

**EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN FOUNDATION PHASE LEARNERS’
HOME AND SCHOOL LITERACY PRACTICES**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

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Abstract

The thesis looked at Foundation Phase children's early home literacy practices and examined how these literacy practices are adopted at school in Libode, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa, a rural area. The purpose of the study was to determine how early literacy practices at home are adopted in classrooms. The study aimed to determine the relationship between home and school literacy. To understand the literacy practices used at home and school by four Foundation Phase children and four Foundation Phase teachers, an interpretive ethnographic study design was used. Participants who spoke isiXhosa as their first language participated in data collection using structured observations, video and audio recordings, field notes, and unstructured interviews. The study's framework, the Cultural Historical Activity Theory, was used as a tool to collect, examine, and interpret data through its various components. Themes were identified, arranged, and categorized. The findings revealed children from low socioeconomic backgrounds have rich literacy practices. Teachers do not acknowledge or recognize the contributions that these children's cultural backgrounds make. The study recommends that schools start acknowledging the advantages that children's environments have for them. It also suggests that teachers build on the knowledge that children bring from home, as this will have an impact on how they behave in class because students bring their family's literacy habits, which serve as the foundation for their academic literacy habits, to school.

Keywords: Foundation Phase, literacy practices, Cultural Historical Activity System, interplay, home and school literacy, ethnography.

DECLARATION

I, Xoliswa Patience Magxala, declare that this thesis “**Exploring the interplay between young children’s home and school literacy practices**” is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other University, and that all the sources I have used or quoted from have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Signature:



Date: September 2023

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After a very long journey, finally, I've reached my destination and I thank God Almighty through Jesus Christ (Wonderful Counsellor), for granting me the strength, courage and wisdom to conduct and complete this research study; the journey was not easy.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

ANNA:	Annual National Assessment
CAPS:	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CAS:	Classroom Activity System
DoBE:	Department of Basic Education
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE:	Department of Education
EC:	Eastern Cape
EFAL:	English First Additional Language
EU: SFTE:	European Union: Strengthening Foundation Phase Teaching and Teacher Education
FP:	Foundation Phase
GADRA:	Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association (GADRA)
HAS:	Home Activity System
LiEP:	Language in Education Policy
MKO:	More Knowledgeable Other
NLS:	New Literacy Studies
PIRLS:	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
SACMEQ:	Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SAS:	School Activity System
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

1 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In South African classrooms, many children come from social backgrounds that are not always conducive to preparing them for the literacy requirements they will face in school. According to Fleisch (2008), one of the causes of the low literacy rates among primary school students is the social backgrounds that do not always prepare children for the literacy demands they encounter in the classroom. He further asserts that many children find it difficult to meet academic standards for school and, for some, to catch up to peers in the same grade. Many of these children's home literacy experiences are not included in their formal school learning. There are so many challenges of literacy that have been documented such as overcrowding, lack of resources, higher teacher-learner ratio, and poor infrastructure (du Plessis and Mestry, 2019; Amnesty International, 2020; West and Meier, 2020). All these issues have a negative impact on literacy development and have severe consequences for successful teaching and learning (du Plessis and Mestry, 2019). This study focused on challenges that are associated with the interplay between home literacy and school literacy.

This study is part of a larger research programme (The European Union: Strengthening Foundation Phase Teaching and Teacher Education (EU: SFTE) that seeks to contribute towards understanding South Africa's complex literacy landscape and formulate strategies that may address these, particularly in the Foundation Phase. This study takes place in South Africa, in the Eastern Cape Province in Libode district. Regarding poverty, South Africa has gaps where children's socioeconomic circumstances vary. Some children come from wealthy families, while others are from low-income families. People from high socioeconomic backgrounds enjoy more privileges than people from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This chapter introduces the main contents of this study by defining literacy, literacy activities and literacy events; detailing the state of literacy in South Africa (SA) and abroad, exploring current debates on home literacy and school literacy, the importance of literacy, the context of the study, it provides the statement of the problem, research questions, and a summary of thesis chapters. I also discuss my motivation to conduct this study.

1.2 Literacy practices defined.

Literacy practices and events

Literacy practices are a powerful way of conceptualizing the relationship between various literacies and the social structures in which they are embedded, and they help shape (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Heath, 1983; Scribner and Cole, 1981; Street, 1993, 1995). Literacy can be defined as “both behavior and the social and cultural conceptualisations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing” (Street, 1995: 2), or as Heath (1982: 93) suggests, “any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the production and/or comprehension of print plays a role.” According to Wedin (2006), literacy practices are non-observable units of behavior, whereas literacy events are observable activities involving written texts. Barton and Hamilton (1998) suggest that literacy practices are the general cultural ways in which people use written language in their daily lives. In the most basic sense, literacy practices are what people do with literacy.

Practices are not observable units of behavior because they include values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships (Barton and Hamilton, 1998). They are shaped by social institutions and power dynamics, with some literacies being more dominant, visible, and influential than others. Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices and are more usefully understood as existing in the relations between people, within groups and communities. Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making (Barton and Hamilton, 1998).

Literacy events, as defined by Barton and Hamilton (1998), are activities in which literacy plays a role. There is a written text or texts at the heart of the activity, and there may be discussion around the text. Events are observable episodes that emerge from and are shaped by practices. The concept of events emphasizes the situated nature of literacy, implying that it always exists in a social context. Many literacy events in life are regular, repeated activities, and these can frequently serve as a useful starting point for literacy research. Some events are linked together in routine sequences, which may be part of the formal procedures and expectations of social institutions such as workplaces, schools, and welfare agencies. Some events are shaped by more informal home expectations and pressures.

As a diversified country, South Africa has a variety of oral languages, as I highlight in the next section.

1.3 Orality

Hendricks (2018) points out that South Africa has a long oral history deeply rooted in the memory of the archives of the 'other' and the history of the poor and oppressed. Their secret story, an undocumented story with a repressive identity, is the way colonialism and the apartheid regime recognized the historic 'other'. Orality and oral traditions among the 'Other' have survived for years throughout South Africa's suppressed past, according to Brown (1995).

Scott (1992), in his book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, states that orality can be seen as dialogue between the public transcript of 'Otherness' over against the hidden transcript of the dominant class who have falsely constructed the histories of the poor and oppressed. Orality or oral literature is largely absent from accounts of literary history of the 'Other' in South Africa. In his book Scott (1992) wrote that orality was a public copy of the "other" and the hidden ruling class that mistakenly constructed and oppressed the history of the poor. It states that it can be regarded as a dialogue with the copy. There is little oral or oral literature in South Africa's "other" literary history reports.

Black oppression (e.g., multi-ethnic, and Indian) was verbally due to the Group Areas Act of 1950, due to the interface between residential and urban areas with different residual maturities (written and verbal) in the urban apartheid system. This contributed to the absence of formal communication. The following system enables oral development of indigenous languages. Due to the alienation of writing by colonial masters and slave drivers, primary orality has been primarily associated within the African community as a form of communication through rituals, songs, dances and poetry. Suppression of 'others' oral speech in favour of the ruling class's printed or written texts is a symbol of literary studies around the world, and is a critical practice most typically controlled by twentieth-century colleges and schools. It appears to be connected to the twentieth century (Brown 1995).

According to Hendricks (2019), the introduction of both script and scripture through missionaries was so closely linked that mixed-race and black communities in the Cape regarded the mission's progress as the progress of the word. This viewpoint was supported by the fact that, Hendricks suggests, the missions had been almost entirely in charge of black and mixed-race education. From the 18th century to the 1950s, they were in charge of the vast majority of black schools and higher education institutions. According to Kruger (cited in Hendricks, 2018), attending a school was the only way to gain access to the literate world. African chiefs

who could not read or write used missionaries as secretaries and sent their children to school. African chiefs occasionally employed literate secretaries (Hendricks, 2018).

Ong, (2002) distinguishes two types of orality: primary and secondary orality. He defines primary orality as the orality of people who are unable to read and write, and secondary orality as the orality of people who have a high level of exposure to technology, such as telephones, radio, television, and other forms of writing (Ong, 2002). He argues that the shift from orality to literacy and on to electronic processing engages social, economic, political, religious, and other structures. These are only indirect concerns of his book, which treats rather the differences in 'mentality' between oral and writing cultures (2002).

