

Report on the theoretical framework and empirical toolkit for analysing literacy case-studies

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Abstract

In this report, we present a theoretical framework for the analysis and assessment of literacy practices and (socio)cultural participation (see section 1). In addition to this theoretical framework, we also present and evaluate a set of methodological tools. In order to evaluate this toolkit, C&E discusses the application of these methods for data collection and analysis, as well as their theoretical grounding (see section 2). Based on a case study of the developers' discourse on social media platforms, we present part of the outcome generated with the methodological tools (see section 3). In the closing section of this report, we provide an overview of the affordances and limitations of the toolkit and briefly discuss how these issues will be addressed in the case studies that are now in progress. (see section 4).



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Abbreviations

C&E – research group Culture & Education
CSV – Comma Separated Value
API – Application Programming Interface



1. Introduction

*"Schools as institutions have been slow to react to the emergence of [the] new participatory culture; the greatest opportunity for change is currently found in afterschool programs and informal learning communities."*¹

1.1. Challenges of literacy education and research

The research of C&E focuses on cultural literacy as it develops and transforms within social media environments. It builds on the theory of multiliteracies and the suggestion that "[...] *each technological advance has seen a corresponding change in how literacy is practiced and its social role understood*" (Snyder, 2003, p. 14). Sociolinguists and social psychologists confirm this claim by pointing out that literacy is a series of situated linguistic constructions that express social conventions relating to speech and action patterns (Gee, 1989; Livingstone, 2008). This implies that there is a strong connection between media developments, sociocultural participation, discourse and different forms of literacy.

Cultural and social institutions like schools play an important part in formulating and operationalizing society's expectations relating to media use and sociocultural participation. These expectations change rapidly as society tries to keep up with continuous technological developments. This makes the task of cultural and social institutions a very challenging one. At the same time, this also poses significant challenges for research on such changing cultural practices, thus creating the need for flexible and dynamic research designs.

In this report, we describe our attempts to develop such a flexible and dynamic research methodology. By setting up collaboration between researchers and stakeholders (e.g. developers, teachers, writers, etc.) we try to create a cross-over between *educational action research* (Foreman-Peck & Murray, 2009), *ethnographic literacy research* (Heath & Street, 2008) and *rhetorical analysis of literacy practices* (Mortensen, 2012). Together, researchers and stakeholders explore and describe the effects of technological development on social interaction and cultural participation. Considering current developments, the focus is on social media that are used for cultural participation. Social media can be both studied and used to set up action research and ethnographic study. Users frequent these environments to meet people with a common passion or interest and to participate in activities that allow them to explore, develop, refine and share their passion with others (Vlieghe, Bourgonjon, Rutten, & Soetaert, 2011). These are places where information is expected to flow in all directions, not just from a producer to an audience. Stakeholders create information and generate data simply by participating and sharing what they know, think and feel. Research can do the same, thus opening up the research process to feedback from the participants.

¹ Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006, p. 4



1.2. Social media as affinity spaces

Social media are often described as Web 2.0 technology (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Tim Berners-Lee, argues that the term Web 2.0 refers to a change of practice rather than a fundamental change of the Web's infrastructure (Anderson N. , 2006). Indeed, many of the protocols upon which the Web is built have remained largely unchanged. The emergence of a new kind of Web application known as social media is the consequence of a different kind of use of those protocols by developers. That change is translated into algorithms which allow social media users to transform data instead of merely accessing them. This brings the users to the forefront. By transforming data, users take part in the production process, just like a listener becoming part of a radio show by engaging in an on-air telephone conversation with the show host.

The tension between practice and infrastructure warrants caution. When considering the relationship between technological and sociocultural developments, researchers should be careful not to adopt a deterministic stance (Livingstone, 2005). An interesting perspective on this relationship is the theory of *affinity spaces* (Gee, 2005). This theory suggests that new media can become spaces where people meet, collaborate and learn without having to become a member in a community of practice.

Gee's theoretical perspective is supported by recent research on games and media. This research indicates that learning environments for non-formal and incidental learning emerge in and around new media like videogames (Gee, 2005; Steinkuehler & Duncan, 2008; Squire, 2008; Ito & Bittanti, 2009). Such non-formal learning environments have an open character. This means that people at all levels of experience and expertise can enter and leave at any time, can participate in many different ways, can create and transform content, can affect negotiations about expertise and leadership (Gee, 2005, pp. 225-228). Based on these characteristics, affinity spaces can be described as temporary and unrestricted learning environments. Because participation is not tied to community membership or a common endeavour, the learning environment can cease to exist at any point in time (Vlieghe, Bourgonjon, Rutten, & Soetaert, 2011). Of course, community formation is not entirely ruled out. It is merely considered temporary, as: *"we can move in and out of informal learning communities if they fail to meet our needs; we enjoy no such mobility in our relations to formal education"* (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006, p. 9).

1.3. Literacy and literary culture

Social media environments answer to the description of affinity spaces and can be studied as such. First of all, social media are open and aimed at interaction through content creation and transformation. Secondly, social media are often aimed at creating, supporting and developing particular interests, such as: literature (e.g. GoodReads©), music (e.g. Soundcloud©), films (e.g. Youtube©), images (e.g. Pinterest©), etc. Studying the entire field of social media environments for cultural participation is an impossible task for a four-year research project. Therefore, C&E and the appointed guidance committee have decided to select a smaller, but representative set of cases



within the field. In particular, we have chosen to direct its attention to social media platforms which focus on literary culture.

The choice to focus on literary culture is rooted in the observation that literature, literacy and education have an interesting historical connection. In fact, the concept of “literacy” was derived from “literature” and “literate” to refer to the ability to read and write and the status of being well-read (Williams, 1983, pp. 184-185). The description of literacy changed after the introduction of radio, television and computer technology. Today, the term literacy is used to refer to the ability to deal with a multitude of representational forms, which include but are not limited to printed text (The New London Group, 1996; Vlieghe, Rutten, & Soetaert, 2011). Attention to multimodality is gradually increasing within research and formal education, though books and literature continue to hold an important position (Soetaert, 2006).

Our interest in the relationship between social media and literary culture is also influenced by theories on *media convergence* (Jenkins H. , 2006). Indeed, stories are told through various representational forms or media formats. They are continued, transformed and combined, thus slowly causing a convergence between media. This kind of convergence is maximised through digital technology and Web 2.0 media use. *Social reading platforms* – i.e. social media focused on literature – are an interesting example. They present an opportunity to set up a comparative study of existing and emerging cultural practices and social conventions related to literature and literary culture. As suggested by Marshall and Eric McLuhan (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988), such a study should consider which elements are retrieved, become obsolescent, are enhanced or reversed.

To enable comparison, our research builds on empirical studies of literary culture related to printed texts and books. These studies suggest that “*in ‘modern’ societies, the acting possibilities of actors in the social system of literature are institutionally distributed onto four action dimensions: production, mediation, reception, and post -processing*” (Schmidt, 1997, p. 124). Based on an ethnographic study among actors in literary culture, we explore whether and how these four dimensions (re)appear in relation to social reading platforms and how related expectations evolve.



2. Method

2.1. Methodological tools

The theoretical framework presented in section 1 focuses strongly on practices that emerge within new media environments in general, and social media environments in particular. Within social media environments, these practices often result in the production of media content in many different forms. One of the primary forms, however, is textual or lingual. In this section² we ground this observation within rhetorical theory and argue that the transformative effects of “new” media related to literacies can be studied by focusing on language (rhetoric) as symbolic and situated action.

Language can be considered the most fundamental tool by which people conceive, comprehend and communicate understandings of reality and formulate “*instructions on how to act and talk so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize*” (Gee, 1989, p. 1). Thus, different uses of language can be studied as indicators of how people perceive a situation and the choices and actions they see available to them, thereby offering insight into the motives for acting (Foss, 2004). These situated meanings and motive-generating functions that language performs in relation to specific contexts can be studied by using tools from rhetorical criticism (Brummett, 2006), most notably: the dramatistic pentad.

The dramatistic pentad offers a frame for “*analysing discourse by focusing on how it attributes motivation to human action*” (Blakesley, 2002, p. 32). The pentad is a tool directly related to dramatistic theory. The central claim of this theory is that humans can be described as a “*symbol-making, symbol-using, symbol-misusing animal*” (Burke, 1966, p. 16). The founding father of the dramatistic theory, Kenneth Burke, argues that we can learn to understand how these symbols work by analysing literature, speeches, or even accounts of what people do and why, as dramatistic situations. The aim of the analysis is to understand the attributed motives of social interactions by addressing the question: “*what is involved when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?*” (Burke, 1945/1969, p. xv). The dramatistic theory has been adopted by different scholars in order to study popular culture (see: Kimberling, 1982; Brummett, 2006), film (see: Blakesley, 2003), video games (see: Voorhees, 2009; Bourgonjon, Rutten, Soetaert, & Valcke, 2011) and theatre (see: Rutten, Mottart, & Soetaert, 2010).

