and writing skills but cannot perform socially and culturally ('functional illiterates'). An illustration of this conceptualization of functional illiteracy can be found in a UNESCO 1987 report in which the organization states that

Functional illiteracy in industrialized countries, which afflicts more particularly the poorest sectors of the population, is of course a minor phenomenon. Functional illiteracy

is all the harder to bear by those who suffer from it in that it is misunderstood and of minor proportions. The illiterate person's conviction that he is an 'isolated case', an exception, makes him feel that he is solely responsible for the situation he is in. All those who have had contact with illiterates, whether young people or adults, know that apart from the considerable handicap resulting from this situation, its principal concomitants are distress, embarrassment, and self-withdrawal. To be an illiterate, which is to be practically an ignoramus in the eyes of the rest of society, means lack of prestige and social erosion. (p.201)

But, one should acknowledge that literacy is no longer merely a set of cognitive abilities and skills; it needs to be recognised as a social activity embedded within larger social practices, contexts and technologies. As such theoretical debates about how to define literacy should move beyond the completive accounts of what it means to be 'literate' or 'illiterate'. Nonetheless, it remains constant that the defining parameters of literacy are more often set by the politics of power than by the needs to move a particular social or cultural group beyond the socio-political ladder. Thus, this implicit control is affirmed by the continued maintenance of the belief that literacy refers to the basic competencies of reading and writing.

When UNESCO is positing an operational definition of literacy, literacy levels remain used to assign people to their place within society and posit specific divisions of labour. As such, the measurement process keeps on legitimating schooling therefore giving the illusion that acquiring the basic skills of reading and writing is vital to personal and collective development. Also, these competing accounts of literacy, by their ideological and methodological variances, have helped UNESCO to produce a more pluralist perspective of multiple literacy modes such as: 'survival literacy', 'social literacy', 'cultural literacy', 'basic literacy', 'functional literacy'

and 'critical literacy', but for the most part, a narrow and singular definition of traditional and casual literacy still dominates.

But the populations in the developed world end up being able to read and write but remain unable to cope with the social and professional uses of writing in the world of work. Thus, they were presented as functional illiterates who didn't fully master the requisites of the written tool. Therefore, they didn't realize that writing occupied a preponderant place in industrialized countries and that they needed to: "Cope with an increasing number of forms to fill in, information to read and procedures to follow in order to exercise his rights as a citizen and participate in social life" (UNESCO, 1987, p.201) if they wanted to integrate the world of work. An illustration of this 'mandatory literacy' can be found in the same report when the organization states that the "weakness of their capacity to read and write is in direct correlation with the poverty of all their other means of expression" (Ibid.p.201).Thus, new conceptualizations of functional literacy and functional illiteracy posited the pitfalls and the inadequate portrayal of the traditional and rudimentary view of literacy as the ability to read and write.

It remains important to acknowledge that functional literacy conceptualizations can be associated with Paulo Freire views of literacy, ones in which "reading does not consist merely of decoding the written word or language; rather it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world" (Freire&Macedo, 1987, p.29). In doing so, "language and reality become dynamically interconnected and the understanding attained by critical reading of a text implies therefore perceiving the relationship between text and context" (Ibid.p.29). Freire went to add that literacy acquisition is more than just a psychological and pedagogical mastery of the skills of reading and writing, it rather reflects how to "dominate these techniques in terms of

consciousness, to understand what one reads and write, what one understands, to communicate graphically" (1973, p.48). As such, Paulo Freire is envisioning a definition of literacy that is rather liberating and transformative as it allows adult learners to cope with pedagogy of social inclusiveness by acquiring the basic skills of reading and writing and by applying them to real life.

Again, Paulo Freire conceived literacy as a transformative tool enabling individuals to legitimize their world views in order to write their culture and their history. As Freire realized, individuals needed to cope with the demands of a globalized economy in order to transform their world because as Lankshear and McLaren (1993) argue: "literacy must be approached as discursive practices such as the creating, shaping, and bounding of social life" (p.10-11).Also, Freire philosophical literacy orientations resemble the former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere's vision of literacy when he associated literacy with 'education for self-reliance positing the fact that: "The ideas imparted by education, or released in the mind through education, should therefore be liberating ideas; the skills acquired by education should be liberating skills. Nothing, else can properly be called education; teaching which induces slave mentality or a sense of impotence is not education at all" (Nyerere, 1975, p. 10).Nyerere vision of functional literacy accommodates with UNESCO portrayal of literacy but it refuses to interpret literacy in essentialist terms and rather conceptualizes it instead in terms of a overlapping liberator mode of socio-cultural and political salvation. Nyerere shows how a casual functional vision of literacy involves a negotiation of cultural identity across differences, ones that cannot be ascribed to a pre-given traditional and casual literacy model and an irreducible westernized vision of the world eluding predominant cultural traits of the so-called illiterates. Nor can 'illiterates' and 'literates' be viewed as separate entities that can be defined

independently. An argument similar to that preferred by Nyerere is given by UNESCO one which involves the perpetual negotiation of cultural identity and a mutual recognition of cultural differences. For UNESCO, literacy is hybrid and produced performatively in contexts that can be either antagonistic or affinitive. An illustration of their common view of literacy can be found in a 1975 UNESCO report in which the organization states that literacy "transcends the sheer learning of a technical skill; it has a political content, in the widest meaning of the world, for it involves man and the polis as a whole" (UNESCO, 1975, p.75). For UNESCO, the social articulation of literacy is a complex, on-going re-negotiation that seeks to legitimize socio-cultural literacy hybridities that emerge in moments of personal and collective transformations. As such, one should acknowledge that what's compelling about UNESCO's argument is that it refuses to view literacy in an absolute sense, always guaranteed to produce the intended positive aspects in the 'illiterate subjects'. Instead, the literacy process involves more than cultural mimicry of westernized values and, traditions, and beliefs.

But it remains constant that UNESCO's traditional school of thought envisioning literacy as a political and technical object is very much prevalent in discussions of adult literacy education in the developing world and presents illiteracy as a "violation of human rights and as a source and symptoms of the social system which oppress poor and disenfranchised people around the world" (Walter, 1989, p.36). As such, this view of functional literacy associated acquisition of literacy skills with social, economic, and cultural empowerment by presenting illiteracy as the cause of social inequalities all around the world. An illustration of this conceptual engagement can be found in the words of Walter (1989) when he states that "illiteracy is an impediment to human development and social equality, a cultural deprivation and a fundamental force in the subjugation of women" therefore, "illiteracy is understood to be

a manifestation of under development and oppression and symbolizes both the legacy and the future of poverty and injustice in the developing world" (p.36).However, what UNESCO is unable to overlook is the fact that the illiterate subject's mode of resistance is itself constrained by the language of the literate group. Thus, it remains important to delineate the existing circuits of power differentiating between literate subjects and illiterate subjects. As such, UNESCO should privilege the notion of hybrid literacy as a way to re-stage literacy and move beyond oppositional meanings of the former concept. Finally, literacy cannot more be viewed as a stable, static, and innocent concept. By moving beyond exclusionary systems of meanings, it becomes possible for UNESCO to draw attention to the ways illiterates are able to challenge static visions of literacy. It is that possibility that enables them to disrupt the static binary opposition of illiterates and literates upon which the vision of functional literacy and illiteracy depend. This is where a postcolonial approach to literacy aims at interrupting received westernized ways of constructing literacy by articulating the hybridity and difference that lies within.

Nonetheless, one should acknowledge that the 'functionalizing movement' inherent to international policies in the adult literacy sphere since the Tehran conference in 1965 prepared the way for the introduction of the concept of multiple literacies. An illustration of this conceptual vision of hybrid literacies can be found in the EFA world Monitoring Report (2006) in which the organization states that "the skills enabling access to knowledge and information" allowed for the coining of the words such as " information literacy, media literacy, and scientific literacy" (p.149). As such, literacy never stands alone as a neutral and dramatical denoting of skills but rather as literacy for something or as a 'potential added' to use the words of Bhola (1990). One can reflect on the words of Ntiri (2009) who states that: "Literacy has come to

include a functional set of skills or competencies that must be mastered along with some knowledge of the multiple literacies for critical individual empowerment" (p.101). Thus, "literacy has undergone a shift from the traditional, non-engaging paradigm to an open, dialogic approach that is politically energized and possesses transformative qualities to enhance understanding of the demands of a changing world" (Ibid.p.101). As such, literacy has been also viewed as a plural notion embedded in specific cultural, political, social, and economic contexts that refine the traditional conceptualization of literacy. Thus, literacy is diluted into various theoretical parcels of literacies.

Multiple Literacies

This view of literacy as a plural notion is constant in UNESCO portrayal of literacy. UNESCO has always been employing different concepts to relate to its primary view of literacy as the ability to read, write, and calculate. UNESCO along the years determine this ability to read, write, and calculate through diverse terms referring to the 'traditional view of literacy' (1975), 'rudimentary literacy' (1975), a 'monolithic view of literacy 'and 'basic literacy' (2000). While portraying this constant view of what we van term as the 'essentialist view' of literacy, UNESCO was positing in the same token the plural notion of literacy by mentioning 'functional literacy' along with 'social literacy' (1985), 'technological literacy' (2000), 'indigenous literacy' (1997, 2002), 'sustainable literacy' (2002), 'youth literacy' (2000), and' multiple literacies' (2000). The variety of these concepts trying to capture the essence of literacy confirms the difficulties that UNESCO was facing in trying to unravel the theoretical debates surrounding the 'literacy dilemma' and coping with the various research findings regarding literacy uses in academia.

While widening the definition of literacy throughout the years, UNESCO made it clear that one needed to transcend the traditional and rudimentary view of literacy as an autonomous set of skills. An example of this conceptualization of literacy can be found in a 2004 report in which the Organization states that literacy is not: "Uniform, but instead culturally and linguistically and even temporally diverse. It is shaped by social as well as educational institutions: The family, community, workplace, religious establishments and the state" (UNESCO, 2004, p.13). As such, this strong conceptualization o literacy as a plural notion is not a new concept in UNESCO's publications and policy research papers about literacy education.

As early as in the 1980's UNESCO developed a clear vision of a new understanding of literacy. An illustration of this conceptual vision can be found in the Paris report in which UNESCO states the need for a "new conceptualization of literacy in relation to changes in social demand regarding adult education" (UNESCO, 1985, p.56). Another example can be found later in the report when UNESCO states that this vision literacy is a "complex problem related not only to the surrounding environment, but also to the historical, cultural, political, economic, and social features of each people" (Ibid.p.56). Plausible though this argument is, it has been much criticized for its valorization of hybrid culturalizations of literacy. While it is true that the contemporary definition of literacy is underlined by much variability and multivocality, the portrayed plural literacy model is somewhat fuzzy and represents a cut-and mix theoretical object suggested by the idea of hybridity. It is constant that the hybridization of literacy cannot be viewed as a neutral process; it rather involves a politics in which issues of economic and cultural power are central. One should acknowledge that a promotion and celebration of plurality per se, if not articulated with the issues of hegemonic westernized models and

dominant power relations, always runs the risk of appearing to sanctify the fait accompli of the symbolic violence of literacy. As a theoretical idea, plurality of literacy is indeed a useful tool against cultural essentialism, but cannot in itself provide the answers to the difficult questions of how plural literacies take place, the form it take in particular cultural, economic, and political contexts, the positive or negative consequences regarding particular cultural groups, and when and how particular literacy forms are progressive or regressive.

Finally, this 'cultural functionalization' of literacy is again valued by UNESCO when it further adopts a civilizational concept of literacy, the aim of which is to:

> Raise the individual to an educational and cultural level that enables him to acquire the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic and to participate in the development of his society and the renewal of its structures, so that he will have the social and cultural incentives to go on learning and to improve the quality of life. (Ibid.p.57)

The same view is adopted by Walter (1999) who states that: "When literacy is defined as cultural practices, as has been the tradition in anthropological research, the multiplicity of perspectives on literacy and the complexity of its consequences begin to be acknowledged"(p.42). Walter's portrayal of multiple views of literacy reflects the theoretical vision of literacy developed by Heath (1980) when he argues that: "literacy has different meanings for members of different groups, with a variety of acquisition modes, functions, and uses; these differences have yet to be taken into account by policy-makers" (p.133). One of the major insights of Walter's view is its understanding of the dialectical relationships between the illiterates and literates. It has been shown, for example, how literates do not only shape the culture and identities of the illiterates, but are in turn shaped by their encounter in a ranger of dominating and complicated ways. But, the illiterates cannot be only considered as innocent

bystanders in their encounters with the hegemonic domination of the so-called literates. One's casual common sense should refuse to treat the illiterates as 'cultural dupes', incapable of interpreting, accommodating and resisting dominant literacy models. As such, conpemporary conceptualizations of literacy as a plural notion by UNESCO should involve processes of negotiation of the cultural messages of dominant literacy models. This suggests that UNESCO should take into account the asymmetrical power relations between illiterates and literates in promoting new literacy models. From this perspective of valuing the plural notion of literacy, one can also reflect on Walter's word who argues that:

> A simple dichotomy between literate and illiterate individuals is replaced by a consideration of how historical context, cultural norms and specific social environments affect the ways in which adults in the developing world value and use literacy in their daily lives. (1999, p.45)

Accordingly, two considerations appear to be pertinent in analyzing these lines of vision positing the plural notions of literacy. First one can sense that there is some interpretive unease in the use of the rather unusual plural of the word literacy because this new theoretical view of literacy sustained a discontinuity in traditional understandings of literacy regarding UNESCO's linguistic repertoire and the traditions of international usage of the word literacy. Also, this new vision of literacy in the plural reinforces the 'theoretical doubts' of literacy specialists and policy makers alike in trying to find common grounds for the comparability of educational statistics at the international level. An illustration of the complexity of the theoretical battles in academia can be found in the World Conference on Education in Jomtien in which the organization states that "there is no single level of skill or knowledge that qualifies a person as literate, but rather that there are multiple levels and kinds of literacy (e.g. numeracy and

technological literacy)" (UNESCO, 1990, .p.4). This new idealization of literacy as a plural notion renders the new conceptualizations of literacy in the international community and in academia as literacy was no longer considered as a myth to paraphrase Graff's words but as a means for social transformation and economic sustainability in right line with the new world economic order surrounded by the influential paradigm of lifelong learning and the urgency of education for all and literacy for all as mentioned in three worldwide strategic policy documents: the Jomtien declaration(1990), the Dakar framework for the universal primary education (2000), and the United Nations literacy decade (2001). As such, "literacy has to address the literacy needs of the individual in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries" (UNLD, 2002. p.4). Again, this vision of literacy portrays the plurality of literacy and its societal implications. To understand then the relationships between literacy and societal development, one needs to avoid the universalistic impulse at the core many hybrid conceptualizations of literacy. I believe that most literacy education occurs at the local level, but local visions of literacy such as African literacy have never been more connected to outside forces such as the leading influence of westernized models of a static traditional view of literacy. This fact can be captured to some extent by the phrase 'deterritorialization of the cultural politics of literacy'. Our role as researchers from the third world is to delineate the underlined forces, ideologies, traditions, beliefs, and misconceptions surrounding dominant literacy models in order to build literacy models promoting literacy not in some uniform ways but in ways that are specific to particular African communities and localities. It is only through this kind of 'vernacular conceptualization of literacy' that it will be possible for Africans to elaborate new modes of 'legitimate literacy models' and to devise new ways of resisting essentialist views of literacy through education.

As such, UNESCO can sustain its institutional legitimacy and leading voice by formulating a stronger new vision of literacy as it did at its 'Experts' Meeting on Literacy (2003) when the organization states that: "Literacies are dynamic and inter-related, even as they are observably different and the concept and practice of literacies are in constant and dynamic evolution, with new perspectives reflecting societal change, globalizing influences on language, culture and identity, and the growth of electronic communication" (UNESCO, 2003, p.15). Again, this new conceptualization of literacy as a plural notion is valued by UNESCO when Member States "agreed", however, that they "preferred to use the expression 'literacy': a plural notion' rather than the term 'literacies', as the way for UNESCO to articulate its position on literacy" (UIS, 2008, p15).But it remains constant that through this new conceptualization of literacy as a plural notion, literacy is again only an institution where people are inculcated into hegemonic systems of reasoning and a site where it is very hard to resist dominant discursive practices. As such, it is only through deterritorialized literacy models and practices that it is possible to resist hegemonic literacy's hold on our imagination. Nonetheless, literacy remains a site where the legacies of hybrid literacy practices and the contemporary process of knowledge acquisition intersect. Thus, the concept of the pluralization of literacy should be analyzed critically to show how it travels transnational sites of knowledge through new patterns of literacy definitions. Nevertheless, UNESCO is still making it clear that one cannot no more rely on a traditional definition of literacy, one that posits the ability to read and to write as the essence of the literacy journey. These multiple conceptualizations of the different meanings and uses of literacy led UNESCO to acknowledge that «literacy definitions need to be expanded to include a more sophisticated application of theoretical knowledge and other skills that go far beyond simply reading and writing" (UNESCO, 2004, p.20). Thus, literacy cannot stand alone.