In the last few decades, the scholarly world has become more aware of the oral basis of language and some of the deeper implications of the differences between orality and writing, according to Ong (2002). Fieldwork in oral societies has been documented by anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists. Cultural historians have become increasingly interested in prehistory, or human existence prior to the invention of writing, which enabled verbalized records to be created. According to Ong, the father of modern linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), emphasized the primacy of oral speech, which underpins all verbal communication, as well as the persistent tendency, even among scholars, to regard writing as the basic form of language. Saussure cited in Ong (2002), wrote that he saw writing as a kind of complement to oral speech, not as a replacement for verbalization, but rather as an extension of the human mind.

Oral cultures, on the other hand, emphasize language's meta-communicative function as the elaboration of social relationships among communicators, according to Tannen (1982). Cultural traditions were passed down through stories, proverbs, poems, songs, and riddles. These stories help children improve their interactions with others before they start school. Traditional children's fables and songs, according to Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016) research, are a rich and long-lasting resource from which young children can learn not only reading skills, but also mental, language, and social skills that will help them become active global and cultural citizens. As a result, school knowledge has come to be regarded as the only source of learning, while home learning has been neglected or ignored. Such acts, according to Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016), were motivated by colonial influence, specifically apartheid in South Africa. Mielonen and Paterson (2009) agree with Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016) that literacy

skills are founded on spoken language knowledge and that young children build their own linguistic capital through interaction with others. Also, Corson (1988), saw teaching reading at an early stage as essential for children learning to read. Oral education is necessary in the beginning stages, as it improves communication skills. Although oral education is held to be important for language and literacy development in early years, it needs to be counterbalanced with literacy practices (Corson, 1988). Oral tradition is an important part of people's culture, and it predates printing. Communities maintain their identity as groups by passing down the most important aspects of their culture orally from generation to generation. Oral tradition, which is oral literature, has existed since the invention of printing, and ancestral values are transmitted orally by elders among African communities (Kalu and Edadi, 2019).

As a result, different communities with different languages have diverse oral traditions. This implies that languages are innate, as are oral traditions. The tradition of storytelling has a long history in Africa and children learn about narrative through the oral stories they hear in the world around them. According to Snow et al. (1998), when children observe adults telling stories, they begin to understand the magic, joy, and purpose of stories. Parents and teachers can encourage children to tell stories about their own events, such as vacations or trips, and use photo albums to quickly recall these types of stories. Phillip (1999) also contends that storytelling is more than just a way to entertain children; it can also play an important role in early literacy development. The intimate sharing of a narrative with one or more people is referred to as storytelling. Storytellers create the setting, characters, and plot by using both their voice and their bodies. Good storytelling completely immerses both the teller and the audience in the story.

According to Phillips (1999) both oracy and literacy are forms of human communication, but our written language is far more complex than our spoken language. Because the language used in storytelling is usually more sophisticated than everyday conversational language, it helps a child's oral language development as well as his or her written language development. In many ways, storytelling serves as a useful building block, easing the transition from oracy to literacy. Storytelling improves comprehension by actively involving the audience in the story. Children's comprehension skills can be improved by employing effective questioning and retelling strategies. When listening to a story or reading a text, the same cognitive skills are used as when creating mental imagery, making inferences, and establishing causal links.

Also, children develop narrative skills in the process of storytelling. The narrative is a fundamental type of discourse that underpins all forms of communication (Shiro, cited in Ergul, 2012). Narratives are common in early childhood education settings' daily activities, such as storytelling, show and tell, and sharing time. Although such activities provide opportunities for children to practice and learn narrative skills, they are expected to have some narrative skills when they enter school. However, some children from disadvantaged backgrounds enter school with insufficient prior knowledge of narrative structures and, as a result, have greater difficulty meeting the demands of school life and are more likely to be identified as having learning disabilities (Girolametto, Wiigs, Smyth, Weitzman, and Pearce, 2001; Paul and Hernandez, 1996; Scarborough, 2001). Narrative skills assist children in comprehending what they hear and read (Idaho Commission for Libraries, 2009).

Further, early childhood education, according to Phillips (1999), should embrace literacy programs that actively utilize storytelling to help children bridge the gap between their established oracy skills and their emerging literacy skills. As a result of this encounter, children will be exposed to a diverse range of languages.

Oral tradition is an important part of people's culture. Oral tradition, which is oral literature, has existed since the invention of printing, and ancestral values are transmitted orally by elders among African communities (Kalu and Edadi, 2019). Also, language and oral traditions are inseparable. This is because oral tradition is rendered in the language in which it is housed. As a result, different communities with different languages have diverse oral traditions. This implies that languages are innate, as are oral traditions. The tradition of storytelling has a long history in Africa. To understand the culture of any part of Africa, one must read or listen to folktales because they depict the simplicity and superstition of the rural African people and reflect the stage of development of a specific society.

1.4 The state of literacy in South Africa and abroad

South Africa like other countries globally is faced with challenges in promoting literacy levels of children. Poor literacy levels are still a concern in SA (Newman, 2018). Some of the biggest challenges as reported by Newman in the Daily News in April 2018 include children who are

not on par with reading levels for their age group, lack of reading resources and libraries as well as little or no reinforcement of learning at home (Newman, 2018).

According to McBride (2019), eight out of every ten South African children cannot read properly. This is significantly worse for children tested in African languages. South Africa came last out of the 50 countries surveyed for reading literacy among Grade 4 learners, with 78 percent unable to read for meaning (PIRLS 2016).

This is a consistent trend that has been a persistent challenge in South Africa for some time; for example, early literacy remains a challenge in South African basic education. As a result of the literacy challenge, South Africa has participated in several campaigns to improve low literacy levels. The UNESCO Literacy Decade 2003-2013 (Robinson and Sachs-Israel, no date); the Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), (2001; 2007); the Education For All (EFA) campaign, and national systemic evaluations all show low literacy levels in the country's primary schools.

The Eastern Cape had mean scores that were less than 300 points. The low literacy level is for both the Home Language and English, indicating that children lack reading skills even in their first languages. According to Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, and Palma (2009) and Mohangi, Krog, Stephens, and Nel (2016), African children, particularly those from rural and remote areas of South Africa and the Eastern Cape (EC), where this study was conducted, are at risk and drop out at alarming rates when compared to their urban and middle-class counterparts.

Literacy underperformance is widely acknowledged in South Africa, particularly in the Foundation Phase (FP) across the nine South African provinces, even though children are taught and assessed in their home languages. Although the average literacy score for the Eastern Cape, where this study was conducted, was 39 percent during ANA 2011 (and the ANA authors express some doubts about this figure), it was still a very low level of literacy performance when compared to other provinces. According to the findings, the percentage of children in the Eastern Cape who attained acceptable achievement levels in 2014 increased from 63.4 percent in 2013 to 70.8 percent in 2014, with Libode, the district where the current study was conducted, achieving an average mark of 54.2 percent for Grade 3 in the Home Language in 2014, up from 54.2 percent in 2013 (DBE, 2014). In both years, the national average was 47.9 percent in 2013 and 54.2 percent in 2014. Furthermore, according to the

Department of Basic Education's ANA report (2014), the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal both had a Grade 3 literacy mean score of 39 percent, following the Western Cape's 43 percent. Despite these results, the Eastern Cape's average score of 39% demonstrates that attainment is a serious concern in the region.

The low literacy levels cut across grades, with children in Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 performing poorly across languages. The lack of basic literacy in these grades is especially unfortunate given that the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3) is the stage where the emphasis is on acquiring basic literacy and that, beginning in Grade 4, children are expected to use the basic literacy they developed in the Foundation Phase to acquire curricular content. Graduation to Grade 4 has been viewed as a transition from learning to read to reading to learn, in which reading is no longer the object of study but rather a means of accessing curricular content (Abdulatief, Guzula, Kell, Lloyd, Makoe and McKinney 2018).

