

Reading a community:

Refugee women becoming literate

Research project: investigating the reading/literacy instruction needs of refugee women with limited education backgrounds.

- Education Setting and participants
- Research design
- Preliminary findings
- Theoretical influences

Reading a Community

Freire:

Nobody starts by reading the word. Because before the word we **read the world** to the extent that we understand and interpret it.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6bMBWvoPp8>)

“Learning to read and write is tantamount to “re-reading” the world of our experience”.

(Freire, in Campos, 1990)

Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning

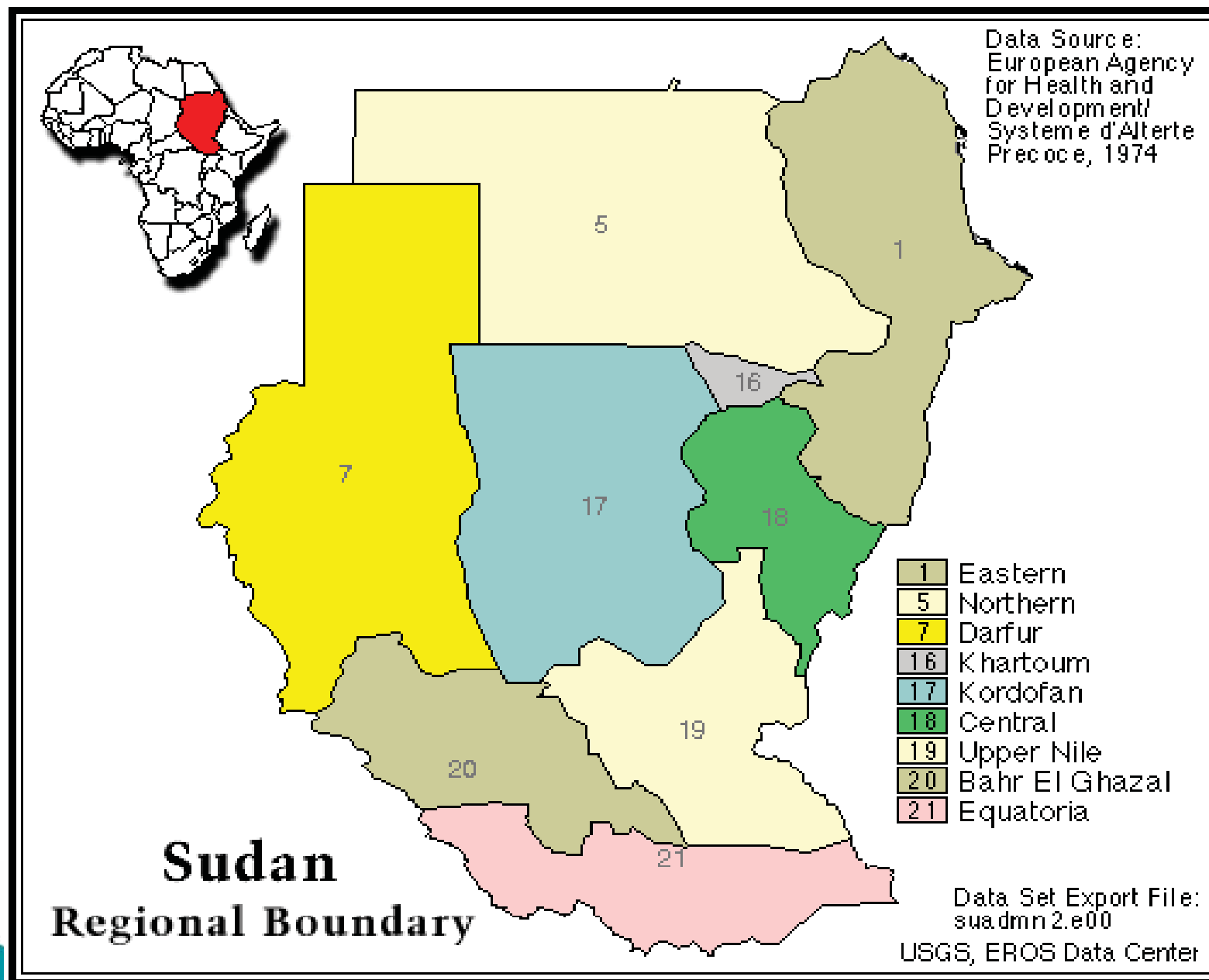
- Literacy support for adults, school age and preschool age