The pentad focuses on the question of *what is involved* and divides it into five distinct segments or elements: the *act* (what happens), *agent* (who does the act), *scene* (the setting in which an action takes place), *agency* (the means by which the act is carried out), and *purpose* (the goal or objective of the act). The first step of any pentadic analysis is always to identify the terms or concepts that

² Based on: Vlieghe, J., & Rutten, K. (2013). Rhetorical Analysis of Literary Culture in Social Reading Platforms. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15(3), <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss3/7>.



represent these five key elements. The next step is to apply ratios that pair two different elements in order to examine their mutual influence and to detect the dominant pentadic element. The final step is to look for patterns in the associations or relations in order to map out different clusters (Foss, 2004, pp. 72-75). Based on the results of the analysis a pentadic cartography can be constructed. The technique of pentadic cartography was developed in order to “*locate the featured term[s] that coordinate transformation of one vocabulary into the terms of another at pivotal sites of ambiguity*” (Anderson & Prelli, 2001, p. 80). Though various perspectives or discourses can be analysed successively when using the techniques of pentadic analysis and pentadic cartography, we propose to limit the scope of each case study to the perspective(s) of one particular group of stakeholders.

The dramaturgic theory offers useful tools for analysis, but states very little about methods for data collection. Burke’s theory does, however, give us a lead. In order to perform a pentadic analysis, research first needs to locate dramatic situations relevant to the research topic. Next, the different stakeholders or perspectives related to that situation need to be identified. Finally, these perspectives need to be documented as thoroughly as possible, preferably by combining first-hand accounts and observation material. We suggest that ethnography offers a framework that meets these requirements as it “*is grounded in theories of culture and allows researchers to view literacy development, instruction, learning and practice as they occur naturally in sociocultural contexts*” (Purcell-Gates, 2011, p. 135).

Ethnographic data generally consist of four main types of material: observation notes, interviews, artefacts and archives (Ibid., pp.143-147). As Christine Hine points out, the distinction between these different types of material is blurred when ethnography involves digital environments (1994, p. 14). She argues that digital environments can be understood both “*as a discursively performed culture and as a cultural artefact*” (Hine, 2000, p. 39). Indeed, within social media environments people’s activities are automatically logged and visualised as an invitation for others to respond to. In practice, this often results in a strong focus on digital artefacts and automated data collection (Rutter & Smith, 2005, p. 84).

Much like the pentadic analysis, the aim of ethnographic research is “*to make explicit the taken-for-granted and often tacit ways in which people make sense of their lives*”. (Hine, 2000, p. 5) As such, it is crucial to establish direct contact with the field – i.e. the participants in the study – and to avoid becoming a distant observer. This is a problem when the focus on digital artefacts mostly involves usage of metrics and meta data. Such information is often created automatically through algorithms which have been engineered by developers. Instead, we propose to focus on first-hand information obtained through participant observation, interviews and the collection of artefacts produced by the participants themselves. These artefacts often involve texts, but they can also consist of audio or visual material, or even computer codes written by the participants.

2.2. Application

In order to apply the proposed toolkit, we set up a case study to explore the field of social reading and to identify its characteristics. The case study focuses on the developers' discourse based on danah boyd's observation that institutionalisation of socio-cultural practices is influenced by on-going debates and negotiations as well as developers' efforts to monitor and regulate these practices (2009, p. 95). An analysis of developers' discourse can shed light on the motives for innovating the literary system by constructing, designing and hosting social reading platforms. Because this discourse also functions as a monitoring and regulating mechanism, it also gives information about the "*instructions on how to act and talk*" (Gee, 1989, p. 1) when engaging with literature in a social media environment. Results from this analysis are a first step in determining how the reallocation of literary phenomena to the domain of social media affects opportunities for action and role taking.

Table 1: List of analysed social reading environments and URLs of the homepage, sorted alphabetically by name.

Name	URL
BookCountry	http://bookcountry.com/
BookCrossing	http://www.bookcrossing.com/
BookFriend	http://www.bookfriend.co.uk/
BookGlutton	http://www.bookglutton.com/
BookIDO	http://www.bookido.be/
BookLamp	http://www.booklamp.org/
BookMovement	http://www.bookmovement.com/
BookRabbit	http://bookrabbit.com/
BookWormr	http://www.bookwormr.com/
Copia	http://www.thecopia.com
Findings	https://findings.com/
Gnooks	http://www.gnooks.com/
Good Reads	http://www.goodreads.com/
Iedereenleest.be	http://www.iedereenleest.be/
LibraryThing	http://www.librarything.com/
OpenMargin	http://www.openmargin.com/
Read Social	https://www.readsocial.net/



Reader ²	http://reader2.com/
Readmill	http://readmill.com/
Revish	http://www.revish.com/
Scribd	http://www.scribd.com/
Shelfari	http://www.shelfari.com/
Social Books	http://apps.facebook.com/social_books/
SubText	http://web.subtext.com/
The Amanda Project	http://www.theamandaproject.com/
Unbound	http://unbound.co.uk/
You Are What You Read (Scholastic)	http://youarewhatyouread.scholastic.com/

The data for this case study involve source materials directly related to developers' activities in the social media environments known as social reading platforms. After identifying the concept of "social reading" and social media platforms related to it, we collected textual and audio-visual material created by developers of 27 social reading platforms to describe the phenomenon of social reading (see Table 1). The data have been obtained through online participant observation in social media environments between September 2011 and June 2012. All source materials and initial observations have been recorded and documented both in an online weblog³ and an offline digital archive. The recorded sources contain texts and audio-visual material produced by developers to describe social reading. As suggested by Christine Hine and others, no data or field restrictions were made prior to documenting the observations collected through participatory immersion (Hine, Kendall, & boyd, 2008).

In this case study, the technique of pentadic cartography was applied to identify the strategic points of ambiguity and to trace transformations and shifts in the uses and meanings of concepts relating to literary phenomena within social media environments. At the same time, it allowed us to gain insight into transforming and emerging literacies expressed through language use. The material was analysed using a Microsoft Access 2010© database. The database was customised for the purpose of rhetorical or pentadic analysis and contains five sets of tables corresponding to the elements of the dramatisic pentad: act, agent, scene, agency, purpose.

All of the descriptive information provided by the developers is segmented at word level and imported in one of the five main tables. A numeric identifier is assigned to each piece of segmented information. In every set, the segments from the main table are paired with segments from the other four main tables based on the syntactic context. The pairs are stored in distinct subtables

³ URL: <<http://joachimvlieghe.tumblr.com/>>



which represent possible pentadic ratios (e.g. the subtable *act-scene* contains segments from the table *act* paired with segments from the table *scene*. Accordingly, there are 20 subtables in total: *act-scene*, *act-agent*, *act-agency*, *act-purpose*, *agent-scene*, *agent-agency*, *agent-act*, *agent-purpose*, *scene-agent*, *scene-agency*, *scene-act*, *scene-purpose*, *agency-scene*, *agency-agent*, *agency-act*, *agency-purpose*, *purpose-scene*, *purpose-agent*, *purpose-agency*, *purpose-act*.

In addition to the subtables for relational information, each set also holds one subtable which contains clusters or themes (for an overview see Figure 3 p.39). Clustering helps to overcome small variations in concepts used by developers. Because of the explorative nature of this study, the clusters (i.e. the applied labels) have not been predefined for the elements *act*, *scene*, *agency* and *purpose*. For the element *agent*, however, we did use predefined labels corresponding with the action roles identified by Schmidt: “producer”, “mediator”, “recipient” and “post-processor” (Schmidt, 1997, p. 124). These predefined labels were not considered restrictive.

After pairing and clustering the information, all collected data from the Microsoft Access 2010 database were exported to a CSV-file and then imported in a network analysis software package Gephi©. Using this software package, the pattern data were analysed and the weight of every relation was determined just as the weighted degree of individual clusters. Based on the outcome of this analysis, a graph was generated in Gephi© to map out and visualise the full spectrum of the developers’ discourse on social reading (see Figure 4 p.40). The result was a highly complex rhetorical or pentadic map. In the ethnographic description of the results, we tried to maintain as much the complexity and richness as possible by combining numeric data with examples from the descriptive material and insights from academic literature related to topics revealed in the data.



3. Results

In this section of the report, results of the pentadic analysis and the pentadic cartography are presented⁴ to show the reach and depth of the proposed and tested research methods. The presented results are presented as a combination of numeric data, data extracts, observational claims and academic sources which also underpin this claim.

3.1. Study developers' perspectives: the case of social reading

This section focuses on the three essential aspects of the pentadic analysis: (a) a dominant rhetorical element, (b) its influence on the other rhetorical elements and (c) the strategic spots of ambiguity in the developers' discourse on social reading. Given the scope of this report, the discussion of non-dominant rhetorical elements is limited to themes with a weighted degree above average which occur in relation to more than 50% of the studied social reading environments – i.e. general trends in the discourse.