Low reading skill attainment is a problem on a global scale (Coltheart and Prior, 2007). According to Connor, Morrison, and Slominski (2006:665), "...in the United States, one-third of children fail to read at basic levels by fourth grade, and the percentage is higher for children living in poverty or belonging to certain ethnic minorities." The authors' (Connor et al, 2006) statistics on reading literacy in America demonstrate the seriousness of the literacy challenge even in developed countries. According to Connor et al. (2006), only 24% of 4th graders are proficient readers, and 37% of 4th graders read below grade level. They also state that an 88 percent chance of a poor reader in first grade remaining a poor reader in fourth grade. This then compounds the literacy challenge particularly for the Foundation Phase of children's education.

What UNESCO and the importance of literacy propose is only what we imagine, not what is expected. The current state of literacy in South Africa is the polar opposite of what is expected. The current condition of literacy in South Africa is determined by international studies rather than the reality of what is occurring in children's homes and communities. Literacy, as important as it is, is one of the challenges that makes it difficult to achieve UNESCO's ideal goal of literacy. There are various conceptions of literacy. Chapter 2 delves deeper into the specifics of those various conceptions. Although we have an ideal of what literacy should be and why it is important, reality in South Africa is far from ideal. We have an ideal of what literacy should do, but only a few schools and middle-class children benefit from achieving this ideal, and children from the working-class who are marginalized in the district where the

study is set still have a long way to go. There have been numerous studies (du Plessis and Mestry, 2019; Mushtaq, and Fatima, and Fatima, (2019); Amnesty International, 2020; West and Meier, 2020) that have documented issues in these schools, such as those mentioned in Section 1.1 of this chapter. Despite all the government's promises, there are still unbuilt schools in South Africa known as mud schools (Govender, 2018). This challenge was attested to by West and Meier's (2020). Overcrowding is a major issue in South African Foundation phase classrooms, according to West and Meier's (2020) study, which sought to identify overcrowding in classrooms as a factor associated with poor academic achievement. Inadequate infrastructure is cited as a contributing factor to overcrowding as a feature of the South African education system. The way a classroom is set up and the materials chosen are important factors in how well children behave in social situations (Obaki, 2017). Children's language, reading, listening, math, and general knowledge skills are developed by involving them in a variety of learning activities and grouping them according to interests. A welcoming environment fosters the development of children's positive attitudes and social skills.

West and Meier's (2020) study included ten participants with teaching experience in overcrowded classrooms in the South African Foundation phase. Also, Mushtaq, et al. (2019), research has confirmed West and Meier's (2020) research that the challenge of classroom overcrowding in the South African education system is a common problem. Participants of the study (Mushtaq, et al. 2019), were teachers at public schools in the Muzaffarabad district of South Africa. They have found that classroom discipline, student participation, evaluation by teacher and other physical problems exist. They therefore recommend that the school be well-organized to address visible barriers and that teachers be provided with training to deal with large classroom management.

However, because the goal of this background is to bridge the gap between home and school literacy, the focus of this study is on the interaction between home and school literacy. To comprehend a student's literacy practices, we must first learn as much as we can about their prior involvement in literacy practices in various contexts of their daily lives, such as translating for parents and participating in religious, social, cultural, and political activities.

1.5 The role of culture in children's development

Culture plays a significant role in children's development. Children learn to communicate in the context of their home culture, according to Parlakian and Sa'nchez (2006). Beginning at

birth, children use their home language and culturally acceptable communication styles to connect with others in meaningful ways, forming secure relationships that are essential to healthy development (Parlakian and Sa'nchez, 2006). Culture is defined as the entire pool of artefacts accumulated by a social group over the course of its historical experience (including beliefs about how to use these artefacts and associated values), (van de Vijver, Chasiotis, and Breugelmans, 2011). Culture, as the accumulated artefacts of a group, is then viewed as the species-specific medium of human development. Also, Pacheco and Gutierrez (2009), define culture as our social inheritance, as we are born into a world full of tools (also known as artefacts) designed by previous generations to help with daily life. They suggest that to understand a student's literacy practices, it is necessary to know a great deal about the student's history of involvement in literacy practices across all contexts of his or her daily life. A cultural-historical approach to learning and development is a particularly robust theory, as it focuses on the relation between an individual's development and the contexts in which he or she has been a part. Pacheco and Gutierrez (2009) discuss the contribution of a historical approach to literacy in designing productive learning environments. The ability to develop within a species-specific medium and plan for its reproduction in succeeding generations is what distinguishes our species. Culture can be defined as the entire pool of artefacts accumulated by a social group over the course of its historical experience. It is 'present-day history': the accumulated artefacts of a group culture (Cole, 1996).

Children may engage in religious, social, cultural, and political activities involving various language and literacy practices, as well as schooling activities. Pacheco and Gutierrez argue that participating in these practices allows children to build repertoires of practice with resources to help them navigate the intercultural exchanges of everyday life (2009). Focus on students' repertoires of practice allows teachers to better understand what students know while also moving away from deficit explanations of students' performances, Pacheco and Gutierrez (2009) argue. They also argue that in the classroom, focusing on how students use their bodies as well as their vocabularies can lead to improved teaching and learning. Again, Gutiérrez and Rogoff, (2003) talk about linguistic and cultural repertoires as ways in which children engage in activities which stem from children observing and participating in cultural practices. They further confirm that individual background experiences together with children's interest may prepare them for knowing how to engage forms of language in literacy activities. Participating in these practices, Pacheco and Gutierrez (2009) extend to say, allow children to build

repertoires of practice with resources to help them navigate the intercultural exchanges of everyday life.

Mall, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) investigated working-class Mexican communities in Tucson, Arizona. Their claim was that they could organize classroom instruction by leveraging household and other community resources. They have devised a research strategy based on qualitatively examining households and classrooms. Mall et al. (1992) investigated the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on Mexican Americans living along the Mexican-US border. They conclude with some comments on the work presented, as well as an example of a teacher-created instructional activity. They were interested in how families develop social networks that enable them to exchange ideas and resources with other households. These include knowledge, skills, and labour that enhance the households' ability to survive. They discovered that household networks are flexible, adaptive, and active, and that they can include multiple people from outside the home. It is possible to have multiple relationships with the same person or with different people, Mall et al. (1992) suggest. The uncle who organizes barbecues may also be the person from whom the child learns carpentry.

The typical teacher-student relationship appears thin and one-sided, according to Coristine, Russo, Fitzmorris, Beninato, and Rivolta (2022), because the teacher only knows the students based on their performance in class. In home-based learning contexts, however, the teacher knows the child as a whole person, considering or having knowledge of the various spheres of activity. Teachers in classrooms draw on the “funds of knowledge” of the child’s world outside of the classroom context (Mall et al. (1992). Funds of knowledge is a concept that Mall et al. (2009), incorporate into classrooms. It differs from the more general term culture or the concept of a culture-sensitive curriculum in that it refers to the social, economic, and productive activities of people in a specific region (Mall et al. 2009). Mall, et al also discovered that having teachers visit households for research purposes was feasible and beneficial.

These are not casual or school-business visits, but rather visits in which the teachers play the role of the child. This contributes to the establishment of a fundamentally new, more symmetrical relationship with the students' parents. Moll et al. (1992) perceived the class as enclosed, if not separated, from the social worlds and resources of the community, and they propose that when funds of knowledge are not readily available within households,

relationships with individuals outside the households are activated to meet either household or individual needs. They go on to say that teachers rarely draw on funds of knowledge of the child's world outside of the classroom context in classrooms. Moll et al. (1992) discovered that, unlike in the classroom, knowledge was acquired by the children rather than imposed by adults. They go on to say that the totality of experiences, the cultural structuring of households, whether related to work or play, whether they occur individually, with peers, or under the supervision of adults, all contribute to the funds of knowledge that children bring to school.

Vygotsky (1978) observes that the child's relationship to reality is from the start a social relationship, particularly in the early stages when the child is most dependent on adults, not only because of the cultural tool kit of the social group into which it is born. The child can use adults to mediate its actions, but it cannot initially incorporate artefacts into those actions. According to van de Vijver, Chasiotis, and Breugelmans (2011), the social world is crucial for the development of psychological processes, and children must be brought in an environment where these processes can develop without the interference of their parents or other social structures. Because distinctively human, culturally mediated psychological life is only possible when adults arrange for the child to acquire the social group's cultural inheritance.