UNESCO's Enactment of Multiple Discursive Formations of Literacy

From 1949 to 2002, UNESCO developed various lines of action by associating multiple views of literacy using interesting metaphors related to the approach of literacy as a skill, one intertwined with a human based approach to literacy and development issues in order to eradicate illiteracy worldwide. In doing so UNESCO developed various patterns of what it meant to be illiterate by distinguishing between functional literacy and functional illiteracy. Thus, by developing these literacy discourses, UNESCO focuses on empowering adult and young learners through literacy programmes that are grounded upon what works. This concept of capacity building serves to promote the need to provide skills, knowledge and opportunities to individuals and communities so that they can build their capacity in order to participate fully in their societies. As such, UNESCO discourses are directed to the Member States, to the individuals, and to public and private literacy stakeholders. An illustration of UNESCO's role can be found in a 1985 report in which the organization states its role is to "bring together ideas, skills and determination" and as a 'lead agency', act as a catalyst, a mobilizer, and an ideal center for exchanges" (1985, p.45). As such Member States are always 'invited' to discuss issues related to adult education and literacy while being 'ensured' by UNESCO that "attention was given to problems peculiar to regions where institutions and methods of adult education may be less developed" (1949, p.3). But it remains obvious that UNESCO while being moved by honest ambitions didn't explore how its mission is intersecting with hegemonic cultural practices of hegemonic cultural practices envisioned through a Eurocentric and ethnocentric conceptualization of literacy policies under the control of other leading and influential United Nations agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Common to UNESCO's literacy policies is a concern with the inherited colonial models of literacy. As

such, one can both acknowledge the leading role of UNESCO in developing interesting literacy policies and posit at the time a concern about how contemporary literacy policies are saturated with colonial and neo-colonial ideologies, traditions, and beliefs.

But UNESCO is keen to move away all these legitimate concerns by putting up front the collective nature of its literacy practices. As such, UNESCO's recommendations, proposals, and lines of action always start with the mention of the impersonal article 'We' or the use of the word 'The Conference' to posit the collective nature of the decisions being undertaken during international conferences on literacy and the international commitment of the literacy community gathering during these international meetings. A further illustration of the collective nature of UNESCO's work can be found through the way the organization is entitled to 'recommend' Member States to "launch wide-scale literacy campaigns for the rapid eradication of illiteracy" (UNESCO, 1972, p.51). UNESCO's action is also directed to all associate members and Non Governmental Organizations. In the same token, the verbs used in the representation of UNESCO's recommendations to the international community regarding literacy reflect also its role as a catalyst and a mobilizer of capacity building at the international level. An illustration of the role of UNESCO as a mobilizer of capacity building can be found in its multiple reports in which 'UNESCO' or the 'Conference' after 'considering', recognizing', or 'taking into account'……, key elements of a policy, 'recommends' to Member states and associate partners 'collaboration' in order to build 'international exchanges' to strengthen its role as an international center of information on adult education and literacy' by 'providing assistance' through the 'organization of seminars and regional meetings' (UNESCO, 1985, p.41). The function of UNESCO as a mobilizer and a catalyst for capacity building can also be found through the uses of the verbs 'invite', call upon', and 'urge'. Thus, after 'inviting'

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Member States to reflect on various lines of action, UNESCO 'calls upon' or 'urges' its Member States to 'continue reflecting' about essentials issues in order for the 'Conference' to 'propose' at the end of these international gatherings 'recommendations' regarding adult education and literacy. The forms of literacy promoted by UNESCO through its recommendations regarding literacy bring an almost total agreement about undertaken actions. But it remains constant that in order to receive special funding from United Nations Agencies, third world countries need to acknowledge UNESCO's literacy policies because they unable to revolutionize their educational systems away from the hegemonic literacy models designed through a Eurocentric eye.

An illustration of this UNESCO's engagement can be retraced in Das's words when he states that:

They cannot impose public policies upon states but they are able to shape legitimized meanings and responses concerning literacy education and accomplish this through their mandated role of disseminating information to states and remain in a powerful position to control information through coordinating extensive research networks of policy experts, scholars, and epistemic communities. (Das, 2008, p.52)

Further, Das states that through that process of positing the theoretical debates about major global themes such as the proceedings of literacy and illiteracy, international organizations "identify issues as important for international attention, and define them in specific ways, significantly influencing public debates and policy making" (Ibid.p.52). Therefore, international literacy policies provide "legitimized discourses which impose meaning upon and orient attention to particular experiences" (Ibid.p.52). Thus, it is our role as researchers to question how UNESCO and leading UN organizations are imposing their 'hidden

agenda' by legitimizing specific literacy definitions and excluding liberating modes of literacy acquisition. It is more than just defining literacy; it is about how literacy definitions influence who we are and how we expect to change our world.

UNESCO's quest for an international commitment regarding adult education and literacy is reflected also under the structural organization of its linguistic repertoire. That's why UNESCO is 'calling upon Member States' to 'solemnly declare that all parties will 'closely' follow up the implementation of …..Declarations (1997, p.6) and "commit themselves to creating greater community participation" by "raising awareness" about illiteracy issues and "encouraging and promoting intercultural dialogue" (Ibid.p.12). But one needs to acknowledge that literacy development and promotion is more than just a political commitment but rather a matter of investment and political sovereignty. Thus, UNESCO needs to move beyond its neutral rhetoric and suggest the leading UN financial institutions to invest in education in under developed countries and promote literacy policies that allow adult learners to meet their social, economic, and political needs and move away from essentialist views of literacy. Again, this should be an opportunity for UNESCO to showing its role as a catalyst and a mobilizer for capacity building.

A stronger illustration of this collective commitment can be also found in a 1978 report in which UNESCO 'recommends' that "Member States should for purposes of international reporting, apply the following provisions regarding definitions, classifications, and tabulations of statistics relating to education». As such, the following definitions should be used for statistical purposes: "A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO, 1978, p.6). Along the years, these statements made by UNESCO portray the advocacy role played by this organization in bringing to the table

various conceptualizations of literacy, ones entailing competing discourse, values, beliefs, and traditions. But UNESCO was unable to move beyond a statistical definition of literacy and posit in the same token how governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations should evaluate literacy through plural forms. It remains constant that UNESCO has developed multiple definitions of literacy throughout the years but it is also true that the leading UN organization is still privileging a static definition of literacy, one which posits a casual representation of literacy as the acquisition of the basic competences of reading and writing.

The Ideological Discourse of Literacy and Developmental Issues

UNESCO's documents on literacy from 1949 to 2002 had the predominant metaphor of literacy as skill and focused on literacy as an asset or deficit held by the individual. The solution was to remediate the individuals to ensure that appropriate basic skills of reading and writing were gained. While the initial inquiry into specific learning difficulties had originated from concerns about access and equity, the solutions proposed through literacy education programmes were related to a thorough assessment of skills in order to enable the access to the benefits of being able to read and write rather than changing systems. From the above, one can define the basic parameters of the literacy domain as a set of skills leading to participation in the learning society and the negotiation of meanings through the processes of reading and writing. From this angle, in different occasions and in different contexts, literacy is defined differently with its processing of skills and its consequences varying in every form of development. The discourses produced around literacy and forms of literacy, as well as the discourses around remediation of illiteracy vary depending on the institutional distribution of literacy qualifications. This study reveals that one of the most prevalent discourses through UNESCO's

policies is the human right discourse along with the autonomous model of literacy discourse; these two discourses are associated with the discourse on the universality of literacy.

In analyzing and interpreting UNESCO discourses on literacy, one should acknowledge that the human right discourse goes along with the discourse on lifelong education in UNESCO's policies on literacy. Along the same line of understanding, the discourse on poverty reduction is currently the primary institutional paradigm for development relations, within a human rights framework. As such, literacy promotion through UNESCO's policies is linked integrally to these processes through the Education for All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UNESCO's international gatherings in putting on the agenda the global issue of adult education reflect a collective commitment in widening the potential perspectives in analyzing this issue worldwide. An illustration of this collective agenda can be found in the second and third sessions of UNESCO's General Conference held in Mexico City in 1947 and in Beirut in 1948 when the organization decided to focus on adult education (UNESCO, 1949). It remains obvious that the purpose of international organizations in their role of advancing different issues worldwide doesn't purport to imposing their point of views to their Member States but rather to share their expertise in various domains such as literacy. An example of this collective nature of UNESCO's work can be found in the Elsinore report when the organization didn't come up with a unique definition of adult education but rather with a declaration of principle which "may apply to all countries and to all types of experiments" (UNESCO, 1949, p.4). As such, UNESCO realizes that a declaration is a standard instrument in international relations that posits a set of common beliefs and shared values about a major global issue of interest for all the Member States.

But even though the paternity of this declaration doesn't belong to UNESCO but rather proceeds through the expertise and the role of coordination of UNESCO as a consultative agency, it remains that colonized countries didn't have a say advancing vernacular visions of literacy definitions. While UNESCO's rhetoric reflects its noble mission of enriching the lives of everyone, it remains constant that the political imageries of the fight against illiteracy worldwide underestimate the real potential of the so-called 'illiterates'. If this UNESCO statement was true then it would have been unnecessary to continuously portray the core of literacy as the sole acquisition of basic reading, writing, and calculation skills. Thus, UNESCO needs to develop more informed ways of defining and evaluation literacy skills of adult learners by going beyond a static and universal definition of literacy.

Again, UNESCO keeps on acknowledging the universality of this declaration by stating that, "education is a vital factor in the social, economic, and political development of all people and a process essential to the implementation of the principles of the universal declaration of human rights" (UNESCO, 1960, p.5). Another illustration of the universality of this declaration of principles can be also found in the way the organization acknowledges that "functional education enables everyone to assume, not merely in his workshop or trade union, but also in the town, his responsibilities as a free citizen" (Ibid.p.4). Thus, it remains constant that international bodies strive on looking towards universals such as the achievement of individual rights or the shaping of global citizens in a market economy. Themes of progress and development are harnessed to this vision. UNESCO (2006), for example has always been an advocate of "literacy as a right" as in the recent Global Monitoring report which acknowledges literacy as an essential part of the right of every individual to education as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But it remains a crucial question: Being literate does it

allow us to fully participate politically in any given society? The answer to this question might seem easy but one cannot deny that adult education was not reserved to a unique category of the population but rather to all people because it was a process of sustaining basic rights for free citizens aiming to benefit from education as a means to access social, economic, and political development.

While bringing into international scrutiny the need to develop the new vision of adult education worldwide, UNESCO was positing its international expertise. An example of this collective engagement can be found through the words of the organization which 'assures' its Member States that "adult education was very important for the purposes of "civic and social education" (Ibid.p.13) in order to lead them to understand that "education is a process that continued through the whole life, it was at once, the right of every individual and the responsibility of mankind" (UNESCO, 1960, p.10). Meanwhile, UNESCO was insisting on the urgency of the situation to make Member States realize the harsh consequences of world illiteracy. As such, UNESCO recognizes that "as long as a sizeable proportion of the world population remains without the rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing; the problem of illiteracy will continue to be of interest" (UNESCO, 1953, p.9). It becomes then obvious that the sole acquisition of basic reading and writing skills is at the core of UNESCO's fight against illiteracy. But this static vision in defining literacy eludes the social, political, and economical inequalities all around the world. Thus, being literate and poor equals being imprisoned in the veils of an unnamed il (literacy).

Nonetheless, all along these strong statements about adult education UNESCO brought a theoretical consensus in the international community of experts on educational issues that adult education is urgency and requires therefore a stronger commitment of Member States and

United Nations agencies. An illustration of this conceptual engagement can be found in the Montreal report (1960) when UNESCO states that adult education is the "right of each one of these adults worldwide and it was a 'responsibility of mankind" (UNESCO, 1960, p.10). One could sense throughout UNESCO statements during the Montreal and the Elsinore Conferences on adult education a need to advance a human discourse of adult literacy, one associated with the traditional vision of literacy as the ability to read and write because as UNESCO (1953) states, "adults needed to acquire the 'rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing' in order to get out of the 'illiteracy circle" (UNESCO, 1960, p.9). In the Montreal document, this positioning is achieved through a functional literacy discourse and a hidden conflicting-activist discourse of social participation. Both discourses posit the collocation of literacy with negative, stigmatized categories of illiterates and amplify the impression of deficit. Thus, moving out from the 'illiteracy circle' means getting out of the 'unemployment circle'. As such, a prominent discourse of social exclusion is focused primarily on economic activity allowing therefore the adult learner to measure the so-called gap between illiteracy and unemployment. Finally, literacy is represented here as everyday engagement with the written word along with the activity of reading. As such, UNESCO is arguing that literacy is a necessary part of daily life, and therefore Adult learners need to acquire basic reading and writing competencies because they have not reached yet the appropriate literacy level so that they can access 'normality' and get out of the 'illiteracy circle'. This argumentation brings the everyday world of the adult learner into the classroom, but also potentially positions this learner as 'abnormal' or in deficit. Again, UNESCO illustrates this discursive engagement by acknowledging that "literacy education for the masses is an essential factor in the economic, social, political and cultural progress of individuals as well as of communities" (UNESCO, 1965, p.3). The above statements posit an association of a strong human right and development discourse on literacy. The uses of this human right and

developmental discourses show that UNESCO acknowledges that literacy education is linked with economic development therefore the international community needs to consider literacy as a right of every adult worldwide in taking their full responsibility and participating in the economic development of their community. As such, literacy being a right, the international community-Member States and United Nations agencies, UNESCO included-need to widen the access to adult education to every citizen because it is the 'responsibility of mankind' to advance this new vision of adult education.

The association of the human right and development discourses is more accentuated during the Paris international conference on adult education in 1985. An illustration of this conceptual engagement resides in the fact that UNESCO (1985) states again that "education is a right for all, throughout life" (p.43) and "those who will be the victims of economic deprivation are illiterates" (UNESCO, 1985, p.44). As such, individual country responses to adult literacy appealed to economic development focusing on lifelong learning and the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills. The ideologies of these programmes depend on broader state policy and ideals of participative citizenship. However, in reviewing a wide panorama of national campaigns from the 16th century to the present in countries from Europe and Scandinavia to Africa, Latin American and India, Arnove and Graff conclude that:

> Larger scale-efforts to provide literacy have not been tied to the level of wealth, industrialization, urbanization, or democratization of a society, nor to a typical type of a political regime. Instead they are been more closely related to the efforts of centralizing authorities to establish a moral or political consensus and over the past two-hundred years, to nation state-building. (p.2)

UNESCO as a leading UN organization is always looking towards universals such as the achievement of individual human rights or the shaping of global citizens in a market economy. Along the same line, themes of progress and development are harnessed to UNESCO's vision. Empowerment, prosperity and equality are said to be achieved through it. UNESCO, for example has been an advocate of "literacy as a right" for this whole period as in the recent Global Monitoring Report which states that:

> Literacy is a right, indeed an essential part of the right of every individual to education, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.8 It is also a means to achieving other human rights. Those who can use literacy skills to defend their legal rights have a significant advantage over those who cannot. Indeed, it is often the poorest, most socially excluded and least literate individuals (especially women) those rights are violated by those with more power. Their inability to read, write and calculate keeps them from knowing what they are entitled to, and how to demand it. It limits their ability to participate politically in society. It denies them a voice. (UNESCO GMR, p. 126)

Issues of inequality can be tracked through UNESCO's policies by examining the ways in which particular views of citizenship are constructed within the key policy documents produced. UNESCO positions those with literacy needs as an 'underclass' needing priority attention from the governmental bodies. As such, the notion of an underclass presupposes an unequal society and those with unmet literacy needs as disadvantaged within it. This positioning is achieved through a functional literacy discourse and a subsidiary and conflicting discourse of social participation. Again, the collocation of illiteracy with negative, stigmatized categories (unemployed, low skilled, members of disadvantaged communities) has the effect of amplifying the impression of deficit.