3.1.1. SCENE: Social reading platforms as social space

Table 2: Social reading environments related to developers' discourse containing information on all elements of the dramatic pentad

Name	
BookCountry	Reader ²
BookCrossing	Readmill
BookFriend	Revish
BookgGutton	Scribd
BookIDO	Shelfari
Copia	SubText
Good Reads	The Amanda Project
LibraryThing	Unbound
Openmargin	You Are What You Read (Scholastic)

A first and important observation is that the developers' discourse on social reading environments only contains information on all elements of the dramatic pentad in 18 of the 27 studied cases

⁴ Based on: Vlieghe, J., & Rutten, K. (2013). Rhetorical Analysis of Literary Culture in Social Reading Platforms. *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 15(3), <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol15/iss3/7>.



(see Table 2). The element missing in every instance is *scene*. Of course, social reading environments are digital platforms and thus do not embody a physical and temporal environment. Instead, social reading platforms represent virtual or projected environments. The absence of distinct physical features of social reading platforms interferes with the developers' attempts to define the scene or to determine with certainty the different scenes of individual users from which the platforms are typically accessed. When the developers do focus on the element scene, it is always to refer to a social space.

*"Book Country is a place where readers and writers of genre fiction come together to read original fiction, post work or comments, and make a name for themselves. (...) Book Country aims to be useful, egalitarian, and merit-based while fostering an atmosphere of encouragement and creativity."*⁵

*"Shelfari is a gathering place for authors, aspiring authors, publishers, and readers, and has many tools and features to help these groups connect with each other in a fun and engaging way."*⁶

*"It is a place where you can see what your friends are reading and vice versa. You can create 'bookshelves' to organize what you've read (or want to read). You can comment on each other's reviews. You can find mind-blowing new books. And on this journey with your friends you can explore new territory, gather information, and expand your mind."*⁷

*"We all get more out of books when we can talk about them. And now there is a way I can talk with my students right in the pages of digital books. It's called Subtext. And it allows the whole class to be in a book together."*⁸

Developers use the concepts of "space" and "place" to construct a recognisable and comprehensible metaphor which describes the social reading platforms and everything that they entail: services or tools (agency), endeavours (purpose), algorithmic and user-generated content (act), and people (agent). The metaphor of the social space is used to celebrate the lack of physical determinants and idealises the potential for diversity and anonymity as a stronghold, rather than a weakness of the social reading platforms. It stresses the importance of spaces that give everybody the opportunity to interact socially based on personal interests, regardless of when and where, and without discriminating based on physical appearance or social position (also see: Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 118). As such, the developers relate the discourse on social reading platforms to the longstanding and

⁵ Book Country LLC, 2012 <<http://bookcountry.com/AboutUs.aspx>>

⁶ Shelfari, 2012 <<http://www.shelfari.com/Shelfari/AboutUs.aspx>>

⁷ Goodreads Inc., 2012 <<http://www.goodreads.com/about/us>>

⁸ Subtext Media, 2012 <<http://vimeo.com/39460409>>



on-going debate about the democratic potential of the digital media. In the light of this debate, social reading platforms become democratic social spaces where people are judged “*by what they say and think, not what they look like*” (Blakenship, 1986) because they lack physicality. Their non-physical nature alters “*those aspects of group identity, socialization, and hierarchy that were once dependent on particular physical locations and the special experiences available in them*” (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 125).

At first glance, the potential of *scene* as a dominant element seems minor because it is often missing from the discourse and lacks many details when it is present. However, by contextualizing the use of the *social space* metaphor within the debate about the democratic potential of digital media, the importance of the element *scene* becomes clear. This is also reflected by results from our analysis. After applying a filter to the dataset to exclude all incomplete pentads (i.e. where the element of *scene* is missing from the discourse), it is apparent that the terms coded for the element *scene* are consistently used to establish a connection between other pentadic elements. Based on the data output from our Access 2010© database, Gephi© identifies the theme of space as a central node in the pentadic cartography with a weighted degree of 22,304. It is related to all 53 other themes in the pentadic cartography which features 1,454 edges or relationships in total (for an overview see Table , p.41).

Among the non-dominant pentadic elements, several themes also have a relatively high frequency of recurrence. The themes of “meeting spaces” (agency), “sharing” (act), “discovery and exploration” (purpose), “interest and passion” (purpose), “recipient” (agent) and “interest or affinity or passion” (agency) have been documented in relation to at least 17 different social reading platforms. The weighted degree of the themes indicates that “recipient” (14,088) and “meeting spaces” (6,448) have the highest concentration of relationships. Attention is therefore directed towards the elements *agent* and *agency*. Comparison of both elements based on the weighted degree of all themes points out that the average relationship concentration is much higher for the element *agent* (3,717) than for the element *agency* (772). These results suggest that there is a hierarchy among the non-dominant pentadic elements. If the average weighted degree is used as a selection criterion, the pentadic elements can be placed in the following hierarchical order: scene (22,304); agent (3,717); agency (772); act (674); purpose (593).

3.1.2. SCENE-AGENT: Obsolesced and obscured roles

The implications of this hierarchy can further be addressed by focusing on the ratios or relationships between the pentadic elements. With regard to the *scene-agent* ratio, the following two observations deserve close attention. One the one hand, themes related to the element *agent* are never used to describe the position or role of the developers. On the other hand, the descriptions of potential users of social reading platforms focus on only three of the four main categories identified by Schmidt.

The first claim is based on the observation that explicit self-references made by the developers are very scarce, but not entirely absent. If and when developers talk about themselves, they do so by



referring to the name of the developed platform. This means that the names of social reading environments are used interchangeably to refer to the elements *scene* and *agent*.

*"At Scholastic, we believe that literacy is the pathway to success and to realizing a complete life. Books play an important role in shaping who we are and who we will become. You Are What You Read provides a unique opportunity for readers all over the world to connect with each other through their shared 'Bookprints,' as we celebrate the books that bind us together and make us who we are today."*⁹

*"BookCountry aims to be useful, egalitarian, and merit-based while fostering an atmosphere of encouragement and creativity. Book Country also offers a convenient and affordable way to self-publish eBooks and print books. With a variety of services available, we want you to be able to put your book on the map."*¹⁰

"Shelfari introduces readers to our global community of book lovers and encourages them to share their literary inclinations and passions with peers, friends, and total strangers (for now). Shelfari is a gathering place for authors, aspiring authors, publishers, and readers, and has many tools and features to help these groups connect with each other in a fun and engaging way. Our mission is to enhance the experience of reading by connecting readers in meaningful conversations about the published word."

¹¹

Thus, a first strategic point of ambiguity is revealed. By using the name of social reading platforms to refer to both *scene* and *agent*, the *scene-agent* ratio becomes an ambiguous one. As a consequence, the only way to learn about the developers' perception regarding their contributions to the literary system is through their descriptions of the affordance of the social reading environments.

The second claim relates to the observation that developers describe potential users of the social reading environments in terms which concur with the following roles identified by Schmidt: "recipient", "producer" and "mediator" (Schmidt, 1997). These terms serve as categorical references in order that allow users to navigate to subdomains dedicated to particular roles and practices with which users can identify (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Descriptions of the different roles are almost never explicitly mentioned. Mostly the descriptions are formulated implicitly in terms of the means (agency), practices (act) and goals (purpose) specific to the role-related subdomains. In the light of this, it can be concluded that the *scene-agent*

⁹ Scholastic Inc., 2012 <<http://youarewhatyouread.scholastic.com/kids/about/faq/>>

¹⁰ Book Country LLC, 2012 <<http://bookcountry.com/AboutUs.aspx>>

¹¹ Shelfari, 2012 <<http://www.shelfari.com/Shelfari/AboutUs.aspx>>



ratio holds a subdominant position over the ratios *scene-agent*, *scene-act* and *scene-purpose*. In other words, the *scene-agent* ratio strongly influences the *scene-agent*, *scene-act* and *scene-purpose* ratios. This is also reflected by the high weighted degree of the themes “recipient” (14,088), “producer” (5,392) and “mediator” (2,824).

Figure 1: Screenshot of <<http://unbound.co.uk/books/unchosen>> taken on 19/10/2012. Emphasis (in red) added by authors.



Figure 2: Screenshot of <<http://www.librarything.com/about>> taken on 19/10/2012, Emphasis (in red) added by authors.





3.1.3. SCENE-AGENCY: Passion, confrontation and communities as means

The analysis of the *scene-agency* ratio also results in two important observations. The first observation concerns one particular theme, namely “meeting spaces”. The second observation is directly related to that and focuses on “passion and interest” as key elements of social reading environments.

As we have indicated above, the concentration of relationships for the theme “meeting spaces” (6,448) is considerably higher than the maximum concentrations measured for any other theme related to the elements *agency* (2,960), *act* (3,000) and *purpose* (2,640). The unique position of the theme “meeting spaces” becomes clear by looking at the raw data and their coding. The terms coded for the element *scene* were often coded for the element *agency* as well. This occurs when a social reading platform is simultaneously presented as a social space (*scene*) and a means for communication and confrontation (*agency*).