According to Parlakian and Sa'nchez (2006), culture shapes our expectations of what children can and should know and do at different ages. These beliefs shape our interactions with children in early childhood programs. And the curriculum decisions we make based on our beliefs become part of children's life stories, influencing their skills, motivation, and enthusiasm for language and literacy learning. There is no single 'correct' technique to enhance early literacy learning for children from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, according to two authors (Parlakian and Sa'nchez, 2006). They argue that strategies for introducing language and literacy abilities must also include cultural concerns. Instead, it is necessary to seek out adaptable, responsive teaching strategies. This highlights the importance of parent-child relationships in promoting children's literacy learning. People's usual ways of doing things can be examined from a cultural-historical perspective to understand individuals' history of involvement in the practices of various communities, such as ethnic or national communities, as well as others such as academic or religious communities (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003).

The preceding discussion focuses on children's involvement in social and cultural activities in their families and communities as a central construct for assisting teachers in rethinking and

redesigning the classroom. This necessitates culturally responsive teaching as well as culturally responsive teachers. Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is a pedagogy that recognizes and embraces children's cultures, languages, and experiences while connecting them to classroom learning. It has the potential to be extremely beneficial in terms of closing achievement gaps between children from different backgrounds (Guido, 2021).

1.6 Current debates on the impact of home literacy practices on school literacy

The differences in literacy practices in the home and the school (Heath, 1983) have major implications for the development of literacy in children¹. Home literacy environments and parental literacy interactions are regarded as the key components in the overall literacy development of children before they enter formal schooling. According to Dong, Ying, Dong, and Tang, (2020), rich home literacy environment (HLE) fosters students' academic achievement. As a result, the family and home literacy environments are said to have a strong impact on children's early literacy development (Bonci, Mottram and McCoy and Cole, 2011).

At home, literacy occurs invisibly or unobtrusively as an integral part of everyday activities, which is not the case at school. At school literacy practices are obvious and intentional and specific to literacy teaching and language learning. The argument that is proposed by current research is that, just because the literacy practices of children from impoverished environments are not recognised, this does not mean that they do not exist (Kajee, 2011). These children have literacy practices even when they come from low socio-economic environments/areas. Rather than viewing literacy as a skill, schools should begin to recognize what students bring from their surroundings and view literacy as a social activity (this is discussed in detail in Chapter 2). Children do not come to school empty, they come with literacy. Bourdieu (1986) suggests that the family habitus underpins and mediates literacy habitus at school; this too is further discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Using Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus and adopting a cultural-historical orientation, this study examines literacy practices in the home and how these are, or are not, taken up in the school. The study looks at literacy practices in certain homes in a rural community in the Eastern Cape, as well as literacy practices in Grade 1 classrooms, from which the sample of

¹ While the convention in the South African schooling system is largely to use the term 'learners', I will be mainly using the term 'children' because that captures more accurately their status in the home and the terminology used in the home, which is the main focus of this study.

four children was chosen, to better understand how they intersect. For further details, this is discussed in Chapter 2.

1.7 The importance of literacy

In South Africa, as in many countries, literacy is regarded as a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution (South Africa, 1996; Winch Johnston, March, Ljungdahl and Holliday, 2006; EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2006; Robinson and Sachs-Israel, 2008). It is also regarded as critical to the development of any country (Christopher, 2010) as it empowers citizens economically, politically, and socially. Literacy is also central to learning since, at the heart of all learning, is the ability to use language and semiotics in the processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and thinking (Cummins, 2007; Christopher, 2010). Literacy, therefore, empowers people to be active agents in their learning and education is designed to promote and respect their rights and needs (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2007).

In a technologically advanced world, characterised by an information influx, literacy is needed not just for access to job opportunities, but also for survival (UNESCO, 2012). Without being literate, one can hardly participate effectively in society and consequently cannot contribute meaningfully to national development. Literacy empowers people to have access to necessary information that is relevant to better their lives (Kasanda, 2015).

That literacy is vital in any country's social development is revealed by international organisations. The Director General of UNESCO, when celebrating the first International Literacy Day in 2001, made the point that "humankind has made enormous progress regarding literacy: there are now close to 4 billion literate people in the world. Moreover, many of today's rapid technology advances are focused on information and communication, which is central to the practice of literacy" (UNESCO, 2001). UNESCO declared 2003- 2012 as the literacy decade, aimed at increasing literacy by 50% by the year 2015 (UNESCO, 2003).

While much effort has been made by various stakeholders such as governments, the United Nations, non-profit organisations, and private entities to improve levels of literacy globally, the challenges remain. For example, the global literacy status (Richmond, Robinson and Sachs-Israel, 2008) shows that 1 in 5 people in the world is illiterate. One of the goals of the

Millennium Development Goals (MDG) was targeted at ensuring that every child would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015.

In South Africa, other efforts have been made by organisations such as Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association (GADRA) (Westaway, 2015) which implemented a curriculum-based programme to address poor levels of English and isiXhosa literacy in the Foundation Phase children. This programme focused on all nine-isiXhosa medium primary schools in Grahamstown, an Eastern Cape Province district in South Africa. The National Education Collaboration Trust in response to the call by the National Development Plan (NDP) declared that by the year 2030, 90% of children should be able to achieve 50% in Mathematics, English First Additional Language (EFAL) and Sciences.

Despite all efforts to reduce illiteracy, much more needs to be done in the field of literacy to reduce the number of children who are not in school (MDG Report, 2014). According to the 2014 MDG report, 20% of primary-school-age children from the poorest households are three times more likely to be out of school than their middle-class counterparts. Though the world is making some progress in literacy, the challenge remains.

Another South Africa's biggest problem is unemployment which poses the biggest threat to achieving universal poverty reduction. South Africa's fiscal and social policies are pro-poor and contribute to reduced poverty headcounts. The situation has not improved sufficiently between 1990 and 2015 to meet the MDG target. South Africa's taxation system has enabled expansion of the social assistance system. The proportion of households which are multi dimensionally poor fell from 17.9% to 8.0% between 2001 and 2011. Income inequality remains a challenge (MDG, 2015). Even the African National Congress (ANC) government has not done enough regardless of what the President, Cyril Ramaposa stated in January 2019 that the ANC is the only organisation in the country that is committed to improving the lives of the South African people. The President's statement confirms the goal of rural development to improve the quality of life for rural households and to strengthen food security through a diverse agricultural production base as well as to maximize economic potential in each area (Kapur, 2019).

Reconstruction and Development Programme was one endeavour to undo the structural oppression of the apartheid era with the aim to provide better social services for previously

disadvantaged South Africans. Its focus was not only on poverty, but to build a stronger macro-economic environment. The primary goal of RDP housing is to replace shacks that are usually found in townships and provide low-income people with a certain amount of dignity and quality of life. In South Africa, even though apartheid has officially been abolished for more than 13 years, discourses of racism, white superiority and class prejudice continue to surface, especially in desegregated areas (Felix, Dornbrack and Scheckle, 2008).

Also, du Toit (2010) in his study of the metropolitan government's response to homelessness in South Africa, discovered that the most important thing a municipality could do for homeless people was to provide employment and affordable housing in a decent environment. Du Toit's (2010) study was based on a comparison of four of South Africa's six metropolitan municipalities, including Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, and Tshwane. According to indications, the number of homeless people in South Africa's metropolitan municipalities will increase in the future, and municipalities' responses will be critical in reducing their burden.

1.8 Understanding the context

This study focuses on home and school environments in a rural community in the Libode district of the Eastern Cape where isiXhosa is the primary language and the language of enliteration in the early years of schooling. In this community, using oral language is valued more than other forms of reading and writing, and print is scarce in the home. The print that children encounter in their environment (signage, packaging, advertising, etc.) is generally in English rather than isiXhosa which is the language of learning and teaching in the Foundation Phase classrooms. The study seeks to understand the nature of the oral foundation provided in the home and how this connects with school literacy practices. Detailed information about the site and participants of the study is provided in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.