Along the same line, a prominent discourse of social exclusion is focusing primarily on economic activity. As such, in the discourse of social exclusion, the notion of "literacy as a right" is transformed into literacy learning as an 'entitlement' conditional on fulfillment of 'duties' and the agency of the adult learner as citizen is changed. This discourse is a well-established part of wider discourses of neo-liberalism which currently frame national and international policy. UNESCO's view and promotion of the human right and developmental discourses found a positive echo in academia. An illustration of this discourse can be found in Harvey's words (2005) when he states that UNESCO's vision reflects one of the "basic tenets of a neoliberal view positing a strong conviction that every individual is entirely responsible and accountable for her/his situation" (Harvey, 2005, p.65). Accordingly, UNESCO is drawing on a strong deficit discourse of adult literacy learners while emphasizing positive commitments to individual change and participation. Again, there is a link between literacy, rights, and active participation. In order to participate, to exercise certain rights, to choose between alternatives and solve problems, people need certain basic skills such as reading and writing.

Additionally, one can notice that UNESCO's human right discourse on literacy is strongly associated with the concept of economic development by addressing the functionality of literacy because the abilities of reading and writing alone cannot posit economic development and sustainability. In UNESCO's rhetoric, the discourse on development, human rights, and continuing education are associated in order to expand and sustain learning opportunities for all and posit education as a key element of nations' economic development; this comforted line of vision is still connected with UNESCO's discourse on development and lifelong education as the objective of international conferences on adult education was to "expand educational opportunities within integrated lifelong education systems" (UNESCO, 1972, p.2). Along this

line, literacy is represented as everyday engagement with the written word, through the activity of reading. The discourse of lifelong education argues that literacy is a necessary part of daily life, and therefore there needs to be literacy teaching for those adults who have not reached the appropriate level so that they can access 'normality'. This argumentation brings the everyday world of the adult learner into the classroom, but also potentially positions this learner as abnormal' or in 'deficit'. So the concept of functional literacy introduces a form of exclusion by pointing to the necessity for mastery of the written language within society. The concept of functionality therefore implies that the goal of literacy education is to enable individuals to fit into the status quo rather than challenging inequality or promoting social transformation. It is also closely related to a reductionist version of literacy as vocational competencies. Along the same line of vision, UNESCO promotes a rather important discourse on lifelong learning.

The Lifelong Learning Discourse

Two essential publications on lifelong learning by UNESCO (Faure Report, 1972; Delors Report, 1996) posited fundamental principles of lifelong learning.An illustration of UNESCO's engagement in promoting lifelong learning can be found in the Faure report (1972) which states:

> The idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society. The lifelong concept covers all aspects of education, embracing everything in it, with the whole being more than the sum of its parts. There is no such thing as a separate, permanent part of education which is not lifelong. In other words, lifelong education is not an educational system but the principle on which the over-all organization of a system is founded, and which should accordingly underlie the development of each of its component parts. (UNESCO, 1972, p.181)

The concept of lifelong learning can be viewed as a justification of the necessity to develop and sustain adult education worldwide with the increasing alarming figures of world illiteracy. Compulsory education cannot alone promote high rates of literacy during someone's entire life. Lifelong learning is a conceptual approach to address learning needs throughout life that emerged in the late 1960s as a response to changing economic and political conditions, especially in Latin America and OECD countries. Lifelong learning, like globalization, has become a hegemonic discourse (Fairclough, 2006). The prevailing discourse of lifelong learning, I argue, has been intrinsically linked to the dominant discourse of globalization. Indeed, the assumptions underpinning the purposes of lifelong learning are inextricably coupled with the strong globalization thesis which maintains that the neoliberal capitalism that underpins globalization—which essentially has led to "viewing… the world through an economic prism" (Saul, 2005, p.97) — is generally unavoidable. Accordingly, lifelong learning, too, is also seen as necessary precisely because of globalization.

While lifelong learning has increasingly been cited as one of the key principles in the educational and development fields, there is no shared understanding of its usage at the global level. Also, the concept of lifelong learning or continuing education is not specific to developed or under developed countries. But the industrialized countries, at the time of the economic boom of the 1960's, realized that the ideology of lifelong education reflected in effect the necessity for the rapid training of workers in the vocational field. An illustration of this functionality of adult education has been developed by UNESCO which posits the universality of its action by mentioning in the Faure Report that lifelong education is "the master concept for educational policies in the years to come for both developed and developing countries" (UNESCO, 1972, p.181). Thus, lifelong learning is a key feature of all forms of education whether formal or non

formal and will be associated with UNESCO future documents policing education in general. Again, UNESCO illustrates this point of view by acknowledging that "lifelong education is not an educational system but the principle in which the over-all organization of a system is founded, and which accordingly underlies the development of each of its component parts" (Ibid.p.182).

At the same time, there was a need to clarify and operationalize the concept of lifelong education. An example of this 'theoretical refinement' is illustrated through Dave's (1976) words when he states that "it is often difficult to conceptualize lifelong education in its entirety on account of its comprehensiveness and multiple modalities" (Dave, 1976, p.35). As such, the clarification and operationalization of the lifelong education discourse is present in the Paris international conference on adult education in which lifelong education is becoming an «absolute requirement for social, economic, scientific and technological development in the modern world" (UNESCO, 1985, p.43).But it can be argued that the general concern for promoting learning beyond compulsory schooling started in the early 1970s. At this time, UNESCO published the 'Faure report' (1972) where 'lifelong education' was put forward as a way to cope with the modernization process, economic uncertainty, and technological change and advancements. From this report, one can acknowledge the link between 'globalization' and 'lifelong education' (later to become 'lifelong learning'). This report, as well as many other reports, articles and books released in the 1970s on lifelong education, coincided with the dissolution of the Bretton Woods agreement on currency, high unemployment, and the beginning of a widespread loss of faith in Keynesian economics and in the viability of the welfare state. While it can be argued that 'social inclusion' and prevention of social dislocation dominated the purposes of lifelong learning as understood by UNESCO (Delors, 1996), and also

by the OECD up until the 1970s the changing economy can be seen as the catalyst for lifelong learning and the wind that has propelled the idea to prominence in governments and transnational organizations such as the OECD, UNESCO, and even the World Bank.

Since the 1970s, lifelong learning has arguably been further intertwined with the economic sphere. The 'knowledge economy', which can also be seen as a dominant discourse accompanying globalization, has become the main imperative for promoting lifelong learning at present. In short, due to the increasingly global nature of capitalism, as well as technological advances—which arise from and contribute to globalization—there is an alleged need for workers to 'upskill'. In other words, with the growing complexity of technologies, as well as the growing necessity of global mobile qualified workers, lifelong learning is considered as an imperative. 'Training for the new economy' and 'adapting to the changing society', thus have become the dual central purposes of lifelong learning (Martin, 2003).

Through its objective to clarify the operationalization of the concept of lifelong learning, UNESCO illustrates its position by stating that: "Basic education can by no means anticipate vigorous technological and social development and that, therefore, lifelong education, in an ever-changing environment, is absolutely necessary" (UNESCO, 1985, p.54).At the same time, UNESCO states the relationship between basic education and economic development by promoting the acquisition of technical skills that will enable adult learners to perform better in the world of work. An illustration of this conceptual engagement by stating that:

> Many countries are in a period of economic austerity characterized by high unemployment, underemployment and the increasing application of high technology requiring greater skills for individuals to participate fully in modern life. Adult education plays an important role in ensuring the effective exercise of the right to work

by preparing individuals and the population to play an active part in economic life, providing people with professional and technical knowledge, skills and practical experience, improving their qualifications and enabling them to learn new occupations. (Ibid. p. 54)

Again, UNESCO keeps on clarifying the operationalization of the concept of lifelong learning and recommends its Member States to:

Take all necessary steps to develop further its adult education activities which on the basis of the concept of lifelong education should become an integral part of the educational system and a factor of its improvement and democratization, with a view to providing full and equal opportunities for education for all. (Ibid. 46)

Twenty-eight years after the Faure Report, UNESCO illustrates a refined operationalization of the concept of lifelong education and replaces the former one by lifelong learning. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in the 1996 UNESCO's Delors Report which acknowledges the need to "rethink and update the concept of lifelong education so as to reconcile three forces: competition, which provides incentives; co-operation which gives strength; and solidarity, which unites" (p. 18). UNESCO further illustrates this conceptual refinement by arguing that:

There is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. Not only must it adapt to changes in the nature of work, but it must also constitute a continuous process of forming whole beings—their knowledge and aptitudes, as well as the critical faculty and ability to act. It should enable people to develop awareness of themselves and their environment and encourage playing their social role and working in the community. (p. 21)

Accordingly, the Delors Report main purpose is to posit the basis for a 'learning society'. An illustration of this conceptual clarification can be found in the same report when UNESCO states that the "the truth is that every aspect of life, at both the individual and the social level, offers opportunities for both learning and doing" (p. 21). One can notice the shift from 'lifelong education' to 'lifelong learning' was not only semantic but also substantive. Lifelong education is associated with the more comprehensive and integrated goal of developing more humane individuals and communities in the face of rapid social change. On the contrary, lifelong learning is linked to retraining and learning new skills that would enable individuals to cope with the demands of the rapidly changing workplace.

Through this clarification of the operationalization of the concept of lifelong learning one can notice that there is a connection between UNESCO's portrayal of lifelong education and the World Bank vision. Both United Nations agencies acknowledge that lifelong education or lifelong learning encompasses all forms of educational systems and that it is a key feature of the new world economy as reflected in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA GMR) of 2006. An illustration of this conceptual clarification can be found in the 2006 EFA GMR report in which UNESCO states that "After a basic education in the formal system, an adult may have to change jobs or will be vulnerable through globalization, economic transformations, migration or personal choice to greater geographic mobility" (EFA GMR, 2006, p178). Along the same line of vision, the World Bank illustrates a clarification of the concept by positing that lifelong learning is a "method of organizing and delivering leaning in a manner that is intended to be learner, vs. institutionally, driven" (UNESCO, 2002, p.2). Another illustration of this conceptual clarification can be found in the same report when UNESCO states that "lifelong learning encompasses learning over the entire life cycle (from early

childhood to retirement) and all learning systems (formal, non-formal, and informal) is related the global changing economy" (Ibid. p.2).

Again, the World Bank refines the operationalization of the concept by acknowledging that "lifelong learning is not a new learning system" and presents it as an "essential rationalization of existing learning systems to make them function in an integrated manner for the best of individuals" (Ibid. p. 2).It is fair to conclude that 'training' is, indeed, what the hegemonic discourse of lifelong learning has generally become. This is not to say that that there is an easy way to supplant such a constraining discourse with more liberating ones. The present situation in which we find ourselves in is what Freire referred to as a "limit situation" (Freire, 2000). The current dominant discourses of lifelong learning and globalization make it difficult for alternatives. Yet, as Freire explains, "it is not the limit situations in and of themselves which create a climate of hopelessness, but rather how they are perceived by women and men at a given historical moment: whether they appear as fetters or as insurmountable barriers" (2000, p.80). According to Freire, the first step to overcoming, or at least mitigating, such barriers is by truly understanding the ways in which they work and yield power over those who have less power in society. In examining barriers to alternative lifelong learning it is important to delineate and unravel such perceived barriers. As such, a Freirian approach to lifelong learning can be seen as a tool enabling illiterates and literates to overcome the perceived barriers of inequality. Again, the discourse of critical pedagogy can be co-opted in the dominant lifelong learning paradigm. In *Beyond rhetoric: adult learning policies and practices*, for example, the OECD calls for the "transformation of the individual rather than the regurgitation of information" (OECD, 2003, p.163). As such, both instructors and learners are encouraged to think about broader issues of access to knowledge, inequality and the relationship between past

and present when thinking about the future. Consequently, literacy is clearly treated as 'situated' (Street, 2005) and considered as potentially transformative, to the individual learners, educators and society as a whole.

Along with the concepts of human rights and lifelong learning, UNESCO developed also the poverty reduction discourse, one argument associated with the discourse of developmental discourse.

The Poverty Reduction Discourse

This new objective for literacy programmes is relevant in UNESCO's apparel. An illustration of the operationalization of this discourse can be found in the Hamburg report in which UNESCO states that illiteracy is "one of the factors in low economic growth, social tensions, and political stability" (UNESCO, 1972, p.48). While considering literacy as a fundamental and a political right, UNESCO starts to widen the narrow definition of functional literacy in order to improve the practicality of the Experimental World Literacy Programme. A thorough illustration of this conceptual operationalization can be found in the review of the EWLP when UNESCO realizes that:

> The concepts of functional literacy must be extended to include all its dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural. Just as development is not only economic growth, so literacy must aim above all to arouse in the individual a critical awareness of social reality, and to enable him or her to understand, master and transform his or her destiny. (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976, p.191)

Nonetheless, UNESCO is still considering that education is a "right for all" and "lifelong learning is an absolute requirement for social, economic, scientific, and technological development" (p.43).Accordingly, the relationship between education and the world of work

becomes consistent with the concept of poverty reduction. An illustration of this relationship can be found in the Paris report in which UNESCO states that "those who will be the victims of economic deprivation are illiterates" (UNESCO, 1985, p.44). Another illustration of this conceptual operationalization is developed by UNESCO when it states that it is very important to "stress the relationship between the development of vocational skills, economic growth, and social development" (Ibid.p.50). These strong relationships tend to render literacy more functional.

During the 1990s many UNESCO's documents mentioned the role of literacy in sustainable development. The Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in Montreal (1997), the World Education Forum in Dakar (UNESCO, 2000), and the United Nations Literacy Decade (2001) invited renewed attention and effort for literacy promotion as a key element of sustainable development. Also, the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) and United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) have now reaffirmed the strong relationship between the fight against illiteracy and poverty reduction. An illustration of the operationalization of the concept of sustainable development can be found in a 2002 United Nation's report in which:

A map of areas of high illiteracy in the world corresponds quite closely with a map of high levels of poverty, and literacy competence is an essential learning outcome contributing to economic development. In this perspective, it is not literacy on its own that makes a difference, but rather what it enables people to do in order to benefit from new freedoms and address poverty. Literacy is one of the features – but a universal one – that is linked with poverty reduction, economic growth and wealth. (United Nations, 2002, p.3)

Accordingly, the relationship between literacy and poverty reduction was already present in UNESCO's discourse since the Tehran Conference in 1965. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in the Tehran report in which UNESCO states that:"Literacy instruction must enable illiterates, left behind the course of events, and producing little, to become socially and economically integrated in a new world orderwhere scientific and technological progress calls for ever more knowledge and specialization" (UNESCO, 1965, p. 29). It was assumed that literacy and basic education had a positive impact on economic productivity and economic sustainability. But it remains difficult to empirically demonstrate the economic returns of literacy because the changing needs of society and the world of work are presented by UNESCO as accomplished facts which people have to adapt to. An illustration of this empirical difficulty to show the economic returns of literacy can be found in Nair's and White's work when they state that thereis no mention of the "original interpretation of the cultural paradigm approach to communication, which promotes empowerment as human agency as in such definitions of empowerment as the ability of individuals to challenge cultural and strauctural deprivation or oppression" (Nair & White, 1994, p.162)

Nonetheless, it was the role of literacy educators to teach to the learners the two streams of learning related to literacy skills and economic skills by putting an emphasis on the relationship between the acquisition of these professional skills and the economic returns of literacy education.Accordingly, these two learning facets were seen as one. An illustration of this conceptualization of literacy can be found in the Tehran Conference report (1965): in which UNESCO states that:

Functional literacy was accepted as an essential element in overall development…closely linked to economic and social prioriites and to present and future

manpower needs…[The delegates] accepted the new concept of functional literacy, which implies more than the rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing that is often inadequate and sometimes chimerical. Literacy education must enable illiterates, left behind the course of events, and producing little, to become socially and economically integrated in a new world order where scientific and technological progress calls for ever more knowledge and specialization. (UNESCO, 1965, p.29)

As such, UNESCO's vision of functionall literacy, one that entails the economic integration of the learners shares some commonalities with the World Bank approach to poverty reduction and basic literacy education. As such, the WB developed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as the implementation documents of the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS). Both are concepts innovated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to better deliver international aid and provide debt relief to countries who meet criteria set by the Bank and Fund. With this new approach, poverty is no longer restricted to the sole economic dimension. The multidimensional aspect of poverty is fully recognized and interrelations between the economic and social aspects are fully integrated. PRSPs provide different reasons for seeking better literacy rates. These can be regrouped into three categories: The right approach, the social approach, and the functional approach. An illustration of this common conceptualization of literacy can be found in a 2005 World Bank report in which the organization states te importance of the social approach in bettering literacy rates:

The strategy for reducing poverty focuses on promoting the productive use of labor-the main asset of the poor-and providing basic social services to the poor. Investment in education contributes to the accumulation of human capital which is essential for higher incomes and sustained economic growth. Education-especially basic (primary and lower-secondary education)-helps reduce poverty by increasing the productivity of the

poor. By reducing fertility and improving health and by equipping people with the skills they need to participate fully in the economy and in society. (World Bank, 2005, p.1)

Such a social approach envisages literacy as a desired outcome that focuses on social or cultural dimensions. It is mostly linked to human development, empowerment (of women and minorities) and personal well-being. As such, literacy is there seen as an instrument to fight against social and cultural inequalities, or against domination. These inequalities are redressed through target programmes that use ethnic languages or through such measures as correcting gender bias in curricula.