“Reading long-form written content (...) has been a solitary experience for too long, but technologies now exist to bring people together through their shared interests.”¹²

“Books can bring people together in unique ways, transcending geographic boundaries, structuring conversations, fostering ideas and new insights into each other.”¹³

As such, a second strategic point of ambiguity is revealed. The *scene-agency* ratio becomes ambiguous when the concept of “space” is employed to denote two different things: an environment and a means for enhancing democracy and discussion (also see: Papacharissi, 2012, p. 11).

The ambiguity of the *scene-agency* ratio suggests that social reading environments could be perceived as social spaces for confrontation and conflict, not for confirmation and comforting. This characterisation is enhanced by complementing the theme “meeting spaces” with themes like “interest or affinity or passion”, “community (formation)”, “communication”, and “collaboration and co-creation”. The developers’ discourse on social reading strongly focuses on people’s shared interests and passion for literature. Social reading environments are said to allow people to express their engagement with a particular literary work or towards the field of literature. This expression takes place through creation and communication. Developers often refer to communities or community formation to stress the shared engagement (i.e. interest and passion expressed through participation). In earlier work, we pointed out that communities formed in social media environments can be understood through Benedict Anderson’s concept of *imagined communities* (Vlieghe, Bourgonjon, Rutten, & Soetaert, 2011). Based on a close study of nations and nationalism, Anderson has pointed out that “*all communities larger than primordial villages of face-*

¹² Scribd Inc., 2012 <<http://www.scribd.com/about>>

¹³ BookGlutton, 2012 <<http://www.bookglutton.com/about/how.html>>



to-face contact are imagined”, since their members “will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them” (Anderson B. , 1983, pp. 5-6). Indeed, developers use the concept of “communities” to refer to an intricate network of loosely affiliated people who possess diverse knowledge, experiences and perspectives on literature. Stated differently, the concept of “communities” is used to refer to social groups as a type of shared resources that brings new insights both to individuals and to the domain of literature as a whole.

“People have always loved to talk about books. Now there’s a way to talk about the book in the book. It’s called Subtext and it’s going to change the way you think about eBooks. It connects you to an entire community of people how love books just as much as you do. (...) You’ll get more out of your books... and more into your books. You know it’s always being added, so you can revisit a favourite and learn something new. (...) Subtext, it’s a community in the pages of your book.”¹⁴

“Where the collective thoughts and ideas of the community live on every page, bringing new meaning and insights to every word. (...) Copia brings this idea to life in a digital world, so we can all read better together. This is the future of e-reading.”¹⁵

3.1.4. SCENE-ACT & SCENE-PURPOSE: Exploration of taste

There is a significant overlap between the ratios *scene-act* and *scene-purpose*. Therefore, they are discussed together. The overlap is in itself a first important observation. A second observation relates to the theme of “discovery and exploration”.

Consultation of the raw data indicates that the overlap between the *scene-act* and the *scene-purpose* ratio is not caused by a poor selection of thematic labels. Instead, this overlap is where a third strategic point of ambiguity in the developers’ discourse can be observed. In addition to the *scene-act*] and *scene-purpose* ratios, the ambiguity also involves the *scene-agency* ratio. Themes relating to the element *agency* are often presented as opportunities formulated in terms of a set of imperatives. Developers rarely state explicitly whether the listed imperatives refer to acts or purposes. The order of the lists and the syntactic structure of the sentences can sometimes give a hint, but there is often no way to make a definitive statement about the intended meaning. The ambiguity is maximised when developers formulate imperatives that signify a sequential chain of acts and purposes, whereby the purpose of one sequence become the agency for the next sequence.

“Revish lets you:

- *Write reviews of any books you read*

¹⁴ Subtext Media, 2011 <<http://vimeo.com/28368227>>

¹⁵ COPIA Interactive LLC, 2012 <http://www.thecopia.com/flash/flv/Copia_WhatIs_Video.flv>



- *Maintain a reading list and share it with friends*
- *Keep a reading journal - look back and see what you were reading at any time*
- *Read reviews by other Revish members*
- *Create and participate in groups, to discuss books, reading or anything else*
- *Use our API and widgets to include your Revish content on your blog or website*
- *Receive books with Revish Connect (coming soon)"*¹⁶

Across both ratios, a general pattern can be observed among the discussed themes. Terms relating to the theme of “discovery and exploration” (purpose) are found frequently in relation to all 18 sources. In nearly all cases they are accompanied by terms relating to the themes of “interest and passion” (purpose) and “sharing” (act). The latter two themes suggest that the theme of “discovery and exploration” consists of two components. One is a personal component which focuses on “interest and passion”, but also on themes like “efficiency and effectiveness” (purpose), “reflection” (purpose), “choosing and selecting” (act), “controlling and managing” (act), “reading” (act/purpose). The other is a social or group component which focuses on “sharing” (act) as well as “identifying to others” (act), “social bonding” (purpose), “collaborating” (act), “self-expression” (purpose), “seeking advice or suggestions” (act), “discussing” (act), “criticising and evaluating” (act). Assessment of the raw data confirms that the developers often simultaneously stress the personal and social aspect of “discovery and exploration”. As a consequence of the ambiguity between the *scene-act* and *scene-purpose* ratios, a distinction between both – i.e. where one aspect serves the other – is rarely found. In many cases, it is suggested that a taste in books reflects a taste in friends or the company we keep and vice versa (also see: Booth, 1988). Thus, social reading platforms feature two different, yet strongly related kinds of “taste fabrics” which denote networks of interests (also see: Church & Hanks, 1990; Liu, Maes, & Davenport). One focuses on books while the other focuses on people. The most important affordance of social reading platforms is thus to offer users a means to explore and keep track of these taste fabrics which facilitates the discovery of new books and new people.

*“Whether online or on your reader, your library is an easy way to keep track of all the books you’ve read and want to read. And with tons of e-books for sales and millions of catalogue titles you can fill it up quickly. What is important to remember is that every book is a connection to new people. And the more people you follow, the better it gets.”*¹⁷

“You Are What You Read provides a unique opportunity for readers all over the world to connect with each other through their shared “Bookprints,” as we celebrate the books that bind us together and make us who we are today. Once you sign up, you’ll be able to input your Bookprint - the five books that most influenced your life. You’ll then be able to

¹⁶ Champion Internet Solutions Ltd., 2012 <<http://www.revish.com/>>

¹⁷ COPIA Interactive LLC, 2012 <http://www.thecopia.com/flash/flv/Copia_WhatIs_Video.flv>



*connect with others through your shared Bookprints, interact with a global community of readers, and discover new books to enjoy..."*¹⁸

*"For centuries, people have been scribbling in the margins of books, taking notes and doing their best to pass the books along. With Readmill this is made easy. (...) Build up your own personal network of readers and discover how good eBooks can be. Why make a book digital and not make it shareable?"*¹⁹

*"On Goodreads, when a person adds a book to the site, all their friends can see what they thought of it. It's common sense. People are more likely to get excited about a book their friend recommends than a suggestion from a stranger. We even created an amazing algorithm that looks at your books and ratings, and helps you find other books based on what fellow Goodreads members with similar tastes enjoyed."*²⁰

3.1.5. Flexible role-taking in literary social media culture

Rhetorical analysis of the discourse on social reading environments has shown that developers only refer to three of the four roles identified by Schmidt in relation to the traditional literary system: producer, mediator, recipient and post-processor. Based on a comparison of the weight of the relationship between *agent*-related themes on the one hand, and those relating to the elements *agency*, *act* and *purpose* on the other hand, we conclude that the general findings regarding the phenomenon of "social reading" apply in fairly similar fashion to all three roles. However, variations in the relative importance of certain themes have been detected. These variations suggest that each role continues to have a (slightly) different focus.

In relation to the recipient, developers stress the themes of "reading" (act/purpose), "communication" (agency), "social bonding" (purpose) and "identifying to others" (act). As such, the social aspect of literary reception is highlighted (for an overview see Table 4, p.43; Table 5, p. 44; and Table 6, p.45).

*"Copia brings this idea to life in a digital world, so we can all read better together. This is the future of e-reading."*²¹

*"People have always loved to talk about books. Now there's a way to talk about the book in the book.(...) Subtext, it's a community in the pages of your book."*²²

¹⁸ Scholastic Inc., 2012 <<http://youarewhatyouread.scholastic.com/adults/about/>>

¹⁹ This is Readmill, 2011 - <<http://vimeo.com/33250586>>

²⁰ GoodReads, 2012 <<http://www.goodreads.com/about/us>>

²¹ COPIA Interactive LLC, 2012 <http://www.thecopia.com/flash/flv/Copia_WhatIs_Video.flv>



In relation to the producer, the themes of “collaboration and co-creation” (agency) and “criticising and evaluating” (act) are stressed. This emphasises the interactive or collaborative aspect of literary production (for an overview see Table 4, p.43; Table 5, p. 44; and Table 6, p.45).