In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) stipulates that the language of instruction for learners in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) is the Home Language (HL). Children should be introduced to an additional language to their L1 in the Foundation Phase, according to the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) and CAPS (FP). In practice, children begin using their additional language, English, as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 4 (CAPS, 2011), implying that children must have developed strong speaking, reading, and comprehension skills in English during the Foundation Phase to achieve the level of English proficiency required later in school

(Khuluma Education, n.d). According to CAPS (2011), during the FP time in Grades R and 1, the focus should be on developing a strong oral foundation in L1 and studying English as a foreign language (FAL) to lay the groundwork for learning to read and write in English. This means that children learn through their first language² and thereafter transition into learning through the medium of English.

The Eastern Cape is not only primarily rural but also has the poorest schools in the country that are under-resourced with overcrowded classes and low levels of literacy (Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), 2005; West and Meier, 2020). It is a province with a population of 6 562 053 (12.7%) people (Census, 2011) and is the third largest in population in South Africa. The Eastern Cape Province has nine school districts. Libode, the district where the current study was located, falls under cluster A³ which is 99.9% rural and is found in the eastern side of the province. All the schools are rural and cater for isiXhosa speaking children, meaning that most children who start school learn through this medium.

Thirty-seven per cent of the Eastern Cape's population lives in urban areas and sixty-three per cent (63%) live in rural areas. IsiXhosa (the most widely spoken language in the province) is the home language of 83.8% of its population, with English speakers comprising only 3.7% (Probyn 2006). Further, over 80% of African learners in the Eastern Cape's township and rural schools have little exposure to English outside the classroom. By far the majority - eighty-seven per cent (87%) of the children and eighty per cent (80%) of teachers - have isiXhosa as their home language (Plüddemann, Mbude-Shale and Wababa, 2005).

The Eastern Cape incorporates the former Xhosa homelands of Transkei and Ciskei together with the eastern portion of the Cape Province, where the respective mediums of instruction were isiXhosa, Afrikaans, and English. The central parts of the province are the traditional home of the Xhosa people. The Eastern Cape Province is ranked (Writer, 2016) as the poorest province in South Africa though there are significant differences in poverty levels between district municipalities (DMs). I will not elaborate on the differences between DMs as it is

² The first language is the mother tongue of the child which is used as the medium of teaching and learning, and this is extended while an additional language is introduced.

³ The districts are grouped into clusters managed by cluster chief directorates and the clusters are grouped in terms of geographic demarcation as cluster A, B, and C. Cluster A consists of the following school districts: Libode, Lusikisiki, Maluti, Mbizana, Mt Fletcher, Mt Frere, and Qumbu (Ncanywa, 2014).

beyond the focus of this study. However, O.R Tambo, where the study was conducted, comes second in the list of the poorest DMs in the province (Writer, 2016).

The current study is situated in the Libode district and is drawn from the respondents within the poor environments of the Nyandeni Municipality. The unemployment rate and low education levels are strongly associated with poor living conditions as reflected in Table 1.1 below. The municipality covers an area of 4 231 square kilometers, which gives a population density of 68, 6 persons per square kilometer and comprises two magisterial areas, Libode and Ngqeleni. The municipality has a largely rural/traditional character. Libode is a small town of 5000 inhabitants and serves as the administrative seat of Nyandeni Local Municipality which is part of the OR Tambo District Municipality (Main Place Libode, n.d.). Libode is one of the poorest areas of South Africa with a high unemployment rate. Table 1.1 below shows the demographic history of the Nyandeni Local Municipal area of which Libode is a part.

Table 1.1 Nyandeni Local Municipality demography

Population	290 390
Age Structure	
Population under 15	40.60%
Population 15 to 64	54.00%
Population over 65	5.40%
Dependency Ratio -Per 100 (15-64)	85.20 %
Population Growth Per annum	0.57%
Labour Market	
Unemployment rate (official)	44.80%
Youth unemployment rate (official) 15.34	55.00%
Education (aged 20+)	
No schooling	18.20%
Higher education	4.20%
Matric	15.20%
Household dynamics	
Households	61 657
Average household size	4.60
Female-headed households	57.60%
Formal dwellings	33.80%
Housing owned	69.90%
Household services	
Flush toilet connected to sewerage.	1.70%
Weekly refuse removal	1.80%
Piped water inside the dwelling	2.80%
Electricity for lighting	71.00%

Source: Census 2011 Municipal Facts Sheets, published by Statistics South Africa

1.9 Problem statement

As Heath (1982) notes, much of the existing knowledge about how children learn languages, develop literacy skills, and the importance of early literacy practices is based on English

language acquisition in middle-class, relatively print-rich environments, which ignores the importance of some inner-city and rural children's rich oral home and community environments. Despite their linguistic resources, Black children in rural South Africa are frequently disregarded in discussions of language policy. Guzula's (2019) case study of the Stars of Today Literacy Club exemplifies how play and language can be effective pedagogical tools for teaching language and literacy to children, enabling them to become proficient multilinguals.

Few studies have been conducted in contexts where African languages are spoken, particularly in rural communities where there is little or no print in the home language and orality is dominant in the home and community. Kajee and Sibanda (2019) conducted research in a multilingual township in South Africa to explore children's literacy practices through play and the potential implications this might hold for their future careers as readers and writers. Their study found that children's out-of-school practices have the potential to support literacy development in school and that children interact with multiple discourses during their everyday practices and play.

Also, the findings of the research on the literacy practices of Turkish immigrant children by Ergul (2012) revealed that these Turkish immigrant children were engaged in collaborative literacy activities in shared personal spaces such as the kitchen or living room. All three participants in the study used Turkish as the medium of communication among their family members. The other finding was that these Turkish children were not only involved in the out-of-school literacy activities shared with their parents but also in activities that included siblings and other Turkish friends and families. The out-of-school literacy practices varied from books they read, the TV series they watched, the songs they listened to and the way they prayed with their family and friends (Ergul, 2012).

At school, the findings of Ergul's (2012) study revealed that children had different experiences with the teachers concerning language learning and adaptation to their new environment. Some teachers were reported to be helping them although some were intolerant, and there was a lack of understanding by the local teachers. This is thought to be one factor that disadvantaged the immigrant children's transition to their new country of residence, South Africa. To enhance literacy competency in school, teachers were aware that they should value and build on children's current home and community literacy activities.

Teachers from Ergul's study thought that they understood and valued immigrant children having other forms of literacy at home and the fact that they could not communicate in the language of the school. While this was the case, teachers from this study also agreed that they were unable to link the two languages which was the actual challenge for them. They saw speaking English at school as the main way to prevent the segregation between the immigrant children and the local children.

In addition, Ngoh and Kajee, (2018) focused on mapping the language and literacy practices of the two French-speaking immigrant Cameroonian families living in Johannesburg in South Africa. This was a qualitative ethnographic case study that used interviews with both parents and children as well as observations. The findings revealed that there was little linguistic congruence that existed between home and school. The findings also revealed that parents and children serve as language brokers at a different point (Ngoh and Kajee, 2018). The study concluded that "...if South Africa wants to live up to its democratic status, inclusive to all who live in it, teachers need to be versed in the multiple layers of literacy practices of learners from diverse backgrounds and consider initiatives such as family and community literacy programmes" (Ngoh and Kajee, 2018:1).

Another study (Tiemensma, 2008), which investigated the literacy environment at home, school, and in the community, found that children should receive the most support and encouragement from their literacy environment to establish good reading habits. The research investigated what was being done in the home in terms of literacy activities. In children's literacy environments, the home, family, and community are considered as key players. It investigated the literacy habits of a group of nine to twelve-year-olds in middle primary school (Grade 4–6) in South Africa's urban and suburban settings. The study did not include any rural locations.

The research revealed that children at home were engaged with reading with their parents and/or caregivers. Parental involvement at home in the form of story reading before children went to school was also indicated. The findings also show that once children went to school this practice dropped as parents/caregivers did not realise the importance of reading stories to their children during the children's early school years.

In the school context, Tiemensma's 2008 research found that language barriers were a serious issue in many children's reading development. The teachers and headmaster pointed to the issue of the mother tongue which was different from the tuition language. Many children were taught and study in a second language. Ten per cent of the children's mother tongue was English and 57% of them received education in a second language which was mainly English and not their home language.