Accordingly, the World Bank acknowledges the vital importance of functional literacy in the new world economy. So it is therefore vital to have a literate population. In order to so, the World Bank along with UNESCO integrated another two categories-the right approach and the functional approach to refine the concept of poverty reduction strategies regarding literacy. Throughout the right approach, there is a right to literacy as there is a right to education. Such an approach is never formulated as such in the PRSP but it follows from the approach relating to literacy enrollment in formal education. Another indication of such an approach is the fact that illiteracy is closely linked to poverty, of which it is an indicator. Thus, reducing illiteracy will lead to a reduction of poverty since it is a part of the way poverty is measured.

At the same time the definition of literacy will rely on a functional approach centered on the skills and competences needed to function adequately in society. This approach tackles mainly preparation for work, self- employment, access to micro-credit (particularly for women), management of the environment for better productivity and sustainability of crops. The aim of this literacy approach is to sustain economic growth and to increase the productivity of the labor

force. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be also found in the same report in which the WB affirms its new vision, one which requires that:

> Education strategies that maximize the impact of education on economic growth and poverty reduction and aim for higher economic growth and more equitable distribution of that growth" while the Bank's strategy for education is focused in (a) attaining the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals and (b) strengthening education as the basis for a knowledge economy, by building the higher-level skills and knowledge needed to compete in global markets and foster economic growth. (WB, 2005, p.4)

Again, the WB is developing its vision by acknowledging that education is the basis of the knowledge economy and by recognizing that this educational strategy entails a reflection on educational strategies and methodologies in order to develop more informed poverty reduction strategy papers. Along with the poverty reduction discourse, UNESCO is developing a conceptualization of the eradication of illiteracy.

The Discourse on the Eradication of Illiteracy

Since 1948, the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills has been considered as an inalienable human right. But, the persistence of illiteracy remains one of society's greatest shortcomings. The World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) constitutes one of the world's broadest agreements in the field of education, reaffirming the right of every person to receive an education which satisfies his or her basic learning needs throughout life. With the Dakar Framework for Action (Senegal, 2000), the international community once more established illiteracy as a priority issue, setting a number of goals for the year 2015. It is believed that many countries will fail to achieve these goals. Consequently, illiteracy not only limits the full development of individuals and their participation in society, but also has

repercussions throughout life, affecting a person's family environment, restricting access to the benefits of development, and hindering the enjoyment of other human rights. While states and civil society organizations have made significant efforts to address the problem, results have fallen short of the mark. In light of that fact, and acting in accordance with its official duties as set in its statutes, UNESCO developed literacy policies which approach the issue from a new angle. In order to assess the importance of the eradication of illiteracy, it is useful to process through a genealogical investigation of the concept and understands how "a particular concept or belief comes to be perceived as a truth or a problem in the first place" (Gale, 2001, p. 385).

According to UNESCO (2010), "recent statistics for 25 Latin American and Caribbean countries 2 show that, as of 2007, 8.6% of the population aged 15 and older is completely illiterate; this is equivalent to approximately 35 million people" (p.6). It should be noted that illiteracy in seven of these countries exceeds 10%; two have illiteracy rates in excess of 20%. These data pertain to complete illiteracy – that is, census and household survey respondents who state that they can neither read nor write. This measurement technique is the subject of much international debate. Data gathered by such means underestimate the actual status of the population, and fail to reflect individual reading, writing, and mathematical skills in different contexts of social performance (UNESCO-UIS, 2009).Today, the issue is approached not only in terms of complete illiteracy, but also functional illiteracy. The latter is measured by assessing reading, writing and mathematical skills in the various domains of social life which influence individual identity and insertion into society. From this perspective, literacy involves not only reading and writing, but also the acquisition of the skills necessary for effective and productive performance within society (UNESCO, 2006). The World Declaration on Education for All, issued in Jomtien in 1990 and ratified in Dakar in 2002, has enriched the concept. The

Declaration defines literacy as a basic learning need to be addressed throughout life, enabling individuals to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to fully participate in society. It is intertwined with concepts such as citizenship, cultural identity, socioeconomic development, human rights, equity and the need to create "literate environments" for its survival and development (UNESCO, 2006).This broader understanding of the concept and problem of illiteracy creates enormous methodological challenges in terms of measurement. In the 1960s, experts abandoned the literate-vs. illiterate dichotomy in favor of an approach which views literacy as an ongoing process, encompassing everything from the development of basic abilities to more complex linguistic and communication skills which unfold in a variety of social contexts.

Thus, an important commitment in the international effort to promote universal literacy is emerging in developing countries while UNESCO was advocating the organization of a major international campaign to eradicate illiteracy and bolster the national efforts in developing countries along with the financial support of industrialized countries.

Nonetheless, UNESCO is dealing with strong oppositions from some western countries which were associating mass literacy campaigns with the spread of communism. As such, mass literacy campaigns to eradicate illiteracy benefited from less funding due to the political content of these literacy programmes. An illustration of these theoretical conflicts can be found in an early 1957 report in which UNESCO states that there are some unanswered questions:

What are the factors causing a high rate of illiteracy in a given country? What factors contribute to the reduction of illiteracy in the population as a whole? How can illiteracy be eliminated altogether? What are the best methods for combating illiteracy? What can be done to prevent the relapse into illiteracy of those who have been taught how to read

and write? Is it more urgent to teach the adults to read and write, by conducting 'literacy campaigns', organizing literacy classes, persuading literate persons to help their illiterate relatives or neighbors? (UNESCO, 1957, p. 9)

Nonetheless, through UNESCO's literacy policies, one can notice that the methods of combating illiteracy are changing because the older one are not suited to this ever evolving world economy. An example of this conceptual refinement can be found in the Montreal report in which UNESCO acknowledges that: "Other forms of education-economic or cultural- in any literacy campaign should be emphasized; without such motivation the best methods may be doomed to failure" (UNESCO, 1960, p.18).But it remains that UNESCO needed to clarify the operationalization of the fight against illiteracy by continuously refining the definition of literacy and illiteracy. An example of this conceptual orientation can be found in the same report when the organization states that:

> Action should be taken to create within the competent organizations of the United Nations, including UNESCO, a special fund, derived from increased contributions from Member States, for the specific purpose of eliminating illiteracy in the developing and newly independent countries. (UNESCO, 1960, p.30)

Nonetheless, the fight against illiteracy was still the primary aim and one of the basic requirements of cultural, economic, and social development. The fight against illiteracy was represented through the need to promote the traditional view of functional literacy, one that promotes the need to acquire the skills of reading, writing, and calculation in order to be able to solve real life problems.

Accordingly, UNESCO adopted a new position acknowledging that illiteracy cannot be easily eradicated. An illustration of this conceptual engagement can be found in a 2000 report in

which the organization states that it will "no more use a "monolithic view of illiteracy as a disease in which the germs might be eradicated with appropriate drug or vaccination", rather it will view literacy as a "product of educational, social, and economic factors that cannot be radically changed in short periods of time" (UNESCO, 2000, p.4). As such, along the years, UNESCO continues to refine its conceptualizations of literacy and recommends its Members States to help developing a strategy for a comprehensive approach to national literacy campaigns and investigating the possibility of its general application to the struggle against illiteracy in developing societies. Many developing countries recognize that adult education is vital for economic and social development in general, increasing productivity, improving health and in particular the quality of life. An illustration of this vision can be found in the 1978 UNESCO report in which the organization states that "combating illiteracy is still the major objective of adult education, going hand in hand with a concern for the universalization of education" (UNESCO, 1997) and this fight represents an UNESCO's leitmotiv.

Consequently, UNESCO, through these military and medical discourses about illiteracy, is empowering literates all around the world and pushing member States to internalize these distinctions about literates and illiterates and posit at the same time new meanings to literacy and illiteracy through various literacy practices. But the military and medical discourses on literacy are not neutral because they define the subjects (literates and illiterates) in ways that reinforce the societal and institutional understandings of the state of illiteracy all around the world. Thus, UNESCO discourses on literacy possesses a certain resonance because UNESCO is creating a literacy arena that values the universalism of its policies by addressing recommendations to Member States and United Nations agencies, and promotes scientific and professional authority regarding its views about literacy and illiteracy.

UNESCO is using these rules to regulate a web of literacy practices, beliefs, and values by constituting and constructing the world of literacy. Through these rules, UNESCO is creating new categories of actors, defining new shared international research interests, and disseminating new models of literacy. Therefore UNESCO is creating a discourse of power in the international literacy arena through its institutional authority within the United Nations system and controlling over information and professional expertise about literacy concepts, traditions, and practices. In doing so, UNESCO is perceived as more legitimate apparel than Member States because it has access to more information and professional expertise about literacy. As such, UNESCO is still refining the operationalization of the concept of illiteracy by continuously clarifying its meaning.

The Discourses on Illiteracy

UNESCO developed along the years various conceptualizations of the term illiteracy through its use of the dichotomous model in defining literacy. During the first international conference on adult education in Elsinore, Denmark (1949), UNESCO portrays a distinction between the 'so called masses' who represented the masses of illiterates, and the so called cultured people who represented the literate minorities. This theoretical position of UNESCO about literacy represents what has been termed by Street (2003) as the dichotomous view of literacy, one vision of literacy that distinguishes between illiterates and literates. In 1949 during the first international conference on adult education, UNESCO distinguished between the 'so called masses' and 'the so called cultured people'. In doing so, UNESCO recognized that illiterates represented the majority of the world population therefore it was urgent to promote 'literacy for the masses' (1965) because in Westernized countries the state of illiteracy was different and illiterate people were referred to as 'mentally incapable'. This concept of handicap

in defining illiteracy shows that functional illiteracy was more important than basic illiteracy in westernized countries. This new UNESCO's positioning on literacy distinguishes between functional illiteracy and functional literacy while stating that in some parts of the world we had what can be termed as 'unspecified literacy', a way of portraying individuals considered as illiterates not because they couldn't read and write but because they didn't appear in national censuses as illiterates. Nonetheless, it remains that, according to UNESCO, the 'marginalized people' are still 'excluded' from the 'pockets of literacy' (2002). So, from the 'mentally incapable' to the 'marginalized', UNESCO considers that there exists 'official illiterates' who know how to read and write. One can deduce from this situation that the 'illiterates are those who are outside 'official literacy circles'.

This distinction is still relevant in UNESCO's discourse through the development of the concept of "literacy for the masses" during the Tehran meeting on the eradication of illiteracy" (UNESCO, 1965). The concept of literacy for the masses is relevant in under developed countries according to the prevalent UNESCO's discourse stating that the problem of illiteracy is of little importance in developed countries where compulsory primary education has been present since decades therefore undermining the scores of illiteracy. An illustration of this conceptual vision can be found in an early 1953 report in which UNESCO states that in these developed countries, the "mentally incapable" (UNESCO, 1953) represent the 'illiterates'. Many years later, UNESCO (1978, 1985) developed and positioned the concept of functional illiteracy to sustain the difference of 'illiteracies' between under developed and developed countries. The concept of functional illiteracy goes along with the concept of 'basic illiteracy' developed later by UNESCO (1999). In doing so, UNESCO is rendering the theoretical debate about the fight against illiteracy throughout the world more and more complex by assuring

Member States from Westernized countries that the state of illiteracy is these parts of the world is completely different than the one in under developed countries. The 'functionally illiterate' has acquired more skills than the 'basic illiterates' because they know how to read and write but they cannot apply these skills to the new demands of a globalized world. This UNESCO's position about functional illiteracy sustains the importance of the literacy, one defined primarily as the acquisition of reading and writing skills.

At the same time, UNESCO is trying to promote a wider view of literacy by implying that the many uses of literacy imply that literacy has plural understandings. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be also found in the 1990 World Conference on Education for All and the World Education Forum (2000) in which UNESCO states that the international community is no longer using the "monolithic view of illiteracy as a disease in which the germs might be eradicated with an appropriate drug or vaccination" (UNESCO, 2000, p.4). Thus, assuming that literacy has to be conceived broadly as the basic knowledge and skills needed in a rapidly changing world, it remains that literacy is a fundamental right in every society and therefore a necessary skill in itself and one of the foundation of other skills (UNESCO, 1997). Therefore, Member States and United Nations agencies need to acknowledge that literacy is a catalyst for participation in cultural, social, economic, and political activities and for lifelong learning. But, literacy remains the right to read and write and the acquisition of these major skills will continue to determine the distinction between illiterates and literates as far as UNESCO literacy policies are concerned.

The Discourse on Schooled Literacy

Being literate has become of enormous significance in the contemporary policy discourse as a means of human capital development and as a response to the effects of globalization. Policies

across the world commonly assume that lack of literacy restricts the ability of workers to adapt to new technology and leads to safety concerns and costly mistakes, prevents those without such skills from obtaining or retaining employment and has a negative effect on a country's economic performance. For example, the OECD organization strongly recommends a focus on improving literacy skills as the 'key' to unlocking the benefits of globalization (OECD, 1997; 1999). At the individual level being literate is generally equated with success in life, with notions of a person being 'educated' and having access to the goods and trappings that are valued highly in society.

Early as 1949 UNESCO asserts that there is a strong relationship between adult education and schooled literacy. An illustration of this conceptual engagement can be found in the Elsinore report in which the organization states that the "least educated of men can possess as genuine a culture as the scholar" (UNESCO, 1949, p.3). Another illustration of this conceptual vision can also be found in the same report when UNESCO portrays adult education and literacy as a 'living culture' (1949) and acknowledges the fact that adults who didn't go to school or who were left out by the school system have some 'unschooled knowledge' and needed a training to help them cope with the needs and requirements of formal education. By doing so, UNESCO stresses the importance of non formal education as a part of the overall standard educational system.

As such, literacy is treated, however, as if it was a set of unproblematic, information-processing cognitive skills that are independent of the context in which they are used. The process of acquiring these skills is conceptualized as a ladder that has to be climbed up where people are ranked from top to bottom with the emphasis on what they can't do rather than what they can. This leads to a deficit model where those on the bottom rungs are positioned as

lacking the skills that others think they need. This approach has framed the terms of the debate, defined the scope and content of which groups are seen to be deficient in literacy and why, and denied the central role of culture and relationships of power in determining literacy needs and aspirations. Literacy skills are seen as neutral and objective within a discourse that takes no account of the ways in which they are used in specific communities. In this discourse, 'literacy skills are elevated; they are viewed as a set of technical skills which, once acquired, usually lead to positive employment outcomes' (Black, 2002: 2). In terms of the curriculum that is available for learning this means that adult literacy is framed as the acquisition of a body of standardized reading and writing skills that can be formally assessed and compared within and between nations.

The synergistic effect of these UNESCO's policy discourses positions literacy learners as people whose deficiencies have a direct and adverse impact on a nation's economic development and therefore they pose a problem for the literate 'others'. Moreover, the discourse defines the problem as lying with the individual who has somehow failed to learn rather than with broader structural conditions. A particular aspect of this is to describe adults' literacy skills in terms of children's reading ages. Such messages are internalized by those who are deemed to be lacking these skills and shape how they think about themselves and how they act in the world. Again, this is compounded by the myth of meritocracy that implies that anyone who is brought up properly will rise above the hardships imposed by poverty. Consequently, this myth permeates common-sense understandings of what returning to learning implies because the failure to acquire mandatory skills in schools is seen as an individual problem. Bourdieu argues that: Agents, even the most disadvantaged, tend to perceive the world as natural and to find it surprisingly acceptable, especially when one looks at the situation of the dominated through the

eyes of the dominant" (1990,p. 131).Thus, policy makers tend to also incorporate and perpetuate the discourse of deficit that pervades literacy practices.