“Get a group of your peers together to read and discuss each other’s work. (...) Then you can have targeted discussions about each paragraph in order to hone your craft.”²³

“Now we’ve adapted the idea for the Internet Age, so authors get to write the books they really want to write and you get to read real books that in a crowd celebrity-obsessed marketplace might otherwise never see the light of day.”²⁴

In relation to the mediator, the developers accentuate the themes of “controlling and managing” (act), “discussion” (purpose), “efficiency and effectiveness” (purpose) and “choosing and selecting” (act). Accordingly, the argumentative and managerial aspect of literary mediation is underlined (for an overview see Table 4, p.43; Table 5, p. 44; and Table 6, p.45).

“BookGlutton has the only Web-only book publishing platform. Using the Epub book format, you can upload, set your price, and track your sales. Your readers are part of your publishing network, and we enable direct lines of communication between reading groups and you. It’s not for everyone in publishing, but it’s for the forward-thinking ones.”²⁵

“How Libraries Can Use LibraryThing. We love libraries. Let us count the ways. Fully integrate LibraryThing’s social data into your catalogue using LibraryThing for Libraries. LTFL lets you add tag-based browsing, book recommendations, ratings, reviews, series data, awards information, stack maps, virtual shelf browsers, and more to your OPAC, by integrating with LibraryThing and its high-quality book data.”²⁶

The pentadic analysis of the developers’ discourse on social reading platforms shows how the roles of the recipient, producer and mediator reappear within the social media environment, while specific references to the role of the post-processor appear to be absent. The developers highlight the interrelatedness of production, mediation and reception which is highlighted by focusing on their interactive, argumentative and social aspects. This echoes the idea that “*meaning-making is an on-going process [that] does not end at a pre-ordained place*” (du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997, p. 85). In other words, the presentation of social reading platforms as social spaces for

²² Subtext Media, 2011 <<http://vimeo.com/28368227>>

²³ BookGlutton, 2012 <<http://www.bookglutton.com/about/how.html>>

²⁴ UnboundVideos, 2011 <<http://youtu.be/de9CQA7G6vk>>

²⁵ BookGlutton, 2012 <<http://www.bookglutton.com/about/how.html>>

²⁶ LibraryThing, 2012 <<http://www.librarything.com/about/libraries>>



confrontation stresses the spiralling effect of the literary system as a *cultural circuit* (Ibid.). As such, the developers relate their descriptions of social reading platforms to the discourse on remix culture, which is strongly connected to the rise of social media and user-generated content. The discourse on remixing suggests that “*the interdependence of our creativity has been obscured by powerful cultural ideas, but technology is now exposing this connectedness*” (Ferguson, 2010). By stressing this idea of connectedness or intertextuality, the developers’ discourse enhances the idea that everyone in the literary system is involved in the post-processing of literary texts. Stated differently, within social reading platforms everyone involved in the literary system becomes a post-processor. Social reading platforms thus actively seek to democratise the literary system by reducing the notions of hierarchy related to it, thereby also increasing the opportunities to switch between roles. As James Paul Gee suggests, this kind of environment enables and stimulates people to observe, mimic and experiment with a variety of different roles and practices within real and meaningful contexts (2005).



3.2. Summary of the findings

Our pentadic cartography points to a strong focus on *scene* and three strategic spots of ambiguity in the developers' discourse on social reading platforms. The first point of ambiguity relates to the name of the social reading platforms, which is used to refer to a space as well as a group of people. The second point of ambiguity involves the use of that name to refer to social reading platforms as a space and a means for enhancing democracy and discussion. The third point of ambiguity encompasses the description of means as a set of imperatives consisting of a perpetually changing mix of acts and purposes.

Furthermore, the pentadic analysis indicates that the metaphor of the social space is used to identify the lack of physical determinants and the potential for diversity and anonymity as a stronghold of social reading platforms. The focus on diversity is closely related to confrontation and conflict. Social reading platforms are not presented as safe houses where people find comfort and confirmation, but as *contact zones* where people can respectfully challenge each other (also see: Pratt, 1991). In addition to these observations, the pentadic analysis also highlights the developers' use of the concept of communities to refer to an intricate network of loosely affiliated people who possess diverse knowledge, experiences and perspectives on literature. The term "communities" is primarily used to refer to users as a resource for gaining insight. In the light of this, the most important affordance of social reading platforms is identified as facilitating discovery of new books and new people by offering users the means to explore different taste and to keep track of the exploration. As such, social reading platforms become environments that provide opportunities for sustained learning driven by interaction among peers. This also means that they can be considered non-formal initiatives for lifelong learning (European Union Institutions, 2012).

Focusing more closely on the roles and practices related to literary culture reveals strong attention to the social aspect of literary reception and literary production. At the same time, the argumentative and managerial aspects of literary mediation are underlined, while the role of the post-processor seems to be obsolesced. We also notice that the role of social media developers is largely obscured in the discourse. However, by stressing this idea of connectedness or intertextuality, the developers' discourse enhances the idea that everyone in the literary system is involved in the post-processing of literary texts, thereby also increasing the opportunities to switch between roles. The implication that everyone in the social reading environments is a post-processor thus indicates an active move towards democratisation of the literary system through a reduction of segregation and hierarchy.



4. Discussion

In this closing section of the report, we evaluate the methodological toolkit based on the application in the case study that we presented in the previous sections. We begin by providing an overview of the affordances and limitations of the tools for (1) data collection and (2) analysis. We end by discussing (3) our attempts to address these issues in currently on-going case studies.

4.1. Evaluation of ethnographic methods as tools for data collection

As indicated in section 2, participation in social media environments results in the creation of archived information and cultural artefacts. When ethnographers venture into the field of social media these materials are often the only way by which participant activity can be observed. This creates great opportunities, but also several problems. The biggest opportunity for ethnographic data collection is the result of the public nature of social media and the existence of APIs. These make it increasingly easy to assemble big data sets in a relatively short period of time. However, this opportunity is also a potential weakness because it no longer requires the ethnographer to establish a connection with the participants. The lack of contact with the participants causes problems with regard to ethics and validity, which also applies to the presented case study.

Ethical issues arise when the process of data collection becomes a concealed project whereby researchers fail to reveal themselves and their actions as well as their intentions. This often happens when researchers claim that social media are part of the public domain, thus making everything that is said and done in that domain a public good. This argument wrongfully assumes people abdicate all right to ownership when participating in the public domain, thus relieving social researchers from their obligation to acquire an informed consent (for detailed discussion see: King, 1996; Waskul & Douglass, 1996). Christine Hine points out that this is not without consequences because *“online interactions are sufficiently real for participants to feel they have been harmed or their privacy infringed by researchers”* (2000, p. 23). She adds that people’s online interactions and identities need to be treated with proper respect for *“to do otherwise would be to treat online identities as if they did not matter to participants, whereas in many settings they patently do matter”* (Ibid.).

Validity issues arise when the observations and interpretations of researchers are not shared with the participants. Ethnographic findings are generally considered valid when they are representative for the way things are in the situation being investigated (Purcell-Gates, 2011, p. 140). One way to establish validity is through triangulation of sources and comparison with prior research. However, comparison with prior research increases the likelihood that preconceptions and stereotypes will persist. Shirley Brice Heath and Brian Street argue that this can be counteracted by meticulously describing all interpretive decisions and by sharing findings with the participants during the research (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 125). By sharing their findings, researchers can try to seek confirmation among their informants. Informant checking is another,



perhaps more powerful way of establishing validity (Purcell-Gates, 2011, p. 148). Of course, this requires a trusting and reciprocal relationship between researchers and participants.

The case study presented in this report was entirely documented in a public logbook²⁷ and later published in an open access journal (Vlieghe & Rutten, 2013). We also took great care of ensuring triangulation, documenting interpretive decision and comparing findings from our own research with those of others. Despite these efforts, we feel that the research in this case study still suffers from a lack of participant involvement. We believe that future case studies would benefit greatly from a higher level of participant involvement.

²⁷ URL: <<http://joachimvlieghe.tumblr.com/>>



4.2. Evaluation of pentadic analysis and pentadic cartography as tools for data analysis

Pentadic analysis and pentadic cartography afford appropriate means to researchers to analyse the different arguments that run through the discourse of participants. By locating the ambiguous terms, researchers can outline the rhetorical structure of that discourse. This also enables them to identify the way in which seemingly ordinary words like 'space' and 'sharing' are used metaphorically (i.e. change in the semiotic system) in order to affect changes in the interaction patterns of a cultural system (i.e. change in the social system). However, to achieve a sufficient level of depth both analytic tools require the use of highly detailed information. This level of detail causes problems of a practical nature.