- Secular, volunteer -run: coordinators, drivers, caterers, tutors.







Participants

- Women from Nuba, Sudan
- Age 30-40 years, 4-7 children
- Agricultural background
- 0-3 years education
- in Australia 3-5 years
- Elementary oracy
- Beginner —————> Emergent readers

Research question

How can participants(teacher & students) collaborate to construct an effective reading/literacy instructional program that facilitates participation in the community?

Research question

Two-pronged study:

- socio-cultural influences on English literacy development
- the features of a literacy curriculum for low intensity instruction in community settings

Considerations

- What perceptions do mothers of preschool and school aged children have about the role of literacy in their lives in Australia?
- What kinds of literacy texts predominate in their multiple roles within families, home language community and Australian community
- What social, cultural and literacy knowledge and skills do they bring to their role as participants in literacy practices and texts?
- What literacy texts/practices are priorities for learning in a low intensity program?

Research Design

Research tools

1. Individual and focus group participant interviews , L1
2. Participatory Action Research
3. Analysis of literacy texts
4. Interviews with TAFE teachers, school teachers, literacy co-participants

Timeline

- Ongoing, fortnightly - 6 - 12 months
- Ongoing, 6-12 months
- 6-12 months
- 6-12 months

Participatory Action Research

Students - co-participants in the AR cycle:

- **Plan:** Participate in setting priorities for learning
- **Act:** apply knowledge and skills to learning activities
- **Observe:** reading/learning skills and strategies modelled by tutor/colleagues; own performance; results/achievements.
- **Reflect:** on relationships between learning strategies, performance and achievement

Participatory Action Research

Teacher-researcher:

- **Plans:** Consult with students on priorities; designs learning program, materials & activities;
- **Acts:** models reading/literacy practices, strategies, skills; explicit instruction
- **Observes:** student participation, performance and achievement; own performance
- **Reflects:** on relationships between teaching/learning components & students' performance and achievement

Emerging Themes



Socio-cultural influences on literacy development

- participants had limited opportunities for education in L1
- Education in national language is expensive, in some families males had priority of access
- Resistance to L2 education in Sudan – perceived as language of the oppressor
- Literacy practices are gendered, related to family/gender roles
- educational disenfranchisement continues in Australia – difficult to engage with educational

paradigms

Literacy instruction in Australia

- Intensive ESOL/literacy instruction (AMEP & TAFE) has resulted in literacy gains
- Low intensity, uneven access has slowed the rate of progress in literacy
- Access to post-AMEP instruction is limited for mothers of babies and toddlers (childcare & home duties)
- strategies needed for independent learning (eg, homework, self directed study)

Participant beliefs and attitudes

- Greatly value the opportunities for adult & child education in Australia
- Value literacy as a skill for participating equitably in community life
- Experience anxiety with reading; more resources at hand to support writing tasks
- highly motivated to learn – attendance & effort

Participant feedback

- Are developing confidence in their learning skills
- value meaningful texts that are immediately relevant and usable, eg school communications
- value meaningful texts that convey cultural information and values, eg home safety; waste management; school routines and practices; first aid

Participants:

- Expect authoritative, knowledgeable instruction
- Accept high levels of challenge, expect high levels of scaffolding
- Have learning style preferences, eg co-operative learning; teacher scaffolding

Curriculum features

- authentic texts in familiar contexts to support engagement in community literacy practices
 - Example: school notes, school newsletters, school website
- simulated texts in different modes (transformations) to highlight text features, vocabulary, phonemic awareness
 - Example: simulated school note and newsletter on same topic.
- Explicit instruction on text structure and features
- Explicit instruction on reading & learning strategies
- Reading aloud by teacher to support aural/visual connections
- Extensive reading – variety of text types and genres to broaden reading experience.
- .