Accordingly, UNESCO further acknowledges the need to link literacy with a universal access to basic education by stating that one needed to: "Eliminate illiteracy at its source by enrolling all children in basic education and development programs to ensure that they will not relapse into illiteracy and provide the newly literate with opportunities for lifelong education" (UNESCO, 1985, p.58). Later, UNESCO keeps on positing the importance of compulsory primary education in fighting against illiteracy. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 1989 report in which UNESCO states that "universal primary education belongs to the "global approach to combating illiteracy along with the education of out-of-school youth and adults" (UNESCO, 1989, par.32). Again, UNESCO illustrates this conceptual refinement and adds that:

> There is increasing awareness that information on literacy should be complemented by more detailed statistics on the percentage distribution of the population by the highest level or grade of education attained, so as to provide additional and finer indications on the educational composition of the population that are essential to the planning of socio-economic and cultural development. (UNESCO, 1995, p.14)

A stronger illustration of the importance of compulsory education can be found in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of September 2000 which recommends Members States: "To ensure that, by the year 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys would have equal access to all levels of education, which requires a renewed commitment to promote literacy for all" (UNESCO, 2002, p.2).Nonetheless, most discussions on Education for All didn't take into

account the question of the training for illiterate adults and children in recognizing that literacy and numeracy skills are key elements to increase their economic possibilities. Most of these adults and children didn't acquire the necessary skills of literacy such as reading, writing, and calculation, or did not master them enough to be able to cope with the demands of the new world economy. Therefore, their lack of literacy skills is due to the inadequacy of the formal educational systems and relates to a gap in processing to the reduction of poverty.

Thus, by trying to implement an reinforce the universality of primary education or compulsory primary education, UNESCO, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development program are trying to improve the experimentation of mass literacy programmes in order to increase the literacy rates of adults and children by enriching the formal education system through the introduction of functional literacy components.

Since the "industrialized countries almost attained universal primary schooling, UNESCO and the World Bank acknowledged that it was time to renew the conceptualization of literacy by adding operational terms. An illustration of this conceptual vision can be found in a Bank 2002 document in which" sufficient literacy" is defined as the "equivalent of four years of primary schooling" (WB, 2002, p.8). As such, the WB confines literacy in the midst of the school system and eludes the nontraditional modes in acquiring life skills.

But one should acknowledge that the World Bank and UNESCO's positions on schooled literacy reflect the United nations Literacy decade vision of the "challenges of universal literacy ", an approach that posits the fact that "learning and literacy for all" are not a reality for the hundreds of millions of people who are unable to read and to write, or who lack access to learning. The rationale for the Decade is to "increase national and international efforts to meet the objectives set for literacy by the world community" (UNESCO, 2004, p.14). As such, the

United Nations acknowledge that this common collective commitment in improving literacy policies should value the education of the most 'vulnerable' population through the promotion of compulsory primary education and 'continuing education' along with the acquisition of lifelong learning skills.

Thus, literacy is still in UNESCO agenda but the concept of "Literacy for All" is diluted in the concept of Education for All. Thus, UNESCO, the World Bank, and associated organizations are equating literacy with education. An example of this conceptual orientation can be found in the same report which states that universal completion of primary education will improve literacy rates among what has been termed as 'the most disadvantaged groups' (UNESCO, 2003). Another illustration of this new vision of literacy for all can be found in a 2004 report in which the organization states that "the importance of literacy, especially adult literacy as part of an "integrated approach to the realization of the EFA Goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) as well as other policy priorities such as the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative (FTI)" (UNESCO, 2004, p.17).But all the literacy programmes should acknowledge that it is important that people have a positive educational experience and feel that their issues and concerns are valued, because in valuing these, one also values them as people. This has implications for the curriculum if the power imbalances that keep on pervading curricula all over the world are to change.

Also, international literacy programs should acknowledge the close connection between literacy practices, identities, and discourses. Again, literacy practices in schools are shaped by power and ideology so educational practices should therefore take cognizance of the cognitive, social, and emotional issues affecting learning. However, adult literacy practices all too often

foreground the cognitive at the expense of the social and emotional dimensions and focus on skills for employment rather than learning for the whole of life.

The Literate Environment Discourse

As early as 1949 UNESCO developed the concept of "living culture". Definition of this concept can be found in the Elsinore report in which the organization states that adult education aims to «enabling each individual to live as full and rich a life as possible" and allowing individuals to "understand how they fit in with the laws of production and consumption" (Ibid.3) in a living culture" (UNESCO, 1949, p2). Thus, non formal education and formal education reinforce the knowledge acquired by adults through various lines of human reflection and action and determine the reality of an environment open to all types of learning. In portraying the notion of a literate environment, UNESCO is widening the definition of literacy and posits literacy practices enabling the learners to acquire the skills necessary for bettering the lives of each individual. At the same time, UNESCO is creating a link between the concept of a literate environment and the fight to eradicate illiteracy. In doing so, UNESCO (1989) documents the "absolute priority that should be given to the struggle against illiteracy and the creation of a literate world by the end of the century" (par.1). Further, UNESCO illustrates its position by developing a socio-cultural approach of literacy by stating that the fight against illiteracy will help build "literate societies responsive to the different cultural traditions" (UNESCO, 1997, p.17) and posit the need to "enrich the literacy environment by enhancing the use and retention of literacy through the production and dissemination of locally-relevant, gender-sensitive and learner-generated print materials" (Ibid.18). Also, UNESCO stresses the fact that the acquisition of literacy skills is possible in non formal and formal settings in order for literacy programmes worldwide to take into account the importance of locally relevant

modes of learning that privilege writing processes and which are gender-oriented. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 2002 UNESCO document in which the organization states that:

> Literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.(UNESCO, 2002, Art.7)

The mention of literacy for all posits the strong relationship between the acquisition of basic literacy skills, the socio-cultural components of literacy, and the economic development paradigm. Also, by bringing in the notions of demography, health issues, and the concept of sustainable development, UNESCO was stressing the plural meanings of the concept of literacy by addressing to its Members States the need to incorporate these crucial key features to all literacy programmes in order to improve their effectiveness. Again, UNESCO is enriching the traditional and casual definition of literacy, one going beyond the only satisfaction of statistical purposes. As such, UNESCO acknowledges that Member States need to create and sustain "dynamic literate environments in countries with low literacy rates" (UNESCO, 2002, p.4). Thus, UNESCO is trying to overcome the pitfalls of an operational definition of literacy by urging Member States and organizations working on implementing literacy programmes worldwide to take into account the fact that:

> Compte tenu des multiples facettes de l'alphabétisation dans la vie quotidienne, les efforts tendant à l'alphabétisation universelle doivent à l'évidence dépasser la simple exigence d'accroître les taux de participation aux programmes d'enseignement scolaire ou d'éducation des adultes. La création d'environnements d'alphabétisation riches et

dynamiques, où la communication écrite soit utilisée de façon durable à toutes fins et sous des formes appropriées au contexte, est la clef des progrès de ces efforts. (UNESCO, 2004, p.18)

Consequently, beyond positing the plural meanings of literacy and the international efforts in trying to accomplish Universal Literacy, there is a need to improve the participation rates of adults in formal and non formal educational programmes. As such, the creation of dynamic literate environments in which written communication is used in diverse appropriate contexts will allow literacy programmes to succeed. Also, there is a need to acknowledge the creation of dynamic literate environment in the classroom, at home, and at work is an essential condition in facilitating the multiple uses of acquired skills. Again, the creation of literate environment necessitates a wider access to information and communication means in the perspective of incorporating local knowledge and vernacular languages according to the requirements of UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Thus, the creation of a dynamic literate environment necessitates the intervention of various sectors outside the educational system. Following the United Nations Recommendations, it remains mandatory to create literate environments and literate societies in order to achieve poverty reduction, reduce infant's mortality, slower the world demographic expansion, sustain gender equality, and assure sustainable peace and democracy.

Consequently, it is urgent to widen the access to oral and written modes of communication in accordance with the new technological era and improve the reinforcement of individual and collective capacities regarding the production and management of local knowledge along with textual communication modes in relation to visual arts, dance, music, drama, and computer science. Thus, one need to create community oriented libraries and help

them develop multilingual and multicultural policies and economic, social, and cultural development programmes. In doing so, it remains important to cooperate and help editing businesses, the media, the technological industry, families, individuals, civil society organizations, universities, research centers, and the private sector to contribute to the undertaken actions in order to create environments that sustain literacy overall. Again, the creation of literate environments is one of the targets of the United Nations Literacy Decade. Again, the proposed conceptualization of a 'literate environment' attempts to create a literacy arena in which one should acknowledge the need to encourage reading and writing.

Finally, UNESCO is widening the definition of casual literacy by incorporating to its refined definition the need "to create environments that foster workplace literacy" (UNESCO, 2004, p41). In doing so, UNESCO is privileging a strong association between literacy and the world of work by promoting functional literacy. But, by continuously refining the discourses that surround the social construction of literacy, UNESCO didn't take into account certain conceptualizations of literacy.

The Framing of Excluded Discourses in UNESCO's Policies of Literacy

The least prevalent discourse in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy is the discourse of literacy as a text which is not mentioned in any document. Few documents (2/18) mention the francophone discourse of literacy and the discourse on indigenous literacy. The majority of UNESCO documents was positing the prevalence of an Anglophone discourse of literacy and didn't take into account other conceptualizations of literacy in Francophone countries.

The Francophone Discourse on Literacy

During the first international conference on adult education, the French experts representing their country during this international meeting of adult education specialists remarked that adult education was a flexible concept as some countries as France developed a wider term that encompasses all age levels. An illustration of this conceptualization of adult literacy can be found in the Elsinore report in which the organization states that the expression 'adult education' is not used in France; it is called 'popular education' or education populaire" (UNESCO, 1949, p.10). Another example of this conceptual vision of adult literacy can be also found in the same report in which the French experts acknowledge that "popular education is much wider and expresses the will to include all social classes in the cultural work" (Ibid.p.10). Thus, as early as 1949, education specialists were dealing with divergent views in how to address the conceptualizations of adult education worldwide. Therefore, UNESCO is facing some theoretical and educational challenges in trying to define the concept of adult education during an international meeting of educational experts from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It remains difficult to promote a unique definition of adult education. The same is true with the definition of literacy.

With the influence of the French language and culture during the past century it was obvious that UNESCO and the affiliated United Nations organizations could not take into account the various understandings of the concept of adult education and adult literacy as evidenced later in francophone countries. As UNESCO argues, the "original meaning of the English word literacy is different from its translations in several other languages" (UNESCO, 1949, p.6). Accordingly, these theoretical debates have been evidenced in the proposed conceptualizations of literacy in academia. An example of these conceptual battles can be found

in Fransman's words (2005) who states that "scholars have devoted considerable attention to defining literacy" while "their work has had direct implications for approaches to practice and policy" (Ibid.p.6). Another example of these complex conceptualizations of literacy can be found in the EFA World Monitoring report (2006) in which the organization states that "academics ranging from disciplines as psychology, economics, linguistics, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and history have engaged in an ongoing and, at times highly contested debate over the meaning and definition of the term literacy and how it is related to the broader notions of education and knowledge" (p.6). Excluded from these definitions of literacy was a critical view of literacy, one that views literacy as a means of imposing and legitimizing 'dominant' discourses over local conceptualizations of knowledge and recognition of the particularities of various cultural traditions.

As mentioned earlier, the particularities of the francophone educational system was not taken into account in defining the concept of literacy. UNESCO was struggling in delineating the basis for a flexible portrayal of the concept of literacy, one in which the multiple understanding of literacy could be put into place. The Francophone tradition operationalized two terms in representing literacy and illiteracy. The concepts of 'alphabetization' and 'analphabétisme' were designed to denote the difference between literacy and illiteracy. An illustration of this conceptualization of literacy can be found in the GMR in which UNESCO states that "alphabetization refers to 'literacy' learning' and is used in France to denote the process of literacy acquisition and 'analphabétisme' as poor reading and writing skills in French as a second language" (EFA GMR 2006, p.6). Thus, it remains constant that the French language used two different terms to conceptualize in one hand the relationship between the cognitive processes involved in the learning process and literacy as the acquisition of the skills

of reading and writing and conversely to posit the particular situation of minorities using French as a second language and dealing with the difficulties to master reading and writing skills. Again, one can notice that the Francophone tradition is identifying a different concept in defining illiteracy by positing the importance of the local context in representing different literacy acquisition processes.

The French education specialists and literacy stakeholders acknowledge that France was dealing with a complex situation in trying to cope with the demands of a wide range of immigrants who couldn't cope with the demands of the educational system and with the world of work. Thus, it remains important to deal with these new orientations of the literacy/illiteracy debate by delineating new conceptualizations of literacy. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in a UNESCO 2006 document in which one French Nongovernmental Organization specialized in immigration "ATD Quart Monde' "coined the term 'illetrisme' so that the poor French with limited reading and writing skills would not feel they were being compared to the immigrant workers labeled as 'analphabètes" (UNESCO, 2006, p.6). Accordingly, the ATD Quart Monde Organization is differentiating between two different types of illiteracy: (a) Functional illiteracy (illetrisme) for French people with poor reading and writing skills and (b) 'unspecified' illiteracy (Analphabetisme) for immigrants who were facing difficulties in mastering the French Language. Another illustration of the refinement of the concept of 'illetrisme' can be found in the same document in which the report states that the addition of a new concept into the French literacy circle acknowledges the concept of 'illetrisme' as the term representing "those who had been through part or all of the French primary school system without gaining adequate skills" (Ibid.p.6).

Thus, it is remarkable that the French educational specialists couldn't admit the fact that most of the immigrants living in France who having enormous problems dealing with the French language in schools and at work but they may be acquired reading and writing skills in their national and official languages and therefore could have been considered as literates in their native languages. Thus, one may believe that the distinction between functional illiteracy and 'basic' illiteracy was the result of a particular historical process of French history but as we found out later during a thorough analysis of UNSESCO's discursive formations of illiteracy, the concept of functional illiteracy was utilized by the former organization to pinpoint the state of illiteracy in westernized countries in her efforts to build an international consensus in the fight against illiteracy. Thus, illiteracy couldn't be only a problem that under developed countries had to deal with rather it was now a major international point of focus for all literacy stakeholders in their ongoing theoretical debates and challenges in delineating a 'new world literacy order'.

An illustration of this theoretical challenge can be found in the EFA World Monitoring report in 2006 in which the report states that "Anglophones discourses contributed to a new understanding of literacy" as "in Canada", where "the International adult Literacy survey provided a new meaning for the term 'analphabetisme' by linking literacy with broader learning and the mastery of information to work within the knowledge societies that will dominate the twenty-first century" (p.6). Thus, the concept of functional literacy and functional illiteracy is finding its momentum in the international community because literacy specialists realize that the new state of world illiteracy necessitated new conceptualizations of literacy rendering this concept more flexible in order to cope with the demands of the new world economy.

Later, with the influence of the 'New Literacy studies Movement' (1996), the notion of the plural meanings of literacy was being incorporated into the Francophone literacy circle when the word 'litteraties' started to be equated with the Anglophone term 'Literaties'. Thus, the new demands of the new technological era posited the recognition of a new vision of literacy, one that recognizes the multiple uses of literacy and its socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts. While the notion of multiple literacies was finding its way into the international community, it remains that the literacy stakeholders were struggling in incorporating local perspectives in the literacy arena as to recognize that indigenous people have a right to access "all levels and forms of education provided by the state" (UNESCO, 1997, p.5). As such, UNESCO recognized and acknowledged the need to associate the 'right to literacy' with the 'right to education' in order to give indigenous people a voice.

The Discourse on Indigenous Literacy

Indigenous peoples represent a diverse group and no one definition can fully determine the multiple understandings of the concept. Yet, as Rao and Robinson-Pant state: "they are distinguished around the world by their different cultural world-view consisting of both a custodial and non-material attitude to land and natural resources" (2003, p.1). An illustration of this operationalization of the concept of indigenous knowledge can be found in the United Nations Development Programme which applies four criteria in distinguishing indigenous people:

Indigenous peoples usually live within or maintain an attachment to geographically distinct ancestral territories; They tend to maintain distinct social, economic, and political institutions within their territories; They typically aspire to remain distinct

culturally, geographically and institutionally rather than assimilate fully into national society; and they self-identify as indigenous or tribal. (UNDP, 2005, p.2)

For instance, indigenous African education and knowledge has generally been understood as a simplistic process of socialization involving the preparation of children for work in the home, the village and within a select ethnic domain. Thus, most contemporary discussions on indigenous African education rest in the shadow of a Westernized ideal about transmitting the ideal of neutral literacy programmes. However, via an African centered synthesis one can begin to appreciate the particulars of indigenous ways of knowing and their epistemologies.