Performing a pentadic analysis and a pentadic cartography requires a great amount of time. Pentadic analysis starts by identifying the rhetorical elements (i.e. agent, act, agency, purpose and scene) at the lowest possible level. When working with textual information, this means that researchers must analyse the text at word level. While assigning words or word groups to the appropriate rhetorical elements, researchers must also assign them to particular themes to allow comparison in a later stage of the analysis. In order to identify the rhetorical relationships or ratios, the material must be re-examined at sentence, paragraph and text level. This is in itself a very time-consuming task. As the size of the data set increases, the task becomes even more demanding. In addition, it becomes increasingly difficult to manage the output of the analysis.

The issues of intensity and complexity surged several times during the data analysis process of the presented case study. We feel that these issues greatly reduced the flexibility of the toolkit and the feasibility of using it in the field together with stakeholders. We strongly believe that this warrants an adjustment of the toolkit for data analysis.



4.3. Adjustments and refinement of the methodological toolkit

We are currently working on three other case studies building on the theoretical and methodological framework presented in this report. Every case is related to the field of social reading, but focuses on a different group of stakeholders. Based on our evaluation of the methodological toolkit, we have adjusted and refined the tools. In order to continue the development and evaluation of the toolkit we have made different adjustments for each case study.

A first case study has been finished and focuses on teachers as mediators in literary culture. The research involves a natural experiment set up with 79 students from the teacher-training program at Ghent University. The pre-service teachers were invited to collaborate in our exploration of the phenomenon of social reading from a teacher perspective, thus increasing the connection between ourselves and the participants. To maximise the project's potential the students were asked to focus on one social media reading platform in particular: GoodReads²⁸. The exploration process was comprised of three activities: (A) participation in the GoodReads environment, (B) observation of activities by others in that environment and (C) reflection through writing and debate with peers. The pre-service teachers were actively stimulated to share their observations and interpretations with their peers. They were also encouraged to address every topic that came in mind. Together, the students composed 142 posts containing descriptions and reflections on social reading. From these contributions 120 posts or 49,516 words were selected for further analysis. The selection ensures that every active participant and all major discussions are represented in the data set. The content of the selected post was analysed through the process of open or inductive coding using the software package NVivo10©. The coding process focused only on assigning themes, not on identifying rhetorical elements and ratios. The coding process analysis of the participants' writings was set at sentence and paragraph level. These decisions were made in the light of the intensity and complexity issues discussed above. A preliminary evaluation of the project shows that the intensity of the analytic process was slightly reduced, but that the process itself still requires a significant amount of time²⁹. Due to the inductive approach the coding process resulted in a large coding scheme which proved hard to manage (see Table 7, p.46). By not focusing on rhetorical elements and ratios we reduced the potential of the analytic toolkit to identify ambiguity. Nonetheless, most of that potential could be restored through increased attention for triangulation.

²⁸ GoodReads was selected based on its dominant status among the social reading services. Since its creation in 2007, GoodReads has steadily grown and is currently considered to be the largest platform for social reading. At the start of the research project in March 2012, approximately 7 500 000 accounts had been created and 270 000 000 books added to literary database of the platform (GoodReads, 2012). Reports on website traffic indicate that GoodReads was visited 21 605 274 times by 13 464 830 individual users during the month prior to the beginning of the research project (Quantcast Corporation, 2013).

²⁹ The coding process took place between April 19th and June 19th of 2013 a required a total of 30 working days to complete.



In a second case study, we focus on authors as producers in the literary system. This case study involves collaboration with doctor Kelly Page (Columbia College) and a body of 21 international writers who participated in the 2012 Twitter Fiction Festival. Data collection for this research ran from March till May 2013 and was documented on a public weblog³⁰. In order to increase researcher-participant contact the data collection incorporated two focus groups set up in the natural online environment of the Twitter Fiction authors: Twitter©. This also opened up the process of data collection to include interactions between the authors and other stakeholders in the social reading environment, such as readers and platform developers. In order to increase the potential for triangulation, the data collection process also included artefacts produced by the authors in the form of personal websites, social media profiles, literary texts and audio-visual content. Similar to the previous case study, the analytic process for this case study will focus on open or inductive coding. In this case study, the level of detail is set at paragraph and text level to reduce the intensity of the analytic process and to increase manageability of the output. At this moment, analysis has not been finalised.

A third case study focuses on readers or recipients. This case-study is set up in relation to a Flemish social reading environment that extends across platforms: *iedereenleest*³¹. The research involves a collaboration with Stichting Lezen vzw (the platform developer) and 260 readers. Data collection is still in process and will include artefacts produced by readers as well as interviews with key figures (15) and the platform developers. The analytic toolkit will be adjusted and refined after the data collection process has been completed.

³⁰ URL: <<http://joachimvlieghe.tumblr.com/TwitterFiction>>

³¹ The environment includes a social reading platform located at <http://www.iedereenleest.be> and social reading community page located at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/16170829740/>.



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6. Two-page Dutch summary

In haar onderzoek richt de onderzoeksgroep Cultuur & Educatie zich op de ontwikkeling en verandering van culturele geletterdheid binnen sociale media omgevingen. Het onderzoek bouwt voort op de theorie van meervoudige geletterdheid en de vaststelling dat elke verandering op technologisch vlak een verandering op het vlak van geletterdheid heeft teweeg gebracht. Deze veranderingen hebben in belangrijke mate te maken hebben met taal. Uit sociaalpsychologisch en de sociolinguïstisch onderzoek blijkt dat het begrip geletterdheid verwijst naar een reeks van historisch en sociaal gesitueerde talige constructies. Deze constructie geven uitdrukking aan sociaal aanvaarde patronen van spreken en handelen.

Socioculturele instituties zoals scholen spelen een belangrijke rol bij het formuleren en operationaliseren van maatschappelijke afspraken en verwachtingen ten aanzien van mediagebruik en sociale en culturele participatie. Zij worden in deze taak bijgestaan door onderzoeksinstituten. Die taak wordt echter steeds moeilijker door de toename van het aantal technologische ontwikkelingen en de snelheid waarmee deze elkaar opvolgen. Er is daarom nood aan een flexibel en dynamisch onderzoekmodel. In dit rapport presenteren en evalueren Joachim Vlieghe, Kris Rutten en Ronald Soetaert een theoretische en methodologisch kader dat aan deze vereiste beantwoordt. Het voorgestelde model brengt verschillende onderzoekstradities samen waaronder actie onderzoek, etnografische geletterdheidsonderzoek en retorische analyse van geletterdheidspraktijken.

De literatuur met betrekking tot actie onderzoek benadrukt het belang van een nauwe samenwerking tussen onderzoekers en belanghebbenden uit het culturele veld. Dergelijke samenwerking heeft twee belangrijke voordelen. Enerzijds ondersteunt ze de ontwikkeling van een veelzijdig en empirisch onderbouwd perspectief op technologische veranderingen en hun invloed op socioculturele participatie. Anderzijds zorgt ze er ook voor dat de inzichten en de ontwikkelde kennis onmiddellijk kunnen terugvloeien naar de belanghebbenden.

Een onderzoekstraditie die eveneens focust op samenwerking tussen onderzoekers en belanghebbenden is het etnografische geletterdheidsonderzoek. Etnografisch onderzoek tracht voornamelijk de verscheidenheid en complexiteit van socioculturele groepen en geletterdheidspraktijken in kaart te brengen. Dit gebeurt aan de hand van participerende observatie, interviews en de studie van culturele artefacten. Zowel tijdens het verzamelen van de gegevens als bij het analyseren ervan is direct en veelvuldig contact met de belanghebbenden (of ook: informanten) bijzonder belangrijk.

Retorische analyse van het verzamelde materiaal laat op haar beurt toe om de verschillende motieven voor handelen in kaart te brengen. De dramatische pentade biedt een kader aan voor de retorische studie van betekenisgeving. Door middel van pentadische analyse kan namelijk onderzocht worden hoe mensen een gegeven situatie en hun eigen handelingsmogelijkheden inschatten. Aan de hand van vijf vragen worden de beschrijvingen van situaties en



handelingsmogelijkheden structureel geanalyseerd: Welke handeling wordt er gesteld? Wie stelt de handeling? Hoe wordt de handeling gesteld? Waarom wordt de handeling gesteld? Waar en wanneer wordt de handeling gesteld? Elke vraag representeert een element van de pentade, respectievelijk: *act*, *agent*, *agency*, *purpose* en *scene*. Deze elementen komen telkens voor in verschillende combinaties, waarbij één element echter vaker zal voorkomen dan de andere. Pentadische analyse tracht in de beschrijvingen van iedere belanghebbende dit dominante element te identificeren. Op deze manier kunnen verschillen en gelijkenissen in de betekenisgeving van belangengroepen worden blootgelegd.