Professor Metcalfe (Dlamini, 2017) mentioned the language barrier when she delivered the annual John Beaver (JB) Marks Memorial Lecture, saying that the South African education system faces a serious challenge of children who are not taught in their mother tongue, which affects their ability to understand concepts. Furthermore, children learn best when they are taught in their native language, according to Metcalfe.

According to Tiemensma's (2008) study, the emphasis was on children from print-rich environments and middle-class families. Except for Heath's (1982) research, most researchers (Kajee, (2011); Ergul, (2012); Ngoh and Kajee, (2018); Tiemensma, (2008) looked at the interplay between home and school with no particular emphasis on what children bring from home to school. The importance of acknowledging the knowledge that children bring to the classroom is missing from these international and national studies (Freire, 1984). Except for the research of Mnyanda and Mbelani (2018), who focused on the uptake of what children bring from home to school, which was the focus of my research, there was no focus on the interplay between literacy practices of children in their homes and those they engage in at school.

The above-mentioned study on the interplay between home and school (Mnyanda and Mbelani, (2018) involved children in the Intermediate Phase (IP) and Senior Phase (SP) from a middle-class household, not Foundation Phase (FP) children. These children used English both at home and at school, indicating that they did not struggle to communicate in English when compared to children from rural areas where the language is primarily isiXhosa. As a result, it was not difficult for these English-speaking children to adjust to their new school environment.

Rural areas, as well as what children bring from home to school, were left out of the research reported above, which is an area on which my research focused.

1.10 Literacy practices in the early years

According to Westerveld, Gillon, and Bysterveldt (2015), children's literacy abilities begin to emerge during the preschool years, and between the ages of three and seven, they begin to build their literacy learning, including reading and writing, which underpins what will follow in formal education. According to Ehri and McCormick (1998), when children learn to read, they learn words in a variety of ways. Unfamiliar words are learned by parsing them, comparing them to known words, or making educated guesses based on prior knowledge and experience. Ehri and McCormick identified five developmental stages to differentiate the course of word learning (1998). Each level is distinguished by children's working knowledge of the alphabetic system, which is essential for developing word-reading skills. According to Ehri and McCormick (1998), these five levels are pre-alphabet, partial alphabet, full alphabet, combined alphabet, and automatic letter categories.

On the other hand, research (Nkomo, 2018) suggests that beyond the early years of schooling, there is a general decline in interest in reading. During the primary school years, a strong emphasis is placed on reading instruction, with less attention provided to the development of young children's writing skills. These literacy activities (reading and writing) are frequently separated, even though they are intertwined. Drawing takes on new significance when young children utilize it to make sense of the world. Drawing allows children to express themselves. Drawings, according to Vygotsky (1978), are a way of knowing a specific type of speech and a mediating instrument in children's learning both within and beyond cultures. The role of the more knowledgeable other (MKO) becomes crucial when Vygotsky sees a child as a co-constructor of meaning and an active performer in his or her own environment (1978).

Nkomo's research, (2018), that looked at ten Grade 3 children's attitudes towards reading (5 boys and 5 girls) aged between 9 and 11 years from underprivileged and impoverished backgrounds who struggled with reading and writing in English. Nkomo, (2018) also reported on the effectiveness of drawings used by children to represent their experiences and attitudes towards reading. She used drawings as a methodological tool to investigate children's attitudes towards reading (Nkomo, 2018) because of its benefit of not requiring high levels of literacy skills. Her research used drawings as a data collection tool as well as a pedagogical strategy.

When writing is considered, Daniels and Daniels, (2018) suggest it is frequently understood in terms of handwriting alone and has rarely to do with conscious efforts to shape and mould

aspects of authorship in children from the beginning of their school experience. Thus, there is a need for children to be actively involved in their writing and be left free to choose when to write and for how long. According to Daniels and Daniels, (2018) children need to find their voices in their writing. Clay, (2001:4) reported that “most theories in the field of reading acquisition ignore the fact that children are learning and practising writing at the same time”.

In the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, handwriting is allocated 45 minutes per week with writing allocated one hour per week, meaning that the time allocated for writing is one hour 45 minutes per week whereas reading is allocated four hours 30 minutes (CAPS, 2011). Yet, Clay, (2001) views writing as of critical importance for learning to read in an early literacy intervention as it prevents learners from neglecting things they must know about print and reveals things about the learners’ ways of working that their teachers need to know about. It is also regarded as the central activity of the school curriculum (Czerniewska, 1992). Exclusion of daily writing in early intervention lessons limits children’s opportunities to learn and contributes to slower overall progress (Clay, 2001).

Kress (1994) revealed a massive discrepancy between the amounts of research that has been done on reading compared to the work done on writing. This, Kress suggests, is shown by the vast number of books on the learning of reading in contrast to those on the learning of writing. Since the greater emphasis of the research is on reading, more members of a literate society must be able to read than have to be able to write. Furthermore, the number of writers is relatively small compared to the number of readers even in highly literate societies (Kress, 1994) meaning that access to writing is not equally available to all members of the society.

Reading is one of the literacy activities and it begins at home before children start formal schooling (Niklas, Cohrssen and Tayler, 2016). So, the importance of providing children with many opportunities for writing at home is vital. Evans, (2001) suggests that children learn about print during the exploration of writing and for them to learn to write and to learn about writing they must write. Adults should provide writing opportunities and encourage children to use writing materials such as pencils, papers, crayons, etc. that are available at home. This can also help them to communicate their thoughts (Byington and Kim, 2017).

Literacy is built upon a firm foundation of basic reading skills. Vast majority of South African children cannot read for meaning by the end of Grade 4. Almost a third are functionally

illiterate in English by the time they reach Grade 6. Learners who do not acquire basic reading at Foundation Phase are effectively excluded from learning.

The goal of the dedicated reading course was outlined in the concept paper (Funda Wande) as turning teachers into experts who are knowledgeable about reading, how to teach and assess it, how to remediate reading problems, and how to inspire and motivate children to become skilled readers who enjoy reading. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) worked with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) to train teachers in the teaching of English as a Second Language (EFAL). Because South Africa has a bilingual education system, most children must become not only bilingual but also biliterate (able to read and write in more than one language in addition to speaking and understanding it); they must develop strong literacy skills in both their home language (HL) and their first additional language (FAL) from the start of schooling. From Grade 4 onwards, English FAL is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) for many of them. As a result, they must develop strong reading skills in English as FAL, which are dependent on strong HL reading proficiency. To get students to the required reading levels that will support their academic learning, we need teachers who are fluent in both HL and FAL reading (Department of Basic Education (DBE) n.d.).

Preventing reading failure should also be a top priority. Many South African schools serve disadvantaged, low socioeconomic status (SES) communities. Although these children are at a high risk for reading difficulties and school failure due to their low socioeconomic status, knowledgeable teachers who implement evidence-based reading practices and create print rich classrooms in high poverty schools in the early years can prevent or ameliorate reading difficulties and put children on successful reading trajectories. According to Pretorius, Jackson, McKay, Murray, and Spaul (2016), reading for meaning and pleasure is arguably the most important skill that children learn in primary school. Literacy is used as one of the primary measures of school fundamental means because it is built on a solid foundation of basic reading. By the end of Grade 4, many South African children are unable to read for meaning – even in their native language. According to the National Literacy Trust, nearly one-third of students are still functionally illiterate in English by the time they reach Grade 6. (NLST). Learners who do not develop basic reading skills in primary school are effectively silently excluded from learning and struggle to engage with the curriculum in later grades.

A study by Wade and Moore, (2000), the Birmingham experiment that involved giving free children's books, posters, poem cards, and library information to 300 families whose children had their nine-month health check in South Birmingham Health District produced a positive attitude toward books, increased book purchasing, library enrolment, and book club membership. Parents in this group stated that they spent more time reading to their babies than they would have if the pack had not been available (Wade and Moore in Wade and Moore 2000). Wade and Moore (2000), discovered that an early start with books, combined with repetitive practice in a one-to-one setting in the early years, had confirmed the superiority of the Bookstart group over a similar group who had not benefited from an early book-gifting scheme. Furthermore, the critical role that parents and caregivers play in developing their children's abilities was emphasized.