It remains that population censuses and international literacy statistical data cannot fully acknowledge and identify indigenous people and their specific socio-cultural particularities. Accordingly, UNESCO acknowledges this matter as it argues that "Education for indigenous peoples and nomadic peoples should be linguistically and culturally appropriate to their needs and should facilitate access to further education and appropriate training" (UNESCO, 1997, p.5). But a stronger illustration of this conceptual refinement of indigenous literacy can be further found in UNESCO's discourse when it states that: "Literacy programmes in indigenous communities need to be perceived by the people of the local cultures as an expansion of their existing skills rather than the remedy for the lack of skills" (UNESCO, 1999, p.2). Accordingly, the incorporation of indigenous languages in the educational system can be viewed as a key element of indigenous people's cultural identity. But, one can notice that with the lack of linguistic and cultural diversity in mainstream educational systems, the state of indigenous identities is facing a real threat.

It remains constant that the colonization process undertaken by the influential European countries was implemented through the instrument of education. An illustration of this

conceptual orientation can be found in the words of Bray (1993) who states that "schools in colonial settings were primarily designed to meet the conceptions and needs of the colonizers rather than the colonized, and this influenced the amount, type and availability of education" (p. 334). Hence, as Chilisa states: "Education was framed, constructed and driven by an ideology aimed at colonizing the mind and alienating the self and creating an individual that did not believe in her/himself" (2005,p.660). A thorough examination of international organizations 'definitional posture can lead to an observational critique based on my personal experiences as a second language learner and teacher. Accordingly, indigenous African knowledge is understood by my students as unofficial knowledge of essentially anecdotal memories of the complex laws of cultural artifacts and rituals. As such, the distinction between indigenous literacy and Western European standard literacy posited for the students a complex and uneasy choice in finding their way to making sense of both systems. Finally, there is a need to reform curricula to incorporate indigenous forms of knowledge and go beyond the static reliance on rote memorization and regurgitation.

This undermining process of the indigenous people's linguistic and cultural heritage can be also found in O'Malley's rhetoric's (2003) when he states that:

Even if governments fulfill all of EFA's stated goals—establishing free primary education accessible to all children and acquiring much needed supplies and teachers—this effort may fail because of the colonialist systems of education that remain; This is because state education systems in many developing countries have scarcely developed pedagogically from those established by former colonial powers. . . . Teaching often has more in common with army discipline, with rows of pupils silently copying notes from

the board, than an attempt to exploit a child's natural creativity and curiosity about the world as a route to learning. (O'Malley, 2003, par. 2)

O'Malley (2003) went on to argue that "schools became a place to fear rather than a joyful learning experience giving students another reason, beyond poverty itself, to discontinue school early" (par.3). Thus, O'Malley directed his critics towards the governments which must "contend with not only the excessively limited financial resources that maintain and limit literacy and learning possibilities for their citizens, but the form of education itself" (Ibid.par3).Accordingly, the lack of a real momentum regarding indigenous literacy and linguistic diversity was prominent in another critique of the failure of the international community to bring the rights of indigenous people to the table. An illustration of this political failure of international organizations to take into account indigenous literacy can be found in Tove Skutnabb-Kangas' words when he states "the right to mother tongue medium education is inadequately protected in existing international instruments and standards" (Ibid. p.203). Thus, indigenous people were marginalized and excluded of the mainstream educational system and were left out with no hope in improving their socio-cultural, linguistic, and political conditions.

As a result, indigenous people were facing the fear of achieving economic sustainability and the difficulties in acquiring fundamental literacy skills. As such, indigenous people had to deal with mainstream educational systems that couldn't cope with their personal and social needs in trying to improve and increase their rates of success and achievement. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 2004 UNESCO document in which the organization states that "State education systems often fail to meet the specific needs of indigenous communities with curricula and teaching methodologies" because they are "based on a world view that does not always recognize or appreciate indigenous notions of an

interdependent universe and the important place in their societies" (UNESCO Institute for Education, 2004, p.34). As a result, the differences between mainstream and indigenous cultures were growing stronger as the values, beliefs, and teaching methods developed through the traditional educational system couldn't cope with the needs and aspirations of indigenous people.

An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be further found in the same report in which UNESCO acknowledges that while "mainstream education systems generally privilege academic knowledge and devalue traditional wisdom and skills", indigenous peoples were "raising serious concerns about the negative impact of modern education on their communities' ability to survive" (ibid, p. 37). As such, indigenous people couldn't improve their 'so called literacy skills' because of lack of education in their native languages. Thus, indigenous people were sidelined by the discriminative linguistic and cultural exigencies of the mainstream educational system. Finally, one can sense the lack of recognition of the plural meanings of literacy, one literacy vision that can recognize that indigenous people might not be 'literate' in the mainstream language but that rather privileges literacy in the mother tongue.

Accordingly, the lack of operationalization of bilingual education regarding indigenous people led Aikman to state that: "The value of literacies and the languages of literacy in self-development need to be carefully assessed in societies where communication, knowledge, learning and teaching are oral practices" (2001, p.103). Aikman's vision of bilingual education was echoed in the words of López (2001) who points out that: "Indigenous learners, who are generally oral bilinguals, should acquire bilingual literacy through a simultaneous or concurrent process whereby they may develop their interpretative and productive capacities, as well as their creativity in general, in their two languages" (p.220). However, even though UNESCO is

recommending the implementation of bilingual programs of education, its Member States are not taking full account of these international recommendations promoting the development and sustainability of indigenous literacy worldwide. At the same time, UNESCO is missing a necessary and important re-conceptualization of literacy, one which promotes the conceptualization of literacy as 'text'.

The Discourse of Literacy as Text

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Four, the conceptualization of literacy as a text was not mentioned in any of the UNESCO's documents from 1949 to 2002. Nevertheless, the concept of literacy as text is represented in the EFA Global Monitoring Report in 2006. An illustration of this conceptualization of literacy can be found in a 2006 report in which UNESCO states that literacy can be represented as an 'autonomous set of skills', as a 'learning process, as applied, practiced and situated', and as a 'text' (2006). Among these four metaphors in defining literacy figures the conceptualization of literacy as a text; in this latter definition of literacy as text, one looks at it in "terms of the subject matter and the nature of the texts that are produced and consumed by literate individuals" (UNESCO, 2006, p.151). This conceptualization of literacy as a text is similar to Lytle and Wolfe's conceptualizations of literacy. Lytle and Wolfe introduce four metaphors in operationalizing the concept of literacy: Literacy as skills, literacy as tasks, literacy as practices, and literacy as critical reflection (1989). An illustration of this conceptualization of literacy as text can be found in Auerbach's words when he states that the representation of literacy as practices indicates "variations in types of texts, participant interactions around texts, purposes for using texts, social meanings/values attached to texts, ways of producing texts, and ways of socializing children through interactions with texts" (Auerbach, 1992, p.73). But this conceptualization of literacy is missing in UNESCO's rhetoric.

Nonetheless, the concept of literacy practices posits the importance of a socio-cultural approach to literacy, one "expanding the concept of literacy to include understanding of the social and cultural contexts within which literacy is used" (Walter, 1989, p.34). In that sense one can imply that UNESCO didn't use the term of literacy as text in its literacy documents from 1949 to 2002 but acknowledged the notion of literacy as social practices in its promotion of the plural meanings of literacy.

Positing the Association of Ethnography and Economics in Defining Literacy

UNESCO's definitions of literacy have always promoted the traditional and monolithic view of literacy as the ability to read and write before moving forward in accepting and marketizing the notion of functional literacy, one associated with basic functioning and life skills of survival and finally posting a socio-cultural portrayal of literacy as a means to achieve social empowerment through a recognition of literacy as a process embedded in various social practices. This led to the theoretical challenges and methodological debates that UNESCO was facing in unraveling and delineating the multiple and rather competing discourses about the traditional view of literacy as the acquisition of the basic skills of reading and writing. Therefore, UNESCO was associating various discourses in defining literacy and promoting a new momentum regarding the standardization of educational statistics at the international level by referring to the expertise of various consultants and literacy experts in order to bring to the table a consensus in defining literacy.

Based on the work of academia, UNESCO integrated ethnographic perspectives and an understanding of literacy practices as multiple and culturally varied in order to help avoid simplistic and often ethnocentric claims regarding the consequences of literacy based on one-dimensional and culturally narrow categories and definitions. As such, an ethnographic

perspective can sensitize us to the ways in which the power to name and define is a crucial component of inequality. Accordingly, by providing literacy to the illiterates, governments can expect economic returns and political benefits. Thus, international organizations began associating ethnographic perspectives on literacy with the concept of economic functionality and therefore acknowledged that literacy can relate to the demands of the labor market and the needs to improve productivity in the new world economy. Accordingly,

> Literacy and basic education are key skills helping the poor extract themselves from the conditions causing poverty and improving the basic education status is a pre-requisite to achieving the development goals of enhancing agricultural productivity, improving the health and nutrition status of the family, and reducing fertility. Lacks of literacy and of arithmetic skills are barriers to entrepreneurship and market transactions. (WB, 2001, p.3)

Above all, the World Bank is positing a strong relationship between literacy and the concept of livelihood and acknowledges that literacy and numeracy are directly useful skills in market transactions. Besides these theoretical correlations between the WB and UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy, the latter's attempts to come to an international agreement in conceptualizing literacy revitalized what has been termed as the theoretical challenge in coming to terms with an unified definition of literacy. An illustration of this theoretical challenge can be found in Mosse's words (1998) when he states that since the 1980's, "anthropologists began to be employed by development agencies as problem solvers" (p.14) and started to use, what has been termed as the "ethnographic perspective" (Street, 2001, a), into international organizations' policies on literacy education and development. There subsists a complex methodological dilemma in associating the ethnographic perspective (literacy as a web of social practices) with

literacy policies surrounded by an economistic perspective (literacy as a poverty reduction strategy). As such, researchers in the field of adult literacy were experiencing some difficulties in making their research findings meaningful to literacy policy makers. Another illustration of this theoretical dilemma can be found also in Robinson-Pant's words when he (2004) states that there was a "practical dilemma around how to avoid simplifying lengthy ethnographic analysis into bullet points or generalizing statistically from tiny unrepresentative samples" (p.781).

Accordingly, this methodological dilemma in associating the multiple meanings of literacy with quantifiable data in measuring literacy progress is visible in the constant renewed UNESCO's definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002. An illustration of this conceptual position can be found in the Paris report when UNESCO states that the "teaching of reading and writing must be integrated into a cultural context' (UNESCO, 1985, p.56) while at the same time literacy remains an "essential prerequisite for national, social, economic, and cultural development" (Ibid.p.56). In the same document, UNESCO is associating a tradition definition of literacy as the basic ability to read and write and posits likewise the economic functionality of literacy. Further UNESCO (1997) promoted a new conceptualization of literacy known as the 'civilizational' concept of literacy while distinguishing between functional literacy and social literacy. An illustration of this conceptual refinement can be found in a 1997 UNESCO document in which the organization asks the Member States to "replace the narrow vision of literacy by learning that meets social, economic and political needs and gives expression to a new form of citizenship" (UNESCO, 1997, p.16). But, at the same moment UNESCO is promoting an operational definition of literacy as the ability to read and write for the purposes on establishing an international basis to the comparability of educational statistics. Along the way, UNESCO acknowledges that although literacy has wider meanings, the capability of

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belonging to a literate environment requires the mastery of the essential practices of reading and writing. As such, UNESCO is privileging an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes in order to help policy makers to studying the progress of literacy in conformity with the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals. Nonetheless, UNESCO states that "while the criteria used to determine whether a person is literate or not can differ between countries", there is a clear trend for the countries to use the definitions recommended by UNESCO whereby an illiterate is a person "who cannot with understanding both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life" (UNESCO, 1990, p.2).

Even though UNESCO is incorporating ethnographic perspectives in its literacy policies, the leading UN organization acknowledges at the same time that it is very difficult to measure, evaluate, and compare literacy data between different countries adopting multiple and competing definitions of literacy. A socio-cultural approach I definition literacy might seem an interesting theoretical tool in improving literate environments but it remains necessary to evaluate the number of people crossing the illiteracy gates. Thus, operational definitions of literacy for statistical purposes are justified for one intending to compare illiteracy levels worldwide. Therefore, the role of literacy researchers should integrate new theoretical lenses in studying how to measure and evaluate plural meanings of literacy. Again, an illustration of this theoretical battle in defining the concept of literacy can be found in a 2002 report in which UNESCO states that "literacy is no longer seen as a singular concept, but rather as plural literacies" (UNESCO, 2002, p.60). But, it remains that the more difficult task is to tell the Member States and Non Governmental Organizations how to measure the notion of 'multiliteracies'.

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An ethnographic approach to literacy can posit these alternative sources of definition and naming against each other in stark relief, as the workings of international organizations and the literature regarding theorizations of literacy testify; but they cannot necessarily challenge the power to name that comes with the respective positions the literates and illiterates occupy. If one wishes to pursue questions of inequality out there in the world of economics and of literacy, then, one will also need to pursue firstly the questions of inequality in the world of policy making and academic definitions. A similar argument can be made about the definitions of literacy and of 'problems' with literacy in other areas of the educational field somewhat closer to home for academics – the naming and blaming associated with 'problems' that students encounter as they enter the formal and non formal educational systems reveals many of the same misconceptions and misnaming that people experienced at an apparently lower end of the 'inequality' ladder. Precisely in order to make the point that notions of inequality depend on definitions and naming, it would be interesting to describe some of the experiences learners have in every echelon of the educational system. As such, the real nature of inequality is to be found both in the experiences of those attempting to enter the 'literate system' and in the power of those running literacy circles. Again, an illustration of this difficult operational conceptualization of the notion of literacy can be found in the analysis of the metanarrative that sustains UNESCO's policies on literacy.

Enacting the Metanarrative Sustaining UNESCO's Policies on Literacy

While it might seem that there is a 'rhetoric of errantry' in UNESCO's policies on literacy, a thorough analysis of its constant renewed conceptualizations of literacy through divergent and complementary discursive formations reveals that UNESCO is portraying a holistic approach to literacy by 'privileging' an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes and

'promoting' at the same time a plural vision of literacy. Above all, it remains that the metanarrative that sustains UNESCO's policies on literacy can be viewed as 'Learning and Literacy for All' because the most important target for UNESCO since the 1965 International Conference on public education and later through the Jomtien Conference in 1990, is to meet the Millennium development goals of achieving universal completion of primary education. A strong illustration of this conceptual vision can be found in the Jomtien report in which UNESCO states that the "definitions of literacy must be sensitive to skills needed in out of school contexts, as well as to school-based competency requirements" (UNESCO, 1990, p.4). Through this assertion, one may sense the need to broaden the definitional aspect of literacy. An illustration of this conceptual need can be found in the same report in which UNESCO acknowledges the urgency to include the "basic learning needs or competencies but also in terms of other knowledge, problem solving, and life skills" (UNESCO, 1990, p.5).

This metanarrative is constantly associating literacy with schooling and makes constant reference to the six Dakar goals. An illustration of this conceptual position can be found in a 2002 report in which UNESCO acknowledges that there is a need to: "Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality" (UNESCO, 2002, p.7). Accordingly, this association between adult literacy and schooled literacy reflects UNESCO and affiliated United Nations agencies involvement in the Dakar framework of action (2000) and the Millennium development goals. Since the international community through it funding agents such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are not putting enough money to the literacy table, it remains important and essential for UNESCO as the leading international organization for educational cooperation to promote

universal completion of primary education as a means to reduce the alarming figures of world illiteracy. But a problem still remains as school cannot be the only measurement system in evaluating everyone's literacy skills. Again, literacy is not a static process as it is the center on various types of knowledge, experiences, traditions, and beliefs outside of traditional and formal circles of literacy.

Also, one can assume that if young children complete their primary education studies, they potentially acquired the basic and fundamental skills of reading and writing and therefore need to be trained with the adequate and additional skills in order to perfectly function in the labor market. But the combination of ethnographic perspectives along with the economic functionality of literacy cannot elude the fact that UNESCO's policies are not taking into account 'hidden literacies'. Also, adult learners can be categorized as 'illiterates' by 'outsiders just because they have never been to school or adult literacy classes. As such, the rhetoric of literacy is still confined in the harsh circles of formal educational systems. Also, policy makers need to acknowledge that someone can be portrayed as a learner mastering the reading and writing skills but still remains uneducated because literacy labels are just naming processes adopted mostly by outsiders. Thus, adult learners' lack of literacy skills should not be perceived as a stigma and a disadvantage. Again, literacy policies developed worldwide need to take into account the fact that literacy practices must be relevant to each learner. As such, policy makers and literacy programmes planners should and could learn so many insightful lessons from those portrayed as illiterates what is therefore needed is acknowledgement and thinking beyond current limits and a new vision of adult literacy.

Nonetheless, UNESCO is left out with a unique vision to developing and sustaining the traditional and monolithic approach to literacy education, one promoting a definition of literacy

based on the acquisition of basic and fundamental skills of reading, writing, and calculation. This traditional portrayal of literacy education is valued for its merits in building a momentum for the standardization of educational statistics and an international agreement in implementing an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes.