De evaluatie van het voorgestelde theoretisch en methodologisch kader gebeurt op basis van een toepassing op een gevalstudie. De gevalstudie is gericht op de verkenning van sociale media omgevingen voor cultuurparticipatie. Binnen geletterdheidsonderzoek neemt de aandacht en interesse voor dergelijke omgevingen sterk toe. Deze omgevingen worden vaak omschreven als plaatsen waar mensen met een gedeelde passie of interesse verzamelen, samenwerken en leren. De mogelijkheid om deel te nemen aan cultuur zonder beperkingen of verplichtingen staat daarbij centraal (zie ook: Vlieghe, Rutten & Soetaert 2011). De diversiteit aan mogelijkheden om deel te nemen aan cultuur via sociale media is evenwel bijzonder omvangrijk. Voor de gevalstudie werd daarom gekozen voor sociale media omgevingen gericht op de deelname aan literaire cultuur. Deze keuze berust op de vaststelling dat er een interessante historische relatie bestaat tussen literatuur, geletterdheid en educatie. Bovendien blijven boeken en literatuur een belangrijke rol spelen in onderwijs, ondanks de toenemende aandacht voor het omgaan met verscheidene representatie vormen (Soetaert, 2006).

Uit de resultaten van de uitgevoerde gevalstudie blijkt dat aan dat het voorgestelde theoretisch en methodologisch kader geschikt is voor bestuderen van geletterdheidspraktijken met betrekking tot cultuurparticipatie. De resultaten tonen aan dat het ontwikkelde kader zowel ondersteuning biedt bij exploratief onderzoek als bij de empirische validering van theoretisch onderzoek. Naast een reeks voordelen brengt de uitgevoerde toepassing ook een enkele aandachtspunten aan het licht. Een eerste aandachtspunt heeft betrekking op de mogelijkheden voor geautomatiseerde dataverzameling en het resulterende verlies van contact met de deelnemers van het onderzoek. Een gebrekkig communicatie met de deelnemers heeft immers gevolgen op vlak van deontologie en validiteit. Onderzoekers kunnen communicatie tot stand brengen door zichzelf nadrukkelijker kenbaar te maken en hun resultaten open te stellen voor betrokkenen, ook tijdens het onderzoeksproces. Een tweede aandachtspunt betreft de omvang van de verzamelde gegevens en de complexiteit van de analysetechniek. Het toepassen van fijnmazige analyse technieken op omvangrijke datasets bemoeilijkt namelijk het beheer en de snelle verwerking van de verzamelde gegevens. Dit probleem kan aangepakt worden door aanpassingen te maken in de steekproefgrootte en het analyiseniveau.

7. Annexes

Figure 3: Schematic overview of the database structure used for analysis in the developers case-study.

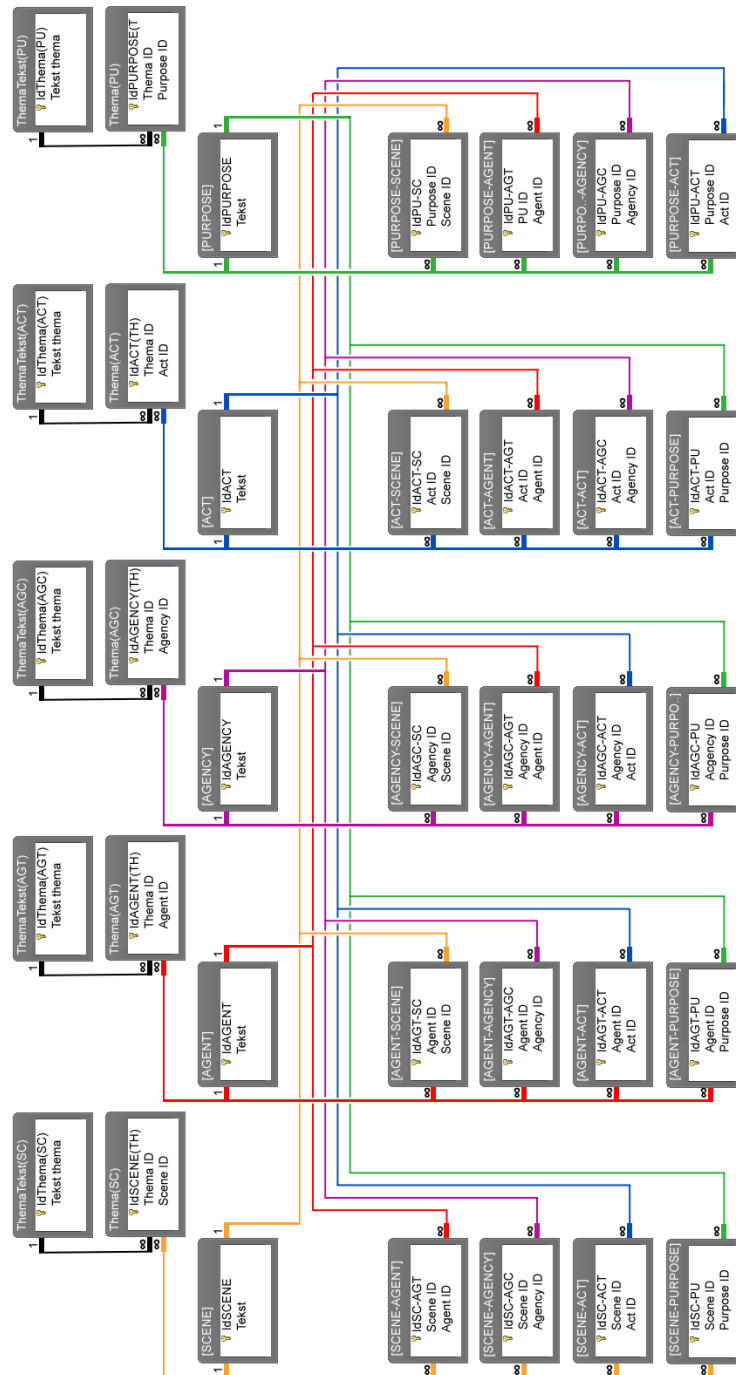


Table 3: Overview of elements and thematic clusters, filtered by range of weighted degree [1032,593-22304,000], sorted by source coverage and weighted degree.

Element	Cluster	Sources	Weighted Degree
scene	space	18	22,304
agent	recipient	17	14,088
agency	meeting spaces	18	6,448
act	sharing	18	2,656
purpose	discovery and exploration	18	2,640
purpose	interest and passion	18	2,456
agency	interest or affinity or passion	17	1,736
agency	community (formation)	16	2,960
act	identifying to others	16	1,608
purpose	social bonding	16	1,576
act	discovering	16	1,496
act	choosing and selecting	16	1,208
act	controlling and managing	16	1,176
agency	communication	14	2,176
purpose	shared resources	14	2,160
purpose	efficiency and effectiveness	14	2,048
act	collaborating	13	3,000
purpose	reflection	13	1,848
purpose	self-expression	13	1,080
act	meeting	12	1,712
act	seeking advice or suggestions	12	1,320
act	discussing	11	2,792
agency	collaboration and co-creation	11	1,672
act	criticising and evaluating	9	1,544



act/purpose	reading	9	1,512
purpose	discussion	9	1,392
agent	producer	9	5,392
agent	mediator	9	2,824

Table 4: Overview of thematic clusters for the element *agency*, filtered by range of weighted degree [1032,593-22304,000], sorted by source coverage, weighted degree and roles.

Cluster	Sources	Weighted Degree	Weight (Recipient)	Weight (Producer)	Weight (Mediator)
meeting spaces	18	6,448	485	221	100
interest or affinity or passion	17	1,736	163	42	12
community (formation)	16	2,960	258	42	70
communication	14	2,176	218	15	39
collaboration and co-creation	11	1,672	88	103	18

Table 5: Overview of thematic clusters for the element *act*, filtered by range of weighted degree [1032,593-22304,000], sorted by source coverage, weighted degree and roles.

Cluster	Sources	Weighted Degree	Weight (Recipient)	Weight (Producer)	Weight (Mediator)
sharing	18	2,656	219	80	33
identifying to others	16	1,608	156	22	23
discovering	16	1,496	118	55	14
choosing and selecting	16	1,208	76	42	33
controlling and managing	16	1,176	86	18	43
collaborating	13	3,000	211	91	73
meeting	12	1,712	145	40	29
seeking advice or suggestions	12	1,320	121	42	2
discussing	11	2,792	233	74	42
criticising and evaluating	9	1,544	97	66	30
reading	9	1,512	159	30	

Table 6: Overview of thematic clusters for the element *purpose*, filtered by range of weighted degree [1032,593-22304,000], sorted by source coverage, weighted degree and roles.

Cluster	Sources	Weighted Degree	Weight (Recipient)	Weight (Producer)	Weight (Mediator)
discovery and exploration	18	2,640	227	90	13
interest and passion	18	2,456	208	83	16
social bonding	16	1,576	155	26	16
shared resources	14	2,160	195	54	21
efficiency and effectiveness	14	2,048	129	68	59
reflection	13	1,848	146	41	44
self-expression	13	1,080	81	33	21
reading	9	1,512	159	30	
discussion	9	1,392	100	33	41

Table 7: Complete codebook for the GoodReads case-study. Includes codes and short descriptions.

