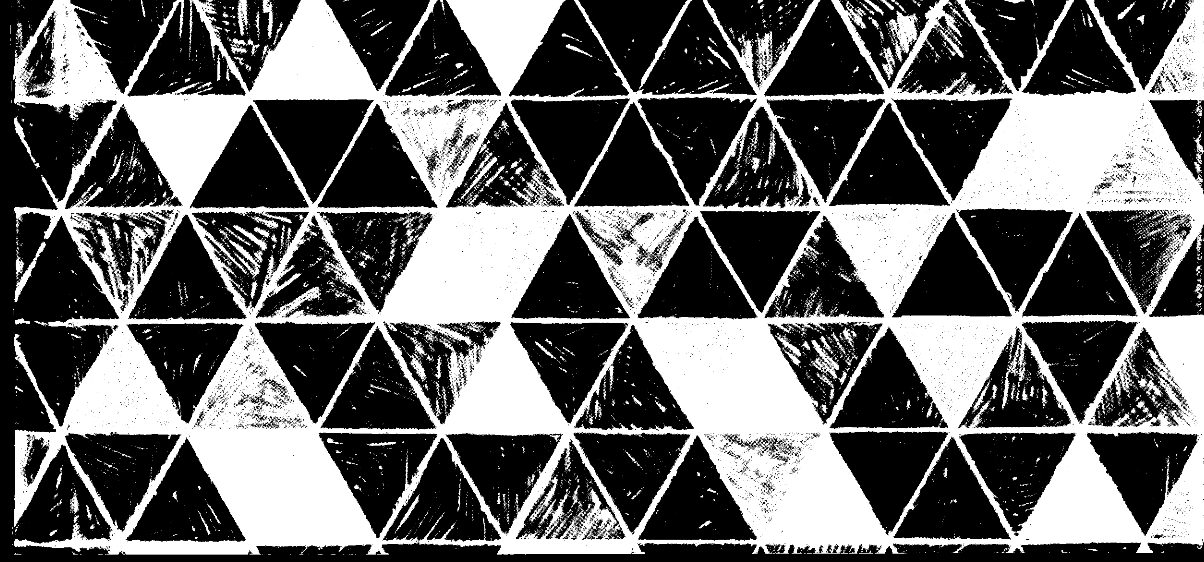
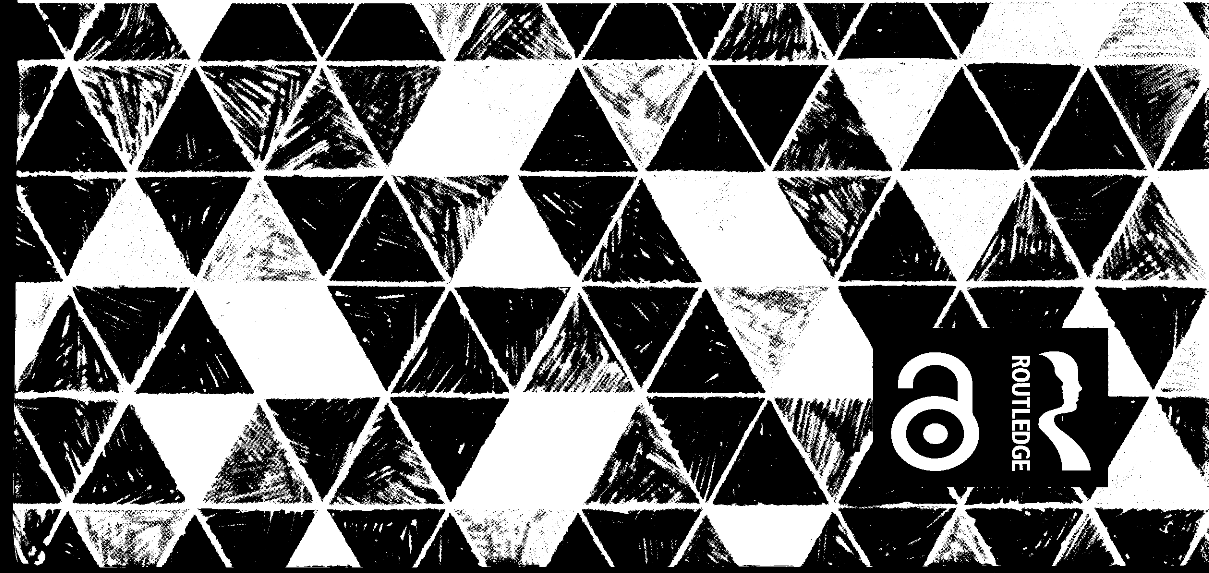


Routledge Research in Media Literacy and Education

MEDIA LITERACY AND MEDIA EDUCATION RESEARCH METHODS

A HANDBOOK

Edited by
Pierre Fastrez and Normand Landry



Routledge Research in Media Literacy and Education
Series Editors
Pete Bennett and Julian McDougall

Media literacy is now established by UNESCO as a human right, and the field of media literacy education is both growing and diverse. The series speaks to two recurring concerns in this field: What difference does media make to literacy and how should education respond to this? Research and practice has aimed to protect against negative media messages and deconstruct ideology through critical thinking, developing media literacy through creative production, and a social participatory approach which focuses on developing active citizens to play a constructive role in media democracy.