Revisiting My Assumptions about this Study

Based on the evolution of the notion of literacy in academia, drawing on theoretical and empirical research, some assumptions were presented in chapter 1. The five assumptions identified in the beginning of this theoretical investigation are discussed in light of the analysis of this study's findings.

The first assumption underlying the research was that there is no universal definition of literacy. This assumption held true according to the first finding (Chapter 4). The majority of the documents posited many definitions of literacy ranging from literacy as an autonomous model to literacy as social practices.

A second assumption posited by this research was that UNESCO's literacy definitions portray the association of various discourses in the international arena and in academia. This assumption turned out to be true. UNESCO developed along the years various definitions of literacy through the association of supportive discourses widening the scope of literacy.

The third assumption mentioned that UNESCO was privileging the Anglophone discourse on literacy. This assumption held to be true. A thorough analysis of UNESCO's definitions from 1949 to 2002 showed us that the Anglophone discourse was the key element in defining literacy. The Francophone discourse was only mentioned in one document while the conceptualization of literacy as a text didn't figure in any of the documents reviewed. Also, the concept of indigenous literacy was mentioned in two documents out of eighteen.

The fourth assumption is that UNESCO is promoting 'functional literacies' in order to achieve universal literacy. This assumption turned out to be partially true because UNESCO was at the same time promoting the traditional view of literacy by encouraging an operational definition of literacy for statistical purposes.

The fifth and final assumption posits literacy as a socially constructed discourse portraying diverse representations of political, economic, socio-cultural realities. This assumption held to be true given that UNESCO was promoting rich and dynamic literate environments in order to advance literacy.

Summary of Interpretation of Findings

This chapter presented a theoretical and critical demarche in investigating UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy from 1949 to 2002. In summary, the prior discussion represents the complex policing of literacy definitions and policies at the international level. The discussion unravels the various discourses that surround the social construction of literacy and reveals the socio-cultural, economic, and political motives regarding UNESCO diverging and competing definitions of literacy.

The purpose of this investigation of UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy was to delineate a more informed synthesis of the study's findings. The main challenge lies in the analysis of the collected data, the identification of various trends, themes, and significant continuities and discontinuities in discourses, and the creation of an interpretation framework revealing what we learned while analyzing the collected data.

The presentation of the analysis and interpretation of the different findings uncovered through this study warrants overgeneralizations. First, the research sample represented less than twenty documents. Second the main focus of the study was UNESCO. Thus, other United

Nations organizations' definitions of literacy and discourses are not taken into account in this study. For this reasons, it should be indicated that the generalizations that can be drawn are specific to UNESCO.

Finally, realizing that the role of the researcher is a major reason for strengthening and weakening the qualitative research process, I recognize the subjective nature of the claims I made in analyzing the findings uncovered in this study. I therefore acknowledge the potential biases involved in this study while privileging a continuous critical demarche all along this study and wide openness to the various ways of unraveling UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy differently.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy from 1949 to 2002. The conclusions drawn from this study follow the research questions and the findings therefore address five areas: (a) UNESCO's renewed definitions of literacy; (b) the discursive formations of literacy; (c) the excluded discourses in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy; (d) the relationships between the ethnographic insights and an economistic approach to literacy; (e) the metanarrative that surrounds UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy. Following is a discussion of the major findings and conclusions drawn from this study. This discussion is followed by possible recommendations and a final reflection on this study.

UNESCO's Rhetoric of Errantry

A thorough analysis of UNESCO's literacy policies from 1949 to 2002 shows a plurality of definitions of literacy. As such, the first major finding of this research is that the concept of literacy has been subjected to constant redefinitions to reflect criteria for social, political, and economic relevance and expectations. There is no standard, universal definition of literacy but rather a plurality of definitions presented by UNESCO. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that no standard international definition of literacy captures all the facets of literacy. Indeed there are numerous understandings of literacy, some of which are even contradictory. Thus, there is a difficulty in incorporating various understandings of literacy into policy documents. Monitoring and measuring the progress of literacy rates is a very difficult process. Therefore, published literacy data at the international and national level cannot convey a reasonably accurate picture of global trends and regional patterns of illiteracy. Two factors set

parameters for the literacy rates reported at the international level: (a) the UNESCO definition of literacy as 'the ability to read and write, with understanding, a short, simple sentence about one's everyday life'; and (b) data on educational attainment. The modes of reporting includes self-reporting responses on surveys and population censuses, in addition to grade attainment, but this excludes objective measurement of real literacy skills, as well as any consideration of the context in which literacy is taking place.

At first, literacy seems to be a term that is easy to comprehend. Looking at different understandings of this concept at the national and international level along with research in academia, literacy as a concept has come to be a complex and dynamic process entailing various interpretations and continuing to be represented and defined in a multiple ways. Our understanding of literacy and its correlate illiteracy is influenced by academic research, institutional agendas, national context of literacy education and programmes, cultural values and personal experiences surrounding the acquisition of literacy.

As such, in the academic community, theories of literacy have evolved from those focused largely on individual characteristics of literacy and illiteracy to more complex views representing the social constructions of literacy. Thus, the concepts of 'literate environment' and 'literate society' are used in order to unravel the complex and dynamic processes of the 'literacy myth'. As a result of these multiple, and convergent conceptualizations of literacy, understandings of the concept in the international community have taken a new turn, moving from viewing literacy as the ability to acquire basic learning skills, to practicing these skills in order to cope with the new demands of the world economy and therefore achieve economic sustainability, livelihood, and income generation. As such, literacy leads to socio-economic

development through the development of personal and social awareness in mediating critical reflection as a basis for self fulfillment and social change.

But one should recognize that the struggle for any definition of literacy to prevail over others entails arbitrary choices of values, beliefs, and traditions representing different and competing perceptions of the social construction of literacy. Since no definition of literacy is able to achieve unquestionable authority, our role as researchers is to unravel the dialectical relationships of the various choices made by literacy stakeholders in order to analyze and interpret their moral, economic, and political justifications.

Knowing that every definition of literacy is supposed to open a new window in the 'literacy house of glasses, the main problem to be addressed remains one of implementation, one that recommends individuals to jump the rope and conform to the prevailing vision of literacy adopted by literacy stakeholders. UNESCO's passionate benevolence in conceptualization literacy and literacies should be questioned in order to delineate the assumptions, beliefs, and traditions that surround and fuel its major vision.

While researchers in academia and literacy policy analysts recognize that other understandings of illiteracy and literacy help comprehend the plural meanings and multiple dimensions of the process of acquiring and sustaining basic skills of reading, writing, and calculation, UNESCO is adopting, an operational definition of literacy approach in privileging 'functional literacy' for the purposes of standardization of educational statistics at the international level. UNESCO's most cited definition of literacy relates to the portrayal of functional literacy as in its 1978 document that states that: "A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and

calculation for his own and the community's development" (UNESCO, 1978, p.3). According to UNESCO, literacy refers to the acquisition and use of reading, writing, and calculation skills in individual and collective processes of learning in order to cope with the demands of social life and the development one one's community.

One should acknowledge that there is value in understanding literacy not only as a set of reading, writing and numeracy skills, but also as a set of skills that are socially relevant for cultural, social, economic, and politic mediations. Thus, the literacy skills acquisition processes will be improved in a community or environment that develops and sustain literate environments. UNESCO's role in advocating for literacy all around the world remains to instill international and national agreements on the pursuit of literacy for all in order to give a voice to all citizens all around the world. It is a momentous challenge and a collective responsibility for all literacy stakeholders to work under the guidance of UNESCO, a lead agency and international coordinator of the United Nations Literacy Decade. In doing so, Member States, United Nations affiliated organizations, private and public literacy stakeholder, will acknowledge that literacy for all is a key element of basic education and the creation of literate environments and societies is essential for achieving economic development and reducing poverty worldwide.

The Discursive Constructions of Literacy

The second finding of this research is that various forms or clusters surround UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy such as the transformative approach to Literacy, the functionalist perspective, the poverty reduction discourse, the discourse on lifelong learning , the discourse on literate environments or literate societies, and above all the multiple portrayals of 'illiteracy' positing the human right discourse on literacy.

A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that UNESCO is continuously portraying multiple supportive discourses about literacy definitions. UNESCO's definitions of literacy shift from a traditional vision of functional literacy, one associated with economic development and the demands of the market, to a socio-cultural approach of literacy, one positing the importance of literacy as a means of personal and social empowerment and that understand literacy as a web of social practices. UNESCO is moving back and forth in defining literacy along the years by valuing the individual parameters of the literacy acquisition process and the social consequences attributed to literacy. Thus, various critical views of literacy and ideologies are infused in UNESCO's discourses from 1949 to 2002.

Every UNESCO discourse espoused a particular and historical conceptualization of literacy through a portrayal of specific traditions, values, and beliefs. These different conceptions and understandings of literacy reflect and promote various values, beliefs, assumptions, and practices in literacy circles. Furthermore, these multiple discourses show that literacy cannot be separated to the particular ideologies, assumptions, beliefs, and practices that color our understandings of literacy in different periods of history. A thorough analysis of UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy from 1949 to 2002 displays not only the various discourses into play but also the theoretical and methodological difficulties that UNESCO is facing in unraveling the dialectic between supportive and conflicting discourses. Thus, UNESCO's diverse discourses cannot be represented as a set of divergent conceptualizations of literacy but rather as a 'web of theoretical practices'. However, in analyzing UNESCO's discourse on literacy, one is left with the terrible idea that literacy might be envisioned as a 'moving theoretical object'.

UNESCO Exclusivist Anglophone Discourse on Literacy

The third finding in this study is that the francophone literacy discourse, indigenous literacy, and 'literacy as text' are the main excluded discourses in UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy. Conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that the Anglophone literacy discourse is probably the most influential theoretical tradition at the international and national levels. The practice of literacy in Francophone countries, formulated in terms of the fight against illiteracy, is supported largely by concepts, which don't correspond explicitly to the Anglophone term of literacy. Reciprocally, the English concept embraces meanings, which don't necessarily exist in the French lexicon. These terms are the object of numerous contradictions, each of which is specific to a particular vision of education, according to the countries and the contexts in which they are used. UNESCO, which until then had concentrated its efforts on developing countries, realized that it was turning its back on northern countries by under estimating their state of illiteracy. The same is true with UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy that do not take into account the specificities of indigenous communities and the conceptualization of literacy as text.

Furthermore, the exclusion of the francophone discourse and indigenous literacy show that there is a two-level conceptualization of literacy: "functional literacy" for developing countries and "functional illiteracy" for developed countries. Consequently, the conceptualization of illiteracy in developing countries is formulated, as a reflection of the cultural and linguistic impediments which portray under developed countries as Nation States undermined through lack of recognition of their traditional and rich educational traditions, and struggling to cope with new functional western models of education as emphasized by UNESCO's conceptualizations of literacy.

A Two Level Approach to Functional Literacies

The fourth finding in this study is that there is a two- level approach to functional literacy: A functional literacy approach in association with productivity, and livelihood for the purpose of economic development in a globalized world and a functional literacy approach that privileges socio-cultural aspects of literacy. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that UNESCO, despite its historical and professional role in developing and supporting international literacy initiatives, is struggling to posit a clear momentum between two divergent and competing discourses: a functional literacy approach associated with an economistic perspective and a socio-cultural approach to literacy based on the socio-cultural construction of the reality of literacy. The theoretical challenges and historical debates that UNESCO is facing are due not just to the complexity of taking into account the result findings of ethnographic understandings of literacy but, also, to the web of analytical discourses brought in by literacy policy analysts from various professional backgrounds. I suggest that the major operational conceptualization of literacy developed and sustained by UNESCO, in which literacy is envisioned in terms of its consequences and its goals in sustaining the standardization of educational statistics, contrasts with the ethnographic research perspective privileging literacy as plural meanings diluted in various socio-cultural practices.

Another conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that UNESCO's conflicting positions are influenced by the influential advocacy work developed by the World Bank, whose mandate is to work with institutional partners to put into place the realization of the Millennium development Goals. Acknowledging that literacy is a key element of the comprehensive educational framework positing that sustainable development is more than just numbers, UNESCO Member States are left out with ensuring that children and adults have the right to

access all forms of education, acquire basic and fundamental literacy skills, use these skills to achieve their personal and collective goals, and remain active agents of a lifelong learning process.

In order to effectively implement literacy programs throughout the world, UNESCO needs to acknowledge the market-driven literacy paradigm and infuse socio-cultural and political parameters to its ever evolving literacy conceptualizations. In doing so, UNESCO needs to keep on working on an agreed international momentum for literacy and a strong political commitment of its Member States in their role of putting the fight against illiteracy to the table. Theoretical challenges and conceptual debates shouldn't hide the fact that literacy is more than an 'accident of history' but rather a web of political commitments, institutional alliances, and structural and developmental connections. Therefore, UNESCO Member States have to keep in mind that education as well as literacy is a key element in promoting the empowerment of the entire masses through an equitable sharing of world resources.

A Comprehensive Literacy Model

The study's fifth major finding is that there is an emphasis placed on a Comprehensive Literacy Model that privileges the discourse of literacy as a social practice while sustaining a functional approach to literacy based on a developmental perspective in achieving sustainable economic environments. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that literacy is central to strengthening the empowerment of individuals and collectivities in their quest to acquire essential life skills and their desire to achieve their goals and true aspirations.

Literacy has in some ways indeed become theoretical moving object rather than a unified discourse aiming for social and personal empowerment. The fifth finding of this study shows us also that there is a strong relationship between literacy programmes orientations, their

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operational definitions and funding issues. A thorough analysis of the types of literacy projects that are financed can unveil the intricacies of the 'literacy game' and reveal the ideologies, assumptions, beliefs, and practices behind various conceptualizations of literacy at the national and international level. Furthermore, UNESCO in its attempts to posit the comparability of literacy data on an international basis reinforces a quantitative approach to literacy as the discourses on economic development and lifelong learning remain the key features of almost every literacy policy implemented at the international level. But it remains important to continue recognizing the high rates of people who never went to school and are not able to read or write because they have been denied their right to literacy and education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions of this study. The recommendations that follow are: (a) stipulations directed to literacy stakeholders and (b) recommendations for further research.

Moving Beyond Literacy Definitions: Implications for Literacy Policy, Research and Practice

UNESCO processed through a web of various discourses in defining and refining its definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002. While literacy was being envisioned as a 'theoretical moving object', the complex understandings of literacy were complicating the unambiguous message that UNESCO aims to address to national and international policy makers. The organization's actions have been guided by two major conditions:

It is primarily incumbent on Member States, with UNESCO support, to provide

education for all and lifelong training in the cause of the right to education; (b)

UNESCO is neither a financing body nor a research institution, its key function being to bring together ideas, skills and determination. (UNESCO, 1985, p.45)

Moreover, UNESCO is characterized by its "role as a lead agency acting as a catalyst and mobilize and its special functions as an ideal center for exchanges" (Ibid.p.45) while its actions and recommendations help Member States:

UNESCO helps governments to define appropriate policies, provide them with the necessary expert advice, collect and disseminate relevant data and significant experiments and support Member States while also helping them to mobilize the necessary resources from external sources. (Ibid.p.45)

But there is a tension resulting from an acknowledgement of the wider and conflicting meanings of literacy (ies) developed by UNESCO and its Member States and the need to develop at the international level consensus that not all conceptualizations of literacy will mobilize greater resources from funding institutions such as the World Bank. With the urgent need to monitor progress against the Millennium Development Goal, there is a push towards an operational and functional definition of literacy. But, UNESCO needs to do more than just proposing a theoretical discussion of the different meanings of literacy but rather moves beyond ways and means to influence institutions funding literacy at the international level. Thus, UNESCO needs to contextualize the importance of multiple understandings of literacy within theoretical debates in academia and make full use of the richness of the diverse conceptualizations of literacy by moving away from a unique operational definitional of literacy for statistic purposes. In addition, UNESCO needs to acknowledge the ideological assumptions behind the theoretical debates and make them explicit in order to be able to incorporate these new understandings of literacy into an international policy document.

Furthermore, UNESCO needs to go beyond the 'technicist' approach which posits literacy as a neutral technology. (Street, 1984) and try to operationalize the concept of multiple literacies. But by promoting universal literacy through compulsory primary education in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals, UNESCO is only concerned with the comparability of literacy data at the international level putting aside a renewed momentum for literacy. While the human right discourse of literacy is associated with the promotion of functional literacy for the purpose of measuring literacy achievements and monitoring literacy progress, the notion of 'rights' within UNESCO's policies is "depoliticized as the rationale for recognizing literacy as a right is only a set of benefits it confers on individuals" (UNESCO, 2005, p.137). A rather dynamic relationship between literacy and social change should be UNESCO's main focus; this new vision posits a more radical stance on literacy as empowerment rather than a conservative statistical approach to literacy.