Writing is viewed as a complex interaction of cognitive and physical factors that involves the hand, eye and both sides of the brain (Gambrel, Morrow and Pressley, 2007). Jewett, (2005) states that writing becomes an image when it is either too big or too small to relate to the practice of reading. By this Jewett means that writing requires making connections and constructing meaning. Writing and reading are linked, and they are part of everyday reality in our society and are among the major aspects of the child's education that parents are anxious about (Czerniewska, 1992; Daniels and Daniels, 2018; Evans, 2001). Children learn about writing when engaging with reading. Participating in story readings and noticing environmental print support children's writing because they learn about writing from the environmental print (Evans, 2001).

Also, Whitehead (1999) cited in Evans (2001) indicated that print should be brought to children's attention, and they should be encouraged to play with that print. One of the features of writing, especially in preschool classrooms, is the children's writing of their own names which is their first experience of proper writing occurring early in their lives (Evans, 2001; Daniels and Daniels, 2018). Evans regards this experience as important as children are interested in their own names. The strong starting point for children's writing is stories based on their own experiences (Brill, 2004). This is understandable because it is where children begin to arrange their views and feelings after which they create writings.

Recent research (Rule, 2017), on the nature of South Africa's reading crisis and what can be done, found that in many South African primary schools, reading is understood as an oral

performance which he describes as oratorical reading (Rule, 2017). According to him, this type of reading emphasises reading aloud, fluency, accuracy, and the correct pronunciation with little or no emphasis on reading comprehension and sense-making of the written words (Rule, 2017). He sees pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency as critical in reading and yet these have no value without comprehension.

The current study posed questions concerning the relationship between children's home literacy practices and the extent to which these are considered and taken up in school. It examines children's home and school literacy practices in a Libode rural district of the Eastern Cape, with the assumption that such contexts are not devoid of literacy practices despite them being print impoverished. The study draws on theoretical perspectives based on a view of literacy as a social practice (Street, 1995). It also employs Bourdieu's (1993) theory of social practice to explain the role of culture and social structures in the reproduction of children's identities, as well as to comprehend the habits of children and teachers as they are influenced by their social environment. Because cultural and social factors influence children's development, the research employs Vygotsky's theory that a cultural-historical literacy approach is beneficial in creating productive learning environments for all children.

1.11 Research goals

This study explores early home literacy practices and examines how these literacy practices are taken up at school in a rural environment.

1.11.1 Research Questions

- What home literacy practices do children engage in before entering formal school?
- What are the literacy practices in Grade 1 classes?
- How are home and school literacy practices correlated in the Foundation Phase class?
- What are the pedagogical implications for understanding the interplay between home and school literacy practices?

1.12 Chapter summary and the structure of the thesis

This chapter explored the challenges that face South African children in the Foundation Phase (FP) by highlighting the cultural gap which has implications for children's literacy development. Having noted the challenge of underperformance, especially in rural schools

from poor communities, including Libode where this study was conducted, this chapter also clarified the focus of the study in the form of the problem statement and the research questions.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature. Theories of literacy that underpin the study are discussed to understand how young children acquire literacy development. Research that has looked at children's literacy and those that are like the current research to establish the intersection between home and school are reviewed. Also, the notion of habitus formation (Bourdieu, 1986) is discussed. Chapter 3 discussed the methodology used to examine young children's home and school literacy and discussed Cultural Activity Theory (CHAT) and its key concepts that guide and inform the analysis for the study.

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings of Phase 1 data derived from the Home Activity System (HAS) to identify the literacy practices children engaged in at home. Chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings of Phase 2 data derived from the School Activity System (SAS) that children engaged with at school. Chapter 6 discusses the findings for both Phases of research, home and school findings, to establish the intersection.

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to present a framework that supports the view that there can be an interplay between children's home and school literacy practices. To accomplish this aim, this chapter begins with a discussion of literacy conceptions, literacy as a social practice, Bourdieu's concept of habitus, and then move on to the children's gains from social interaction and cultural contexts, literacy in and through social practice; a Vygotskian perspective, understanding of early literacy at home, understanding of early literacy at school, research on the whole language approach, and teachers' academic expectations of their child and the chapter concludes with a summary.

2.2 Conceptions of literacy

That literacy is crucial for full participation in the 21st-century, society can neither be contested nor over-emphasised. It explains the prevalence of literacy debates and concerns in the political, social, economic, and educational circles as people aspire for the ideal and most functional kind of literacy experience. According to Rosenberg (2010), early conceptions of literacy include the ability to read and write. This conception of literacy has itself evolved considerably over the years to the extent that new terms such as 'literacies', 'new literacies', and 'multiliteracies' have been coined to describe this fluid concept. These and other terms are an acknowledgement of the diverse nature of literacy. Walsh (2010) has particularised literacy by describing it as 'visual literacy', 'digital literacy', 'multimodal literacy', 'media literacy' and a whole host of other literacies. Furthermore, Buckingham (2005) defines media literacy as the ability to access, comprehend, and create communications in a variety of contexts. Even in the absence of explicit efforts to encourage and promote media literacy, children develop it. Among the barriers to media literacy are several interconnected factors, the most well-established of which are social class and economic status. These barriers restrict children's access to the internet and to print media like books but not to traditional media like radio or television. Buckingham goes on to say that potential enablers of media literacy include parents and teachers.

What all this amounts to is to problematise with the traditional conception of literacy as "the ability to read and write in a standardized form of language" (Rosenberg, 2010:7). The autonomous view of literacy has come to an end as literacy is taken (Street, 2003) as a social

practice that must respond to the contextual settings of the participants which themselves are not standard phenomena. Advances in technological innovation (Winthrop, McGivney, Williams and Shankar, 2016), which are largely credited with the development of new literacies and the reconfiguration of our understanding of literacy, have rendered such a conception of literacy, as the ability to read and write, irrelevant and out-dated. Such “reductive definitions of literacy miss the richness of real-world literacy practices” (Orellana and D’warte, 2010:296).

Literacy no longer has readers and writers only (World Literacy Foundation, 2019), but viewers and other more diverse participants as well. Images, sounds, iconic symbols, signs, and codes are increasingly employed to convey meaning as people navigate through the world (Barnes, 2019). Also, Smith and Gunn (2007:8) see that “past conceptions of exclusively print-based literacy need to be reconceptualised to account for the increasing range of textual practice that now counts as literacy.” What is needed is a reconceptualization, not the elimination of text-based literacy since, for the school system, print remains predominant in all forms of literacy representation. The book industry thrives, (Samantha, 2019), more in our day and age than before, an indication that the new literacies have not supplanted traditional literacy but complemented and broaden it.

According to Cummins (2007:2), “Literacy is the ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, speak, view, represent, and think critically about ideas.” Implied in the definition is that literacy transcends language, and that language is a tool used to attain literacy. That is why, although everyone belongs to a language community, not everyone is literate. In the definition, reading and writing are core, being identified first. Even the interpretation of images can also be referred to as reading (Szabó, 2016). Luke, Freebody and Land (2000:20) in Orellana and D’warte (2010) give a succinct definition of literacy as “the flexible and sustainable mastery of a range of practices with texts of traditional and new communication technologies via spoken language, print and multimedia.”

The definition acknowledges not only the relevance of but also the inadequacy of traditional print-based conceptions of literacy. Unsworth (2001) makes a related observation about literacy that, while the basics of established, language-based literacy pedagogy will remain necessary, they are not adequate for the development of the literacy practices that characterize the continuously emerging information age of the new millennium. The redefinition of literacy

is then meant to encompass the representational resources that are increasingly supplementing, but not replacing traditional modes (Boche and Benjamin, 2014).

Society is changing in the new digital landscape (Johnson and Kress, 2003), and the speed and scope of globalisation highlight the importance of addressing literacy for all, regardless of people's existing differences (Lingard, 2009). Ensuring that children have the requisite tools to unlock the meaning of the different texts that they encounter will be one important step in that direction. With literacy being such a current issue from the political statements and debates surrounding its conception and practice, Freebody (2007) contends that one would be expected to assume the state of literacy on the ground has risen significantly following investments of time and other resources into its development. The literacy landscape, however, seems not to be reflective of the interest that literacy has generated over the years as the next section indicates.