This series is dedicated to a more extensive exploration of the known territories of media literacy and education, while also seeking out 'other' cartographies. As such, it encompasses a diverse, international range of contexts that share a conceptual framework at the intersection of Cultural Studies/Critical Theories, (New) Social Literacies and Critical Pedagogy. The series is especially interested in how media literacy and education relates to feminism, critical race theory, social class, post-colonial and intersectional approaches and how these perspectives, political objectives and international contexts can 'decenter' the field of media literacy education.

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Media Literacy and Media Education Research Methods

A Handbook

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14 Critical discourse studies for research on media and information literacy projects

An illustrated discussion of seven methodological considerations

Jan Zienkowski and Geoffroy Patriarche

Introduction

This chapter is designed to familiarize the reader with the most important considerations that have to be taken into account in designing and carrying out critical discourse studies (CDS) of projects that aim to foster media and information literacy (MIL). CDS is a transdisciplinary field of inquiry that consists of perspectives, theories, and methods that allow researchers to explore how contexts, identities, and multimodal forms of discourse relate to each other. CDS often aims to understand the way power-infused sensemaking processes relate to questions of subjectivity. We will not discuss the tools CDS can offer to develop MIL, even if CDS can be used to foster a critical attitude toward media (e.g., Kellner & Share, 2005). Instead, we focus on the discourses constitutive of MIL projects and explore the political and ideological dimensions of MIL-related discursive practices.

We will address seven crucial methodological considerations for conducting a CDS. We thereby use the MIL project of the European Association for Viewers Interests (EAVI) as an illustrative case (see Patriarche & Zienkowski, 2022). EAVI presents itself as "an international non-profit organization registered in Brussels which advocates media literacy and full citizenship" (European Association for Viewers Interests [EAVI], 2017b). On its website, we can read that "EAVI supports the adoption of initiatives that enable citizens read, write and participate in public life through the media" (EAVI, 2017b). The European Commission (EC) supported the establishment of EAVI with the goal "to facilitate the unifying process of all those who support citizens' and consumers' interests in the field of media" (EAVI, 2017b). MIL discourse often uses the signifiers "critique" and "citizenship" (Fastrez & Philippette, 2017; Landry & Roussel, 2018). These signifiers can also be found in the MIL project of EAVI. EAVI does not use the acronym MIL. Nevertheless, we will use this notion as an umbrella term to capture the heterogeneous set of competences, forms of awareness, and practices that EAVI associates with "media literacy", "information literacy", "data literacy", "visual literacy", and similar terms. CDS can help us to understand how such signifiers inform

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and constitute a preferred mode of subjectivity and an associated societal project.

The seven considerations addressed in this chapter may appear to be neatly delineated chronological "stages" but should be thought of as *interdependent* choices or operations. The choices made need to be consistent and may require revisions in a cyclic research process. The seven considerations can be grouped into three themes: (1) the construction of a CDS-informed problematic; (2) data collection; and (3) data analysis. The political implications of conducting CDS will be addressed in the concluding remarks.

The construction of a CDS-informed problematic

We will discuss two considerations pertaining to the construction of a problematic in CDS. First, it is important to carefully consider the choice for a particular (combination of) CDS approach(es). Second, researchers should exercise care in identifying and naming discourses that attempt to define the meaning of the reality under investigation.

Choosing an appropriate (set of) CDS approach(es)

CDS is an umbrella term that refers to a transdisciplinary domain of competing discourse *theoretical* approaches and discourse *analytical* approaches (Angermuller et al., 2014). It is possible to characterize CDS as a research perspective that draws our attention to the way social reality is discursively structured and to the way signification processes are mutually constitutive with the inequalities and power relations that mark our societies. CDS is a field in which many different approaches meet and compete. Each approach in CDS is characterized by epistemological, conceptual, and methodological particularities and therefore suited for different types of research. Researchers should therefore reflect on the (combination of) CDS approach(es) that will best serve their purposes. The choice for a particular concept of discourse has consequences for all aspects of the research process.

CDS approaches are no simple tool boxes with methodological and practical instructions. In discourse studies, theory, method and analysis cannot be easily divorced (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The label "discourse theory" usually refers to post-structuralist or post-foundational approaches grounded in the work of authors such as Foucault (1969) and Laclau and Mouffe (1985). Discourse theorists tend to rely on a metaphorical concept of discourse to analyze a broad range of historical, sociological, and political phenomena *as* discursive phenomena (Zienkowski, 2017). Discourse theorists developed radically constructivist and anti-essentialist perspectives on meaning, identity, and social reality. They take a specific interest in matters of ideology, hegemony, and power (Torfing, 1999). At the same time, they do not necessarily engage in fine-grained analysis of spoken or written language

use, generally preferring a more abstract and macro-analytical approach to investigate how discourse shapes interpretive and material realities. In contrast, discourse analysts rely more on linguistics, text analysis, the ethnography of communication, and other (sub)disciplines of the humanities that seek to understand contextualized interactions achieved via linguistic, paralinguistic, textual, or multimodal means, not necessarily seeking to analyze large-scale societal evolutions and phenomena (Angermuller et al., 2014; Zienkowski, 2017).

Many discourse analysts use the term "discourse" simply to refer to "language in use", to (the results of) written or spoken conversational exchanges, or any type of linguistic organization exceeding the level of the sentence (Angermuller et al., 2014). Such "non-critical" approaches are common in subfields of linguistics such as linguistic pragmatics, conversation analysis, or systemic-functional linguistics (Blommaert & Meshtrie, 2011). In contrast, *critical* discourse theorists and analysts ask how discourse contributes to the reproduction, contestation, and (de)legitimation of power relationships (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). They often aim to criticize the injustices and inequalities that mark human lives. Critical approaches in the field of CDS include but are not limited to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); Political Discourse Analysis (PDA); the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD); ethnographic approaches to discourse; and poststructuralist discourse theory (for an overview, see Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). These approaches may work with different concepts of critique but share a concern with questions of power and/or domination.

The boundaries between discourse theory and discourse analysis become increasingly blurry. Discourse theorists are looking for ways to ground their analyses empirically, and scholars with a background in linguistics and text analysis increasingly realize that a critical take on discourse requires a theoretical understanding of historical, sociological, and political forces. Whatever (combination of) approach(es) one opts for, a choice has to be made in consideration of the research question, the types of discourse under investigation, the most relevant units of analysis, and the type of critique one seeks to articulate. The ultimate criterion for choosing a particular CDS approach resides in its capacity to offer a coherent critical perspective on the phenomena one seeks to describe and explain.

Let us illustrate this with reference to our study of EAVI (see Patriarche & Zienkowski, 2022). We were interested in the ways EAVI articulates signifiers such as "media literacy", "critique", and "citizenship" in an MIL project advocating a specific type of subjectivity and society. We therefore needed a framework that enabled us to examine how such signifiers get linked to each other, as well as to other discursive elements, across a multiplicity of documents. We opted for a notion of discourse grounded in Essex-style discourse theory (Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) and linguistic pragmatics (Verschueren, 1999) for three reasons.

First, Essex-style discourse theory *defines* discourse as an articulatory practice that links signifiers, identities, and ideologies to each other, fixing their meanings in temporary and tentative ways. It takes an anti-essentialist stance, claiming that there is no necessary link between signifiers and signifieds. Whenever we discursively articulate two or more discursive elements with each other, the meaning of these elements gets modified.

Second, linguistic pragmatics usually focuses on discourse as a matter of (multimodal) language use. More firmly anchored in linguistics, it draws our attention to the performative acts through which discursive elements get linked to each other. In the process of communication, we performatively change the world in which we live (Blommaert & Meshtrie, 2011; Zienkowski, 2017). Linguistic pragmatics enables us to investigate how discourse shapes the subjectivity of actors through performative articulatory practices.

Finally, drawing upon a combination of Essex-style discourse theory and linguistic pragmatics, we were able to define subjectivity as a way of relating oneself to a reality that can be made sense of only in and through discourse. Subjectivity involves an imperfect reflexive awareness of the discourses, practices, and processes that constitute our sense of self, understood as "a reification of the processes that allow us to position ourselves as more or less coherent minds and/or bodies in relation to spatial, temporal, social and (inter)textual aspects of reality" (Zienkowski, 2017, p. 407). Discourses provide building blocks for this sense of self. There is an ideological dimension to all forms of subjectivity, as our sense of self is at least partially informed by internalized ideological discourses and power relations. This dimension can be observed in the way EAVI's MIL discourse constructs a specific relation between citizens, media and other institutions, strengthening the idea of MIL as a necessity for the democratic organization of society.

Ultimately, our choice for a combination of Essex-style discourse theory and linguistic pragmatics led us to formulate a research question that invites us to focus on the articulatory practices of EAVI: what forms of political subjectivity are being constructed through the MIL discourses that articulate signifiers such as "media literacy", "citizenship", and "critique"?

Identifying the discourses that seek to define reality

Identifying and naming discourses is an important task in any CDS approach. It is therefore important to consider how the research topic has been imagined and problematized by other actors in the public sphere. A literature review is a useful way to come to grips with existing academic and nonacademic discourses and to identify blind spots in the body of knowledge. Moreover, relevant academic discourses provide knowledge required to contextualize the phenomena under investigation. They sensitize researchers to the contingency of seemingly commonsensical discourses circulating in the public sphere.

Research objects need to be constructed *as* problems before they can be analyzed. Critical discourse scholars often construct a so-called problematic by asking how academic and nonacademic actors approach reality. The construction of a problematic can be understood as a problematization of

problematizations (Glynos & Howarth, 2007). For instance, what are the issues, problems, solutions, and subjectivities that competing discourses associate with MIL? And around what issues do these discourses enter into conflict with each other, constituting MIL problems and subjectivities in the process? We approached the academic literature on MIL as a discursive field where competing academic discourses and communities attempt to fix the meaning of MIL and signifiers such as "critique" and "citizenship". For these reasons, we conducted a literature review focusing on the keywords "media literacy" or "information literacy" in combination with keywords such as "citizenship" or "critical" in academic databases.

The debates crystallizing around questions of critique were especially relevant for our study (Fastrez & Philippette, 2017). In MIL discourse, the noun "critique" is only rarely defined explicitly. Much more common are articulations of the term as an adjective, as in "critical understanding" and "critical thinking". Such notions are often used interchangeably (Landry & Roussel, 2018). This led some MIL scholars to avoid using the term (Potter, 2019). Others advocate a specific notion of critique, drawing on a variety of frameworks. Many cognitively oriented scholars approach critical MIL as a set of particular (meta)cognitive processes. Other MIL scholars draw on "radical" philosophies to foster a type of critique that may destabilize the reproduction of inequality and injustice (Kellner & Share, 2005). The first approach is labeled as a-critical or noncritical by those who consider critique to be a defining characteristic of MIL. Discussions on critique in MIL studies parallel discussions on critique in discourse studies.

The MIL discourses at play in European policies are also relevant to our study of EAVI. Scholars working on European MIL policies have noticed a tension between "holistic" or "critical" approaches to MIL on the one hand, and "functionalistic" or utilitarian approaches to MIL on the other hand (Trültzsch-Wijnen et al., 2017; see also Drotner et al., 2017). In holistic approaches, MIL is conceived of as a broad set of competencies required for citizenship, participation, and "living together" (Landry & Roussel, 2018). In utilitarian approaches, MIL is understood in terms of a set of operational skills at the individual level. MIL is thereby primarily valued for its impact on employability and competitiveness in a global market. The tension between holistic and utilitarian approaches to MIL comes with a gradual replacement of the signifier "media literacy" by "digital literacy" and "digital skills" in media policy discourse (Trültzsch-Wijnen et al., 2017).

Our literature review allowed us to recognize and contextualize the MIL concepts informing EAVI statements. It helped us to identify the place that EAVI occupies in the wider discursive field of MIL and to identify silences, absences, and omissions in EAVI's discourse. This is especially important if one seeks to understand how MIL initiatives position themselves in relation to each other. For instance, while EAVI acknowledges the existence and relevance of more radical forms of media critique, especially on the left side of the academic spectrum, it does not appropriate these more radical notions

of critique into its preferred mode of subjectivity (see later). For a more detailed discussion of the results of this literature review, see Patriarche and Zienkowski (2022).

An academic literature review may nevertheless be insufficient to problematize the discourses that seek to define the reality under investigation. MIL is also discussed outside of academia by civil society organizations, educational actors, and policymakers of all shapes and colors. While there are feedback loops between academic and nonacademic discourses on MIL, the discursive field of MIL cannot be reduced to academia alone. It is nevertheless a good place to start as research objects are never simply "given".

Data collection

Contrary to what the term "data collection" may suggest, data are not simply out there to be collected. The construction of datasets for purposes of research requires careful consideration. In the following we consider potentially relevant criteria for selecting relevant cases. Also, we address the question of how to delimit the discourses constituting the case study one seeks to investigate.

Defining criteria for the selection of cases

CDS does not necessarily rely on qualitative case study research, but it often does. When analyzing cases, it is imperative to ask oneself what the case is a case of. Cases and samples can be selected on the basis of numerous criteria. One may opt for selecting cases because they are typical or representative for a particular phenomenon or potentially revealing for a question or problem one seeks to investigate. It is also possible to select extreme or deviant cases to explore unusual phenomena. Yet another strategy consists in searching for maximum variation to obtain information about the significance of particular circumstances (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Whatever the strategy opted for, it is important to consider practical issues relevant to most types of research. Are relevant data accessible? Is it manageable to gather and analyze these data?

Several considerations came into play when choosing EAVI discourse as a case study. A first reason for focusing on EAVI was its apparent potential for exploring the political dimension of MIL projects. EAVI explicitly positions itself as a facilitator of citizenship and democracy, as stated explicitly in its slogan "Media literacy for citizenship". A focus on EAVI allowed us to investigate how the notion of citizenship is articulated in a concrete MIL project, fostering a particular mode of political subjectivity in the process.

Second, we considered EAVI to be a relevant case because it engages in a wide range of discursive practices at the crossroads of academic, educational, and policy discourse. EAVI develops media education initiatives on its own but also offers resources for other actors in the field. EAVI popularizes and contributes to MIL research and engages in debates about MIL, both in

policy circles and in the wider public sphere. The case of EAVI allowed us to analyze how a MIL actor positions itself in relation to the tensions that constitute the MIL discursive field.

The practical facts that EAVI's working language is English and that it provides free online access to a wealth of documents were additional arguments for choosing this particular case.

Delimiting the discourse that one seeks to analyze

The matter of delineating discourses is by no means a trivial issue. It has implications for the entire research process. A discourse study cannot be complete until the researcher has analyzed and redrawn the boundaries of the discourses that constitute her or his object of investigation.

The issue of delimitation is intimately connected to the way researchers define the so-called unities of discourse. Foucault (1969) argued that the boundaries of discourses can never be captured fully by the topics they address or by the objects they investigate. The unity of a discourse does not reside in the permanence of the concepts involved or in the form and type of connections between statements either. Instead, Foucault proposed that whenever we can identify a regularity (e.g., an order, correlations, positions, functions, transformations) in the dispersion of "objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices" (Foucault, 1969, pp. 40–41), it is possible to talk of a discursive formation characterized by some degree of unity.

The discourse theorists Laclau and Mouffe follow Foucault on this issue but propose a notion of discourse defined as a "structured totality resulting from articulatory practice" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). Their notion of articulation implies that discourses can never be delineated or closed in a final sense. The principle of articulation prohibits this. Yet it is clear that we all draw boundaries around discourses on a daily basis. Discourses can be distinguished on the basis of the knowledge and practices they produce (e.g., medical, architectural, or scientific discourses); the entities that produce them (e.g., the literary oeuvre of an author or the institutional discourse of the WTO); or the genre conventions and media that shape them (e.g., autobiographical or social media discourse). This implies that the very idea of a unified and clearly delineated discourse rests on a fantasy that contradicts the way discourses are structured.

Even if we focus on a single institutional actor such as EAVI, we need to consider that such entities always rearticulate the voices of other actors. There is an inherent polyphony in *every* discourse because all discourses are open-ended structures that interpenetrate each other. How do we then distinguish between discourses that constitute a domain, a debate, or an institution? What criteria should we draw on? One could even wonder if discourses in the plural exist empirically or whether they are reifications of researchers seeking to make sense of a chaotic reality. This question has to be answered in every CDS project and has implications for the construction of the dataset.

Every CDS requires the construction of a dataset to be investigated to answer research questions. Data may be gathered through ethnographic observations, interviews, document research, and/or any other method for data collection. The data should contain traces of the discourses the researcher is interested in. The dataset should contain indicative or representative samples of the relevant discourses circulating in society. It is therefore important to carefully consider the criteria one relies on when constructing a dataset. Special attention should be devoted to the relationship between the selection of data and the discourses that allow texts to make sense in the first place. The dataset should allow the researcher to identify and label varieties of discourse. Discourse scholars should thereby be aware that no collection of statements or texts can ever exhaust a discursive field. Different criteria may be relevant to delineate a dataset (e.g., a specific period, a set of authors, a selection of languages, a genre or type of document, texts containing specific signifiers). The resulting dataset should be manageable (see also Taylor, 2001).

When we were studying EAVI (Patriarche & Zienkowski, 2022), we needed to recognize that we could not fix its discourse in any final way. We had to develop a data collection that allowed us to analyze the heterogeneous discourses informing its approach to MIL. Not all statements published on the EAVI website can be attributed to the organization itself. For instance, only a handful of the YouTube clips published on its website "Films and Videos" have been created by EAVI itself. The videos authored by EAVI all carry the same main title – that is, *A Journey to Media Literacy*. These videos articulate EAVI's notion of MIL in a format targeting children at elementary school level (see later). Most videos on the EAVI website articulate voices of other actors in the discursive field of MIL. For instance, we find a brief introduction into Stuart Hall's take on media, ideology, and representation in relation to matters of race, gender, and class. We also find Adam Curtis' four-part documentary titled *The Century of the Self*, as well as several videos referring to the work of Herman and Chomsky, focusing on "the engineering of consent" through mass-mediated propaganda. By republishing such content, EAVI recognizes the relevance of such critical approaches, without necessarily committing itself to any of them.

Even if EAVI reanimates critical voices on its website in the form of embedded videos and hyperlinks, it remains important to examine to what extent it endorses such voices. All discourses build on previous discourses, and EAVI is not reinventing the wheel either. In addition to the very explicit forms of polyphony that we may observe in the "Films and Videos" section of its website, EAVI's documents are likely to be infused with traces from discourses developed in a variety of settings without explicit reference to the sources of inspiration. If we are to understand the multiplicity of MIL concepts articulated throughout the EAVI website, we need to start by recognizing the heterogeneity of the MIL discursive field (see earlier).

In our study, we did not seek to identify discourses defined in terms of textual genre (e.g., policy texts, pedagogical materials, or political statements); the source of information or enunciator (e.g., EAVI officials, the EU, or any other organization); or specific formal features of multimodal language use. Rather, we sought to identify the regularities through which the signifiers "media literacy", "critique", and "citizenship" were articulated with each

other. This way we sought to come to grips with the type of subjectivity that EAVI seeks to promote.

We constructed a rather small and manageable dataset of 70 EAVI documents published on the main EAVI website. EAVI is active on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Its website also contains external links to websites dedicated to specific EAVI projects and to projects of other MIL entities EAVI collaborated with. We limited ourselves to EAVI's main website, as this is the place that contains the most relevant documents for our purposes, including campaign materials, MIL tests, games, infographics, news items, best practice guides, lesson plans for media educators, manifestos, policy papers written in response to EU decisions, and much more.

As we were specifically interested in EAVI's use of the signifiers "media literacy" (and related ones such as "digital literacy", "data literacy", etc.), "critique" (mostly in the adjective form "critical"), and "citizenship" (also "civic", "civil", "democracy", and "democratic"), we navigated the menus and downloaded all written documents that included at least one occurrence of these terms. Some of the selected articles were timestamped, others were not; some had an identified author (for instance, a regular contributor to the EAVI blog), others had not. We decided to collect all relevant articles available on the website at the time of the study. Our dataset also included the *A Journey to Media Literacy* cartoons produced by EAVI itself, including transcripts of videos. We included these four videos because they present EAVI and its MIL project in a very explicit way. Audiovisual materials produced by other actors were not included.

When constructing a dataset, it is important to be aware of the time limits and the implications these may have for the analysis of the discursive field under investigation. In our case, collecting blog posts published exclusively in 2020 would have resulted in a dataset containing mostly COVID-19 articles. We therefore decided to include the blog posts (containing the relevant signifiers) published in 2019 as well to construct a collection of documents indicative of a wider variety of MIL discourses, being fully aware that no dataset can possibly exhaust a discursive field.

Data analysis

Every discourse scholar needs to consider what discursive forms and functions are most relevant to her or his research project. Those who opt for qualitative research methods may want to conduct a preliminary inductive analysis to identify relevant categories. Inductive coding can be a useful intermediary step toward the analysis of the political and ideological functions of discourse.

Choosing relevant units of analysis

Researchers may be interested in discursive functions (e.g., speech acts, positionings, alignments, argumentations, identifications, metaphors, narration) or forms (e.g., pronouns, verbs, adverbs, emoticons, memes) of discourse, structured at various levels of abstraction. It is impossible to analyze all possible aspects and levels of discourse. It is therefore important to carefully select the units of analysis that will serve as the primary entry points into the dataset. The most important criterion for selecting these units of analysis is the extent to which a particular aspect of discourse enables the researcher to answer her or his research question. Another relevant criterion is coherence: what aspects and levels of discourse allow the texts under investigation to cohere? Recurrence may be relevant too: what discursive elements and choices reappear within and/or across texts? An informed choice can be made only after a preliminary exploration of the dataset. It may be necessary for researchers to focus on several aspects and levels of discourse, especially when working with datasets containing texts written by different authors, in different styles, for different purposes.

At what level should we investigate EAVI's articulatory practices? Should we analyze MIL statements at the level of word choice, speech acts, argumentation, or narrative? Should we focus on the use of labels, pronouns, or metaphors? Some EAVI documents depended heavily on metaphors while other documents did not rely on metaphors at all. For instance, the cartoons produced by EAVI are structured around an overarching narrative filled to the brim with metaphors. Metaphors are even salient in the title of the cartoon called *A Journey to Media Literacy 1: Meet Jack* (EAVI, 2017a). Becoming media literate is imagined as "a journey" to a place called "media literacy island". The video tells the story of a boy called Jack who is said to already master all of the technical skills to get to media literacy island, but he has not yet attained the status of media wisdom. His technical skills are represented as the boat he sails to get to his destination. Jack must face many dangers lurking in the ocean. The voice-over explains that there are "powerful forces behind the media you use every day", forces that may stop you from reaching the mythical media literacy island. The video represents these forces metaphorically as strong underwater currents. Other dangers are visually represented as sharks ("a few rich companies" controlling the media and "manipulations of images"), as a weaponized submarine ("subtle advertising"), as sea monsters hiding in the deep ("false identities", "nasty content and viruses" on the internet), or as pirates ("trying to sell things he doesn't need"). Jack saves a girl from "education desert island", described as one of those "parts of the world where children don't have access to computers or the internet" and "don't have the opportunities to learn these basic technical skills". It is a place where kids cannot build a boat to go to the media literacy island but also a place surrounded by "pirates" and "shark infested waters". Such metaphors do not only allow for a relatively coherent articulation of MIL in a single text, but they also promote a holistic transformation of the self into an entity that is able to act in an autonomous and reflexive fashion, in a societal context marked by dangerous entities.

We did not only investigate the interpretive function of metaphors in relation to the overarching narrative. We also focused on the interpretive function of these metaphors in relation to MIL signifiers and in relation to the definitions and descriptions of these signifiers. For instance, the videos were coded with implicit and explicit notions of MIL "as technical skills", "as the capacity to remain focused", "as an awareness of hidden forces behind the

media", "as questioning one's use of media", "as a matter of self-confidence and self-determination", "as essential to participation in society", "as a transformative project aimed at media wisdom", "as essential to life" in general, etc. (on the coding process, see later). By analyzing the way different units of analysis relate to each other, we were able to shed light on the ways the aforementioned metaphors link multiple notions of MIL into a relatively coherent project informing a preferred type of political subjectivity.

The analysis of *A Journey to Media Literacy* did not suffice to come to grips with the EAVI project. In the videos, nothing is said about propaganda and forms of extremism such as far right nationalism. Terms such as ideology and hegemony are bypassed as well. However, the fact that such issues are omitted in one document does not necessarily mean that the organization is blind to such matters. A more transversal analysis of our documents was needed to form a more complete picture. We therefore identified relevant text segments containing articulations of "citizenship" and "critique" to code these for implicit and explicit descriptions and definitions of these terms.

Preliminary analysis via inductive coding

Inductive coding is a non-necessary but useful step in many qualitative forms of CDS. Inductive coding procedures are commonly associated with grounded theory and qualitative content analysis. They can be conceived of as labeling practices that allow researchers to describe, categorize, and organize data to develop empirically grounded models and theories (Saldaña, 2013). From a constructivist point of view, the coding process consists of recontextualization practices whereby analysts reconstruct implicit meanings and relationships between segments of discourse (Charmaz, 2014). As such, every act of coding becomes an act of rearticulation that renders implicit meanings of coded excerpts salient by labeling them and linking them to each other via overarching categories developed by the researcher and/or inspired by a literature review. Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) such as NVivo, Atlas.ti, MaxQDA, or Dedoose can facilitate the identification, categorization, retrieval, and visualization of coded data.

In our study of EAVI (Patriarche & Zienkowski, 2022), we worked with Dedoose. We imported all the PDFs downloaded from the EAVI website. We also imported the videos into Dedoose as MP4 files. As a preliminary step, we coded text segments, including time-stamped transcripts of the videos, containing explicit articulations of key signifiers. Overall, the point was to identify relevant segments for further analysis. Selected segments were coded with labels such as citizenship (code applied to signifiers such as "citizenship", "citizen", or "citizenry"); civicness/civility (code applied to signifiers such as "civil society" or "civic organization"); critique (code applied to signifiers "critical" or "critically"); and literacy (code applied to signifiers such as "media literacy", "data literacy", and "statistical literacy"). These codes were applied to segments containing multiple sentences or paragraphs. The coded texts had to provide a minimal textual context for making sense of the way EAVI uses such terms. This preliminary step allowed for an easy retrieval and exploration of relevant text segments.

In a first analytical step, we inductively coded text segments for implicit and explicit definitions or descriptions of MIL, critique, and citizenship. An effort was made to stick as closely as possible to the original wording while grouping different descriptions and definitions under the same label, for purposes of retrieval, comparison, and analysis.

In a second analytical step, the definitions and descriptions were grouped together at a higher level of abstraction. Here, the goal was to identify family resemblances between different definitions of MIL, critique, and citizenship. These higher-level codes were developed inductively but also inspired by the overall problematic. This resulted in a coding tree observable in the left pane of the screenshot (Figure 14.1). For instance, under the top-level code "MIL – definitions and descriptions", we find child-codes at an intermediate level such as "MIL – as a challenge", "MIL – as a form of awareness", "MIL – as a set of skills", and "MIL – as transforming the subjectivity of individuals". Top-level and intermediate-level codes have been provided with a description that explains how they group their respective child codes. For instance, the mid-level code "MIL – as transforming the subjectivity of individuals" contains child codes such as "MIL as a form of mindfulness", "MIL as a metacognitive skill", and "MIL as a journey"; together, these codes suggest that becoming media literate is a transformative project that impacts on the individual as a whole.

The benefit of this type of coding lies primarily in the fact that it makes it easier to find and compare relevant segments of (multimodal) texts and to look for patterns of articulation within and across documents. The coding process does not amount to a discourse analysis properly speaking, though. Our coding tree itself did not answer our research question. It was merely a visual representation of the categories we could rely on, to facilitate comparisons in a transversal analysis of the documents.

Our coding of the website articles focused on text. In analyzing the videos, we also paid attention to the imagery used. As we saw during our discussion of the units of analysis (see earlier), many of the metaphors used in the videos are constructed through visuals and not through text alone. However, Dedoose does not allow for the direct coding of audiovisual materials. It is only possible to code video transcripts. We therefore time-stamped these transcripts, so that we could easily identify the images associated with each relevant text segment.

Analyzing the political and ideological dimensions of discourse

The meaning of terms such as "politics" and "ideology" varies with the CDS approach adopted. In our study of EAVI's discourse (Patriarche & Zienkowski, 2022), we relied on the concepts of politics and ideology as developed in Essex-style discourse theory. This means that our point of departure was the primacy of the political, the idea that social reality is based on ontologically arbitrary but historically contingent political decisions that are largely left unquestioned (Torfing, 1999). We conceptualized ideology as a particular

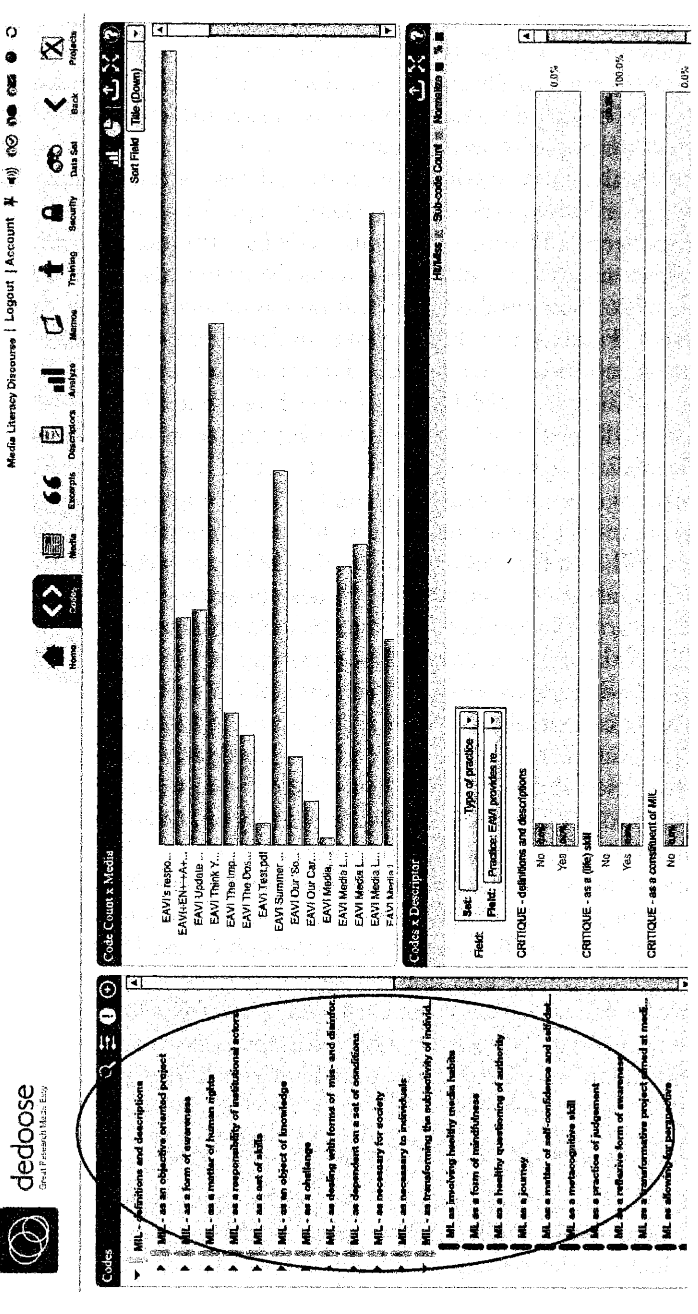

Figure 14.1 Screenshot from Dedoose with a partially unfolded coding tree in the left pane

social, political, and interpretive function of articulatory practices that allow subjects to imagine social reality and to justify or to challenge its injustices and inequalities. Ideology then becomes a dimension of discourse that impacts on our sense of self as well as on the political projects we deem to be necessary. We cannot escape ideology, but it is possible to become reflexively aware of some of the ways it informs our identities, attitudes, statements, practices, norms, and values (Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Zienkowski, 2017).

In our study of EAVI, we relied on a concept of discourse defined as a performative articulatory practice. We therefore had to identify how MIL signifiers were articulated with each other and to examine how the discursive forms and functions of these articulations constitute EAVI's political and ideological project. The coding procedures discussed earlier facilitated the analysis as they allowed us to investigate how relevant text segments inform and reflect EAVI's preferred mode of political subjectivity. Put differently, our codes allowed us to identify aspects of EAVI's discourse that perform ideological functions. For instance, higher-level codes such as "MIL – as transforming the subjectivity of individuals", "critique – as preventing Euroscepticism", or "citizenship as participatory citizenship" contain many statements that contribute to the discursive construction of EAVI's ideal type of subjectivity and society.

It is important to keep in mind that this type of discourse analytical work cannot be reduced to merely identifying and coding discursive patterns, nor is it a matter of uncovering hidden meanings. It rather requires the establishment of new, theoretically informed links that add a layer of meaning on top of the patterns inductively identified in the texts. For instance, in the case of our EAVI study, we had to relate EAVI's articulatory practices to theoretical concepts such as "political subjectivity" and "ideology". Such interpretative work allows the researcher to understand the underlying logics of the discourse under investigation and how it achieves a relatively high degree of coherence. Different results can be achieved depending on the research focus and the core theoretical concepts used.

Our results show that EAVI conceives of MIL as a transformative project that has implications for the individual as a whole. EAVI advocates a "holistic" approach to MIL that cannot be reduced to acquiring utilitarian skills. It promotes an awareness of how media shape the lives of citizens and stimulate a heightened reflexive awareness of one's own (political) beliefs, confirmation biases, and "rational limitations". EAVI explicitly defines "critical thinking" as a "self-discipline" requiring citizens to overcome "deeply entrenched beliefs or confirmation bias" (EAVI, n.d.). EAVI implicitly sides with MIL scholars who understand critique as an ideologically "neutral" (meta)cognitive project. This does not mean that EAVI's project is ideologically neutral but only that its ideological dimension is left implicit. EAVI's preferred mode of subjectivity is in fact deeply ideological as it is presented as a necessity and as EAVI does not recognize the contingency of this construction.

The ideological and political dimensions of EAVI's discourse can also be investigated by focusing on the ideal type of society imagined by EAVI and on the way it seeks to combat social injustices and/or inequalities. EAVI's preferred mode of subjectivity is entangled with(in) a liberal democratic

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15 Rethinking media education policy research and advocacy

A deliberative approach

Gretchen King

Introduction

Four decades after UNESCO championed the inclusion of media education in schools across the world through the 1982 Grünwald Declaration, media and digital literacy has become a cornerstone of citizenship. Where civic engagement is cultivated by political knowledge and opinions, news has been positioned as the currency of citizenship (Schneider, 2011). Scholars have found media education, including news literacy skills, facilitates greater critical awareness of information and enhances political participation both offline and online (Giasson et al., 2017). Research has consistently demonstrated that in the twenty-first century "to be a citizen today is to be a media citizen" (Gozálvez-Pérez & Contreras-Pulido, 2014, pp. 130–131). Indeed, scholarship points to a link between media education (especially news literacy) and political participation (Kozolanka & Orlowski, 2018; Mihailidis, 2014). Critical media education scholars have further noted that for marginalized communities and social justice activists, media education is part of resilience, resistance, and liberation (Kumanyika, 2018). Media education researchers are increasingly turning to activists to document the teaching and learning practices facilitated among social movement actors using media and technology to combat oppression and advance social justice (Seuferling et al., 2023; King, 2020a).

Building on this scholarship, this chapter proposes a deliberative approach for engaging activists and diverse actors in researching and developing media education policies. A deliberative methodological framework facilitates engaged, participatory, and action-oriented media education research with the goal of generating new knowledge with a diversity of actors that can be used to inform the development of public policies. Through deliberative methods, media education researchers gather knowledge among diverse communities, including those implementing policies in the classroom (such as educators or librarians), those directly affected by policies (such as students or users), and those writing policies (such as school administrators or policymakers). Such methods represent a constructivist approach to knowledge creation by investigating research questions through the lived experience of

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