UNESCO needs to build stronger partnerships for literacy to strengthen its role as facilitator of networks among Member States, Non Governmental Organizations, United Nations agencies, and with the private sector. UNESCO role is to ensure that these relationships reinforce the political commitment to build professional exchange and cooperation, mobilize appropriate support for literacy as one of the international goals in education.

The UN Literacy Decade, in the context of international efforts to implement Education for All, provides for UNESCO a unique test in its role as an institutional facilitator in creating an international commitment for an increase of financial resources pertaining to literacy programmes. UNESCO can generate a sufficient momentum around literacy in Education for All conferences, workshops, and forums. The first step would be to lay out feasible strategies for sustainable literacy efforts at national and regional levels with international support.

The urgency of the current situation, and the potential offered by increased international attention to education, call for a renewed global commitment to literacy, based on a rigorous financial framework and closer attention to what is already known about the plurality of literacies and the consequences of literacy at the individual and societal level. Universal primary completion, no matter how challenging a goal, is not the only step toward the ultimate goal of quality education for all citizens. Rather, the creation of sustainable literate environments should be of global interest and lead UNESCO toward a renewed and challenging literacy advocacy approach. UNESCO has to make it clear that the links between literacy and development are very complex and that literacy does not automatically generate socio-economic development. But it remains constant that literacy can play an enormous transformative role in the lives of individuals and communities by making the aware of their full potentials through the use of a continuous critical reflection process. All literacy stakeholders need to be more committed in addressing key literacy education issues and eliminating institutional impediments depriving the illiterate masses of their full potential for expression, communication and participation by creating learning opportunities for all.

In conformity with its mission, UNESCO needs to advocate plural models of literacy, one that are technically sound and culturally responsive to the needs and values of its beneficiaries. UNESCO should create opportunities for synergistic dialogue among Member States and institutional partners regarding how mainstream societies value the exercise of the reading, writing, and calculation skills in the literacy process. UNESCO must face the challenge of creating literate societies, not just making individuals literate. This literacy challenge is based on the allocation of funds to optimize the economic returns to literacy programmes and the universal access to primary education to boost literacy rates worldwide. The international

community glaring silences foster an artificial consensus between UNESCO and the other United Nations agencies on the so called real literacy issues. Nonetheless, it remains constant that it is essential to create a political will for a genuine and critical debate on the fundamental purposes, assumptions, sets of beliefs, values and traditions of literacy. UNESCO needs to reflect on the ethnographic perspective of literacy to realize that literacy cannot be the solution for all our problems in society rather it should stop blaming it on 'illiteracy' alone. The unequal distribution of health across societies has nothing to do with literacy rather it is a matter of political and economic injustice.

Recommendations for Further Research

Definitions and understandings of literacy have broadened considerably since the first international conference on adult education. As definitions of literacy shifted-from an autonomous set of skills for economic growth, to a process embedded with social practices-UNESCO along with other United Nations agencies acknowledged broader understandings of literacy ranging from political empowerment and social transformation to literacy practices and lifelong learning. The growing international awareness of the broader social contexts in which literacy is encouraged, acquired, developed and sustained is especially significant. Indeed, the individual and the societal facets of literacy are put together in delineating literacy as social transformation and literacy as a process embedded in multiple social practices. Increasingly, reference is made to the importance of literate environments and societies to stress the constant importance of written and oral modes of communication in the technological era. The quality of literate environments affects how literacy skills are practiced in the families, communities, schools or workplaces.

Thus, the concept of literate environments reveals the importance of literacy uses and practices and should be viewed an essential of research in academia. A renewed research orientation seeking to unravel the workings of literate environments and societies goes along with the views developed in the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring report. As mentioned in the report, a "literate society is more than a society with high literacy rates; rather, it is one in which important aspects of social life such as economics, law, science, and government…form what we call textual institutions" (UNESCO, 2006, p.32). The report added that:

> These institutions should be responsive to the developmental needs and priorities of citizens; and, in turn, the acquisition and use of literacy skills should enable citizens to actively participate in these institutions. As such, 'an understanding of literacy must include how individuals and groups adopt and utilize writing in the pursuit of their goals but also how they come to terms with such textual practices of the dominant textual institutions. (Ibid. p.32)

Moreover, the concept of literate societies widens the traditional understandings of literacy by positing that:

> Literacy is simultaneously an outcome (e.g. reading, writing and numeracy), a process (e.g. taught and learned through formal schooling, non-formal programmes or informal networks), and an input paving the way to: further cognitive skill development and participation in lifelong learning opportunities. (Ibid.p.34)

Literate societies and environments provide an array of opportunities for lifelong learning. These broader understandings of literacy can provide fertile ground for further research, innovation and progress toward the development of effective literacy programmes for all. Furthermore, the idea that functional literacy will necessarily enable adults in the developing

world to function more effectively in their encounter with the process of change and modernization can also be seen as a means to implement and sustain literate environments.

More research needs to be conducted in learning how the historical context, the cultural norms, and the social environments affect the ways in which people value and use literacy in their daily lives. This more informed ethnographic research perspective is a means to uncover and unravel the plural perspectives on literacy and the role it plays in the lives of adults. Within this ethnographic research perspective, the dichotomous model of literacy needs to be replaced by a socio cultural approach to literacy. Thus, more research needs to be conducted on literacy as practices to provide critical insights into the world of adults and the place of literacy within it, with important implications for educational practice. As such, the conception of literacy as practices might well serve as an organizing framework to understand the phenomenon of adult literacy, helping to unravel many of the unstated, yet powerful assumptions and 'web of beliefs' about literacy and its benefits.

Moreover, The assumptions underlying literacy work rest on the grounds that if policy makers and practitioners fail to take account of such perspectives and their implications, then we might end up putting our energies into unproductive directions and could be seen as acting without control and knowledge of the field in which we are engaged in. Researchers need to address the relationship between the approach of multimodality and that of a social practices perspective. Exploring the relationships between texts and practices might provide a good starting point for new approaches to literacy development programs, measurement, and assessment. This approach would require new forms of assessment that go beyond the standard written test associated with autonomous model of literacy and would rather privilege the dimension of communicative skills associated with the social literacies approach. As such, it

remains urgent to look for a "new global glossary to sort out the terminological confusion in the field of adult literacy" and "literacy debates and policies will obviously gain from a common understanding of different aspects and meanings of the terminology around adult literacy" (Lind, 2008, p.43). As she mentioned further, "in English, the word literacy or literate has been associated with being familiar with literature, or more generally, being well educated" while "in other languages, the word literacy is more directly related to reading and writing or the alphabet" (Ibid.p.44). Thus, there is a strong urgency in studying 'other literacies' by bringing to the table a 'glocal' approach to literacy, one that posit a universal view of literacy taking into account the individual and societal consequences of literacy acquisition and promoting a 'world phone' discourse of literacy associating the multiple facets of 'world literacies'.

Personal Reflections

In this study, I analyzed a variety of policy documents on literacy published by UNESCO from 1949 to 2002. It was not an exhaustive account of all the policy documents on literacy published by UNESCO, nor a full explanation of how we got to the present discursive formations of literacy in the international arena. However, bringing together distinct bodies of knowledge and expertise surrounding literacy education and analyzing critical accounts of discourse analysis provided new insights into the discontinuities, and perhaps more prominently, the continuities through which literacy is envisioned as a moving theoretical object.

This study found that the discursive formations of literacy are embedded not only in conflicting assumptions, beliefs and practices, but also in the ideals surrounding the concept of literate environments and societies. Often represented as a skill to be acquired, it became clear that promoted literacy practices were discursively linked to 'good literacy practices'. This also suggests the ways in which reading, writing, and calculation and the broader conceptualization

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of literacy are also profoundly views deeply embedded in unexamined socio-cultural practices and political motives. The metaphorical analysis tool used in this study along with critical discourse analysis uncovered how contemporary views of literacy are associated with political, cultural, and social visions that often have more to do with the regulation of individuals' life than with promoting reading, writing and calculation.

Discursive formations of literacy from each of the periods examined in this study continues to yield many more insights and arguments. One of the biggest challenges in conducting this analysis was to decide when it was time to stop. But Phillips and Jorgenson (2002) remind us that "the end point of discourse analysis comes not because the research stops finding anything new, but because the researcher judges that the data are sufficient to make and justify an interesting argument" (p. 74).

Yet this study is not an accurate representation of reality because the traditions surrounding critical discourse analysis reject the notion of a "neutral and objective science" (Rogers, et al., 2005, p. 382). I lived both inside and outside the literacy discourses developed by UNESCO and this shaped my interpretations of literacy definitions as a complex interplay of both a web of skills and an ocean of social practices diluted through the permanent influence of ideology and power. I engaged in this study because I wanted to better understand how international organizations 'discourses influence research on literacy education. But as the study unfolded, and my own experiences through this research apprenticeship shifted and changed, I also became aware of the ways in which literacy regulated our lives and influenced our work.

While my own conflicting readings of UNESCO's discursive formations of literacy surrounded and shaped this analysis, I do not assume that this theoretical journey did account for the complex and diverse ways in which international organizations construe, construct, and

legitimize their conceptualizations of literacy. The limited documents concerning essentially UNESCO do not lend sufficient insight into how literacy definitions are negotiated at the international level to permit this. This analysis was primarily concerned with how literacy discourses reflect the literacy ideals of international organizations rather than a simple historical portrayal of literacy definitions. However, this analysis may nevertheless provide an understanding of the discursive web in which literacy definitions are caught.

The analytic tool of multivocality and metaphor analysis were used to interpret literacy definitions as conflicting texts caught in the web of often competing voices and discourses. But while a multivocal analysis contributed to exposing UNESCO's internal contradictions regarding literacy definitions, it also suggests the need for further investigation into the ways in which literacy definitions are negotiated and carried out in the context of complex and changing discourses and ideological motivations. A Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis might be a good starting point in privileging continuities and discontinuities in analyzing literacy definitions in academia and at the international level.

A systematic and inclusive approach to managing our data made it necessary to choose the breadth of the historical time included in the study (1949/2002), as well as the themes and categories that were generated. Indeed, as Phillips and Jorgenson have stated, "the point of discourse analysis is not to exhaust categories but rather generate them" (2002, p. 74). Key decisions made along the way marked moments in this struggle to delineate new themes and new categories in unraveling UNESCO's definitions of literacy from 1949 to 2002. These mainly took the form of how many texts to include, from which sources, and the ways in which patterns of discourse formations across texts could be illustrated while allowing the reader to make sense of the data. And as noted above, one struggle was also to know when to stop

analyzing. I attempted to resolve these challenges by moving out from the canonic Anglophone discourse of literacy to more eclectic visions of literacy, and from the insights into literacy definitions gleaned in academia, to a re-analysis of these histories from an outsider perspective.

I am still wondering why anyone in the entire world would have the desire to stay illiterate and be pushed into the shadows with little or no educational resources in a 'culture of plenty'. There is no such a thing as the arrogance of illiteracy but contemporary discourses on literacy are still infused with an arrogant view of literacy, one that posit the individual and societal prevalence of the literate few, those who learned the secrets of written and new modes of communication in a world in which schooling has failed to promote knowledge of universal cultural values. I am reminiscent of Hampathe Ba words implying that the diversity of our literacies will lead us to a vision of literacy which is globalizing and globalized. Thus, the beauty and importance of the 'literacy carpet' will derive from the diversity and the richness of our definitions of literacy. This glocal literate state of mind will help us reflect along with UNESCO the importance of building literate environments and societies representing the synthesis of the humanized marketizing of literacy instead of an essentialist economistic view of literacy if we wish to survive the 'clash of literacy'. We need to give everyone the type of literacy education that promotes a positive appreciation of diversity and the dynamism of world cultures with a goal to liberate men and women from any type of dependencies. As such new literacies, literacies of the twenty-first century, should teach us to learn about 'illiterates' (the others) through the recognition of their history, culture, socio-economic trajectories, and language. Our new vision of literacy should be to transform it from 'producer of stereotypes' or 'myth of illiteracies', which is satisfied by not reproducing overt stereotypes of illiteracy, to a web of formal and non formal educational tools sustaining positive inclusiveness of all citizens

around the literacy glaze. This holistic packaging of literacy will lead us to lower the ceiling of illiteracy and raising the floor of literacy.

As a second language learner and teacher, I realized that I belong to an academic community that feels inadequate in the face of a the new reality of literacy, one entailed in the harsh static categories of analysis and one eluding the role of personal histories and trajectories in naming and promoting literacy practices and policies. I am left with imagining a new 'literacy theory from below and the role of 'critical positioning' is gaining wide acceptance deep down from the bottom of my heart. As such, I am against the economic reductionism of functional literacy policies as envisioned by the World Bank and UNESCO and I decided to focus on the illiterates' cultural expressions of knowledge wishing that I will find academic and working spaces where I will have the opportunity to show that the illiterates' personal experiences and life stories can be read and written as critical texts or the foundational lenses of real literacy programmes. Again, this imaginary state can be turned into a new source of meaning making because I believe that the naming processes of literacy policies as envisioned by international organizations, eludes the marginalization of people's life trajectories and histories. As such, a new hitoriogram of literacy is much need as it becomes necessary to challenge UNESCO's literacy metanarrative by a plurality of voices from the margin insisting on constructive and liberatory differences. In this search for the source of naming regarding literacy, I believe that naming lies in the relations with power and authority as they entail arbitrary portrayals of human experiences.

Also, as a compositionist, I believe that our research community needs to pay more attention to the workings of international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund regarding literacy policies because they elude the literacy

histories of marginalized people and dominant literacy practices in neocolonial settings. Thus, as an African immersed in the westernized world of academia, I need to call for a critique of the UN static literacy development programmes along with its cultural relativism edges and any scholarship promoting the messy process of language and literacy learning. As such, as a compositionist, one definitely needs to go beyond the idealization of reading and writing as portrayed by UNESCO's literacy policies and attend to the social and historical systems from which writing practices come. Thus, one's teaching's ideals needs to incorporate relevant assessment procedures and curricula in order to decolonize literacy and reconsider what literacy really is. Also, compositionists and second language teachers need to take a close look at international organizations' policies regarding literacy and their implications in curriculum development by delineating and unraveling their histories of colonialism and posit in the same token the fact that the re-positioning of marginalized people (illiterates) is a necessary condition for the development of real literacy. As such, the positive consequences attached to literacy cannot and should not outlaw the illegitimate webs of power and inequality that neocolonial conceptualizations of literacy policies entail. Again, a critique of international literacy programs that prescribe literacy as economic medicine and personal relief is necessary because it allows the ones portrayed as illiterate subjects to be given a voice. Thus, I would like to be part of a theoretical project based in Freirian approach of critical consciousness valuing literacy as historical, social, and cultural practices rather than individual cognitive skill.

Also, this theoretical project needs to acknowledge the fact that literacy is a 'funds of knowledge' including constraints, misconceptions, and endless possibilities. Not knowing international organizations' policies regarding literacy can involve an appropriation of unwelcomed and illegitimate literacy histories. Thus, as compositionists, we need to help our

students to appropriate reading and writing practices in order to self-author their life experiences and trajectories and become therefore literacy brokers. As such, literacy programmes will be fueled by our students' sophisticated, powerful, and critical knowledge and discourse practices often unavailable in traditional educational systems. Thus, this theoretical project will become a success story when it will be able to posit learners whose position in their community and belief in their ability to effect change allowed them to be part of a network of literacy practices outside of any formal literacy program or school curriculum. Finally, compositionists need to challenge UNESCO's autonomous model of literacy because such literacy policy overlooks the personal trajectories in which individual lives are based and eludes their desire for socio-cultural, personal, and political growth. Then, literacy will be imagined as a social narrative of personal empowerment taking center stage in our composition classes.

In summary, although the findings of this study suggest that literacy definitions are shaped by continuity in the various conceptualizations of functional literacy (ies) found in UNESCO's discourses, there were variations in the supportive themes, clusters and skills associated with literacy definitions. Indeed, discursive formations associated with literacy intersected and moved back and forth across time, taking on new meanings and speaking to new themes. The analytic methods of constant comparison, metaphor analysis, and multivocal approach adopted in this study made it possible to delineate UNESCO's literacy discourses from their claims to universality and allowed for new critical readings of contemporary literacy policies based on the analysis of eclectic texts.

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