The importance of literacy in our society has been informed by different ways of thinking about literacy. It is the most important tool the school can give to its clients, the children, to keep up with the information load characterising the information age (Bridge International Academic, 2018). According to Guerra (1998), defining literacy is not an easy task and the commonly used meanings of literacy can be broadly classified into four different perspectives. The autonomous view of literacy can firstly be viewed as an entity, which means that literacy is an object that exists outside social and individual constraints; it is something you either have or do not have. Secondly, the autonomous view of literacy can be viewed as self, whereby it consists of metaphors that essentially view literacy as something that an individual possesses and is personally constructed. Thirdly, literacy is viewed as an institution and it comprises views that define literacy as something similar to an artefact or currency; the more one possesses it, the more successful one can be. Lastly, literacy is viewed as a practice (Guerra, 1998) an ideological view. People who hold this last view, acknowledge that there are multiple forms of literacy and people combine these multiple literacies as they create and engage with the world around them (Street, 1995).

Furthermore, because of the various perspectives on literacy that people hold, each with its implications for how we think children acquire language and learn to become literate (O'Carroll and Hickman, 2012), this study supports literacy as a social practice, a perspective

that situates literacy in the daily practices that people engage in. When children have access to learning at an early age, they could develop language (Briefing, 2017). Early literacy can help children in a variety of settings, including their own homes. Snow et al. (1998) define this as the first stage of brain development because it serves as the foundation for later learning. This first stage also benefits children by providing them with early exposure to language and literacy, laying the groundwork for later reading success (ibid.).

Snow et al. (1998) propose five stages of literacy reading development, including the emerging pre-reader stage, which occurs during the first five years of life and involves children sampling and learning from a wide range of sounds, words, concepts, pictures, stories, exposure to print, reading and writing materials, and casual speech. During the second stage of the reading development process, children learn the relationships between letters and sounds, as well as between written and spoken words. The child starts reading stories with common words and sounds, utilizing newly acquired skills and comprehending the sound of new single-syllable words. The decoding reader: This is the third stage of reading development in which children begin to read familiar stories and texts by combining the fundamentals of vocabulary, sight vocabulary, and meaning in reading stories with options that the child is already familiar with. The fluent, comprehending reader: During this stage, children acquire new ideas, knowledge, feelings, and attitudes, and investigate issues from various perspectives. Reading textbooks, reference books, trade books, newspapers, and magazines that contain new ideas and values, as well as new vocabulary and syntax, is also part of this stage. The fifth stage is expert reader, in which the child learns from a wide variety of sophisticated, descriptive, and narrative, multi-concept material. Children also learn about natural, biological, and social sciences, as well as the humanities, politics, and current events.

Snow et al. (1998) contend that the more children know about language and literacy before starting school, the better equipped they are to succeed in reading. When given the opportunity, children can expand their vocabulary, learn other languages, and gain a basic understanding of the world around them. Engaging in conversations with adults can help children develop their vocabulary and language skills (ibid.) thus promoting literacy. Also, talking about books and everyday events increases not only children's vocabulary but also their ability to understand stories and explanations, as well as their understanding of how things work, all of which are important in early learning.

Literacy promotion at home does not necessitate the creation of a formal learning and teaching environment for children, but parents and other caregivers can use everyday opportunities to assist their children in developing language and learning skills (Snow, et al. 1998). These are frequently random actions, such as talking about clothes or conversing with children. On the other hand, reading good books to children or providing toys that promote literacy development is sometimes a deliberate effort. According to Snow et al. (1998), experience is the only way to gain knowledge and a love of reading and writing, so children should have access to books in primary classrooms, be read to regularly, and see others reading and writing. Understanding the importance of literacy as a means of communication and cultivating a love of reading to bring an emotional moment to a close are the achievements of a good future child (ibid.).

Snow et al. (1998) research recommends that children should be encouraged to write letters, then use those letters to start writing words or parts of words, and then use those words to start writing sentences once they have learned to write them. The use of artificial spelling should be designed so that it does not interfere with the teaching of correct spelling. Beginning with invented spelling can assist you in comprehending phoneme identification, phoneme classification, and spelling-sound relationships. Spelling rules must be learned through specialized instruction and practice. In their final writing products, elementary school students should be expected to correctly spell previously learned words and spelling patterns. Every day writing should be done to help children become more comfortable and familiar with it. In terms of reading, the researchers (Snow et al. 1998) recommend that schools encourage independent learning outside of school in all early grades by using methods such as homework assignments and daily expectations, reading lists, encouraging parent involvement, and collaborating with community groups, including librarians, who share the same goals.

In each of the perspectives of literacy, there are some differences, which I discuss below. Early researchers conceptualised literacy as a skill that individuals learn only when they enter school. This perception views literacy as the ability to read and write (Bus, 2002; Winch et al., 2006) a view which focuses more attention on cognitive skills that exist independently of any context in which they are acquired (Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFA), 2006; Kelder, 1996). According to Gee (1990), this viewpoint places literacy in the individual rather than the society of which that person is a member. Gee's (1990) point of view is similar to Guerra's (1998) suggestion that literacy be viewed ideologically, which means that literacy is not an

object that exists apart from social and individual constraints; it is something you either have or do not have.

The theoretical framework which underpins this perspective is that literacy is an autonomous model suggested by Street (1995). That literacy is removed from its social, cultural and historical context. He observes that cultural and historical context (based on essay-text forms) imposes the Western conception of literacy (Street, 1995). In this model, all contexts held the school-based concept as a standard definition of literate competence. Such a conception presupposes that children must be taught in a hierarchical way whereby teachers, when introducing letters to children, must, for example, present consonants before presenting vowels. An order, according to Strickland (1998), which is based upon the belief that consonants are more consistent in their sounds than vowels and therefore are easier for children to learn.

The definition of literacy as a skill perceives literacy as something that rips it out of the social context and treats it autonomously as something that has nothing to do with human relationships. There has been a shift from viewing literacy in these instrumental terms (Grenfell, 2012), that is, as a prescribed set of skills, techniques and know-how to viewing it as resource-rich for children's communication and meaning-making (Abdulatif et al., 2018). Street (1984) contrasted what he termed an autonomous view of literacy with what he called the ideological view of literacy.

The view that literacy is a skill has thus been critiqued by researchers such as Stein (2008) because it presupposes that literacy involves the development of cognitive skills that can be taught and learned using the same universal model in any context in the world. Stein (2008) argues that literacy involves more than cognitive skills as it is socioculturally located. Weinberger (1996) argues that this narrow definition of literacy, the autonomous view of literacy, is limiting and tends to support a teacher-centred approach. Also, Street (2003), views the autonomous definition of literacy as a skill as forcing Western conceptions of literacy onto others whereas, in practice, literacy differs according to context and culture.

The universalisation of literacy standards for all children in a particular language at a particular level without due consideration of the contextual diversities has, in my view, placed excessive pressure on some children. School literacies hardly accommodate various kinds of literacy that children learn at home and in their communities. Yet, there is an enormous amount of literacy

that children experience, practices that are outside schools such as multimodal textual practices observed by Unsworth (2001) and Mnyanda and Mbelani (2018). The lack of congruence between school literacies and children's out-of-school literacies (Kajee, 2011) may lead to children possessing language which reappears in their out-of-school literacies but is absent in school literacies which the school would do well to document and capitalise upon in children's literacy development.

These current definitions of literacy recognise that literacy is not only a cognitive skill but a social practice displayed in many ways (Luke, 2018; Cairney, 1995; Street, 1995; Matthews and Cobb, 2005). The social practice model treats literacy as being embedded in what people do during some purposeful activity. Thus, examining literacy as a social practice (Street, 1995) involves examining how individuals use literacy in their daily lives, reading and writing within everyday social contexts such as using trains or bus timetables, bank slips, text messages or ATM screens and punching electricity numbers. People who understand literacy as a social practice, distinguish different forms of literacy and recognise that people associate themselves with these different literacies as they participate in the world around them (Street, 1995). Also, Barton and Hamilton (1998) and Keef and Copeland, (2012) concur that literacy is what is done by people, a practice located in the space between the mind and text. Such a belief consists of an understanding of the connection between the text and setting and comprises the combination of listening, speaking, thinking, and reading and writing.

This social practice approach involves the recognition of various