Theoretical influences

Theoretical influences

- **New Literacy Studies:** Brice Heath, 1983; Street, 1984; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; et al
- **Second language reading:** Goodman, 1967; Carrell, 1984; Devine & Eskey, 1988; Freebody & Luke, 1990; Burns & de Silva Joyce, 2000, 2005; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Strucker 2007;
- **Sociocultural influences on reading, learning and achievement:** Burns & de Silva Joyce, 2000, Li, 2007; Brown, Brown & Mitchell, 2005; Decapua & Marshall, 2010
- **Pedagogical approaches:** Hood, 1990; Hood, Solomon & Burns, 1996; Burns & de Silva Joyce, 2005; Rose 2006; Cope & Kalantzis, 2006; Cowey, 2007; Strucker 2007; de Silva Joyce, Hood & Rose, 2008b; De capua & Marshall, 2010;

New Literacy Studies

- Literacy is social, located in the interaction between people
- There are different literacies associated with different domains of life
- Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices
- Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired...
- Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships; some literacies become more dominant, visible and influential than others

(Barton, 1998: 7)

Second language reading

- Models of reading: bottom up/top down/ interactive; learner models
- Reading skills: phonological processing; vocabulary recognition; syntactic processing, schema activating (Burt, Peyton, Adams, 2003)
- Components of critical reading - *code breaker; text participant; text user; text analyst* (Freebody & Luke, 1990:15)
- Individual differences in reading skills, (Strucker, 2007)

“We have ceased debating whether reading is a bottom-up, language-based process or a top-down, knowledge-based process. Most people now accept that the two processes interact . . . , We now also appreciate the influence of background knowledge on both L1 and L2 readers .

And, furthermore, we believe that readers actively control this hidden process, and that this control directly affects their ability to understand and to learn from text.” (Block, 1992, pp. 319-20)

Sociocultural influences

Li, 2007:

“the power struggle between school and home is in a constant flux” and .. there are “tensions around the literacy and culture duality... underlying the mismatches between school and home” (Li 2007:25 in Volz, 2009: 63).

Sociocultural influences

- Brown, J., Miller, J., Mitchell, J. 2005: challenges to school teachers:
 - Students resist modified programs that position them as 'different;
 - Inadequate teaching resources for SLIFE students
- Brown, J. Et al 2006: challenges to students
 - Academic, technical language caused difficulties
 - Gaps in cultural knowledge underpinning concepts
 - Unfamiliar learning practices, eg group work

(Li,2007)

Pedagogies for reading instruction

- Abstraction in written text (Hood, 1990);
- pedagogy for multiliteracies (Cope Kalantzis, 2006)
- Learning to read; reading to learn; (Rose, 2005)
- Intensive reading instruction (De Silva Joyce, Hood & Rose, 2008b)
- Accelerated Literacy Program (Cowey, 2007)
- Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (Decapua & Marshall, 2010)

Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm

Components of MALP

Learning Paradigm: SLIFE

Learning Paradigm: U.S. Schools

Accept conditions from SLIFE

Immediate relevance
Interconnectedness

Future relevance
Independence

Combine processes from SLIFE
and U.S. schools

Shared responsibility	with	Individual accountability
Oral transmission	with	Written word

Focus on U.S. learning activities
with familiar language and content

Pragmatic tasks

Academic tasks

Pedagogies for reading instruction - summary

- Situated practice
- Explicit, overt instruction:
- Critical framing
- Transformed practice

(New London Group 1996, 2006)

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