Name	Description
Active	Active
Actor	Actor
Developers	Developers
Otis Chandler	Otis Chandler
Mediator	Mediator
Bookseller	Bookseller
Journalists	Journalists who compile and edit the literature section of a newspaper or journal
Librarians	Librarians
Marketer	Marketer
Publisher	Publisher
Teachers	Teachers
Post-processor	Post-processor
Critic	Professional critic
Producer	Producer
Author	Author
Writer	Writer
Recipient	Recipient
Booklover	Booklover
Booksearcher	Book searcher
Bookworm	Bookworm
Enthusiast	Enthusiast, devotee,
Reader	Reader
Antique	Antique reader
Average	Average or sporadic reader
Ex	Ex
Experienced	Experienced
Exploring	Exploring
Non	Non
Passive	Passive
Postmodern	Postmodern reader
Potential	Potential
Social	Social reader
Solitary	Solitary
Starter	Starter
Trend	Trend
Unrepentant	Unrepentant, avid, ...
Unassigned	Unassigned
Audience	Audience

Fan	Fan
Everybody	Everybody, nobody, most, many
Expert	Expert, professor, professional, connoisseur,
Family	Family, parents, brothers, sisters, ...
Friend	Friend
Likeminded	Like-minded souls
Member	Member
Others	Others
Participants	Participants
Peer	Peer or colleague
People	People
Scientist	Scientist
Some	Some, few ...
Strangers	Strangers
Students	Students, pupils, peers, ...
User	User
Visitors	Visitors
Youth	Youth, teenagers,
Affinity	Affinity: shared interest or passion for an activity, subject or object (material, artistic product, ...)
Interest	Interest
Passion	Passion
Taste pallet	Shared taste for...
Appreciation	Appreciation
Advantages	Advantages or affordances
Disadvantages	Disadvantages or constraints
Doubts	Doubts
Character	Character
Age	Age
Attitude	Attitude
2books	Towards books
2reading	Towards reading
Career	Career
History	Personal reading and reviewing history, option to revisit
Identity	Identity
Personal Library	Personal Library
Personal taste	Personal taste: not social or exhibition
Communication	Communication
Conversation	Having a conversation or talking



Discussion	Discussion
Books	Discussion concerning specific books
Content	Content
Style	Style
Meta	Meta-discussion
Adaptation & Translation	Adaptation & Translation
Authors	Discussions concerning a specific author and/or his/her oeuvre
Authorship	Authorship
Critiques	Reviews and comments
Events	Events
Experiences	Experiences
Genre	Genre
Literature	Literature
Literature teaching	Literature teaching
Print	Books and media: print vs digital etc.
Topic	Topic
Varia	Varia
Thoughts and opinions	Sharing thoughts and opinions
Consumerism	Consumerism
Informed consumerism	Informed consumerism
Developments	Developments
Literature	Literature Landscape
Society	Society
Technology	Technology
Enhancement	Enhancement and enrichment
Entertainment	Entertainment
Kill time	Kill time
Exhibit	Exhibit or show-off
Experience	Portray reading experiences
Competition	Competition
Taste	Portray taste
Challenge	Challenge others
Compare	Compare
Confirmation	Confirmation
Exploration	Exploration
Browsing	Browsing and discovering
Spoiler	Spoiler
Searching	Searching and finding
Freedom	Freedom
Control	Control and choice making



Moderator	Moderator
Democracy	Democracy, inclusion/access,
Functionality	Functionality
Customization	Customisation
Order	Arrange in different orders
Diversity	Diversity (among people)
Modules	GoodReads modules and functions
Ads	Sponsored Books
App	App for mobile devices
Scanner	Barcode scanner
Bookswap	Book swapping
Challenge	Reading challenge
Comments	Comments
Database	Database
Explore	Explore
Community	Community
Creative Writing	Creative Writing
Events	Events
People	People
eBooks	eBooks
Fun	Fun
Quizzes	Quizzes
Quotes	Quotes
Trivia	Trivia
Genres	Genres
Giveaways	Giveaways
GoodReads Voice	GoodReads Voice
Listopia	Listopia
Popular	Popular
Filters	Filters, tags and metadata
Groups	GoodReads groups
Forum	Forum
Librarians	Librarian function
Likes	Likes
Main	Main page
Discussions	Discussion feed
Feed	Newsfeed
Search function	Search function
Notifications	Notification
Pages	Pages
Author page	Author page

Book page	Book page
Ratings	Ratings
Reviews	Reviews
Share on	Share on Facebook, Twitter, ...
Similar	Similar books
PM	Private Message
Polls	Polls
Portal	Portal
Profile	Profile
Bookshelves	Bookshelves
To read	To read
Follow	Follow
Friendship	Friendship
Progress	Reading progress
Recommendations	Recommendations
Settings	Settings
Tags	Tags
Tips & Tutorials	Tips & Tutorials
Practicality	Practicality
Inspiration	Inspiration
Organization	Organisation and management of collection
Sharing	Sharing
Solution & opportunities	Solution to a practical problem and available opportunities
Time-Energy	Time and energy saving
User-friendly	Ease of use
Groups	Groups
Discussion	Discussion
Profession	Profession
Reading	Reading
Implicit	Implicit
Innovating	Innovating
Interaction	Interaction
Direct	Direct, face-to-face interaction
Indirect	Indirect, mediated interaction
Introvert	Introvert
Language issues	Language issues
Anglo-centric	Anglo-centric
Non-native	Non-native
Learning	Learning
Assessment	Assessment

Cheating	Cheating
Collaborative	Collaborative learning
Communicating	Communicating
Critical thinking	Critical thinking
Individual	Individual learning
Insights	Gaining insights through new or different perspectives
Knowledge	Knowledge and information
Laziness	Laziness and ignorance
Motivation	Motivating to learn, making learning fun...
Observation	Observation of others, practices, etc.
Reading	Reading
Behaviour	Reading behaviour, reader profile
Reading experience	Reading experience
Contributing	Contributing
Reading promotion	Reading promotion
Recommendation	Recommendation
Retrieval	Retrieval and revival
Scene	Scene
Arts center	Arts centre
Literary salon	Literary salon
Book	Book
Book club	Book club
Bookshop	Bookshop
Market	Market
Education	Education
Classroom	Classroom, school, formal education
School platform	School platform
Minerva	Minerva
SmartSchool	SmartSchool
Extramural	Extramural
Informal	Informal learning context
Learning environment	Learning environment
General	General
Environment	Environment and 'leefwereld', home, ...
Place	Place
Platform	Platform
Social context	Social context
Space	Space, context
Time	A time or period
Attention	Attention economy



Nostalgia	Nostalgia
World	World
Geo-location	Geo-location
Culture	Cultural customs
Language	Language
Library	Library
Literary culture	Literary culture
Offline	Offline
Online	Online
Cloud	Cloud
Sandbox	Sandbox
Supermarket	Supermarket
Youth Culture	Youth Culture
Sharing	Sharing
Simulation	Simulation
Social Media	Social Media
Aggregation	Aggregation
Market share	Competition for attention among social media platforms
Platforms	Platforms
Boek.be	Boek.be
BookCrossing	BookCrossing
BookIdo	BookIdo
Deezer	Deezer
Facebook	Facebook
Virtual Bookshelf	Virtual Bookshelf
Foursquare	Foursquare
GooglePlus	GooglePlus
IMDB	IMDB
Instagram	Instagram
Last.FM	Last.FM
Library Thing	Library Thing
Myspace	Myspace
Netlog	Netlog
Spotify	Spotify
Twitter	Twitter
Wordpress	Wordpress
YouTube	YouTube
Stimulation	Stimulation
Creativity	Creativity
Curiosity	Stimulate curiosity, induce or increase

	interest, stimulate exploration
Discussions	Discussion
Engagement	Involvement and endurance
More	Reading more
Reflection	Reflection
Re-reading	Re-reading
Variation	Reading different (types of) works
Stories	Stories & narratives
Supply	Supply
Adaptations	Adaptations
Content	Content and information; quality (or lack thereof) and amount (overload)
Authenticity	Authenticity
Credibility	Credibility
Filter Bubble	Constraints of filtering and customisation
Popularity	Popularity
Quality	Quality
Quantity	Quantity, overload,
Fiction	Fiction
Multilingual	Multilingual
Translations	Translations
Non-fiction	Non-fiction
Poetry	Poetry
Study	Study
Teaching	Teaching
Approval	Approval
Book reports	Book reports
Discussions	Discussion
Class discussion	Class discussion
Evaluation	Evaluation
Inclusion	Inclusion
Overarching goals	Overarching educational goals
Media-wise	Media-wise
Readings	Reading assignments (+book selection)
Research	Research and reflection
Supervision	Supervision
Support	Support for learning processes, guidance, ...
Tips	Tips
Writings	Writing assignments
Tool	Tool
Writing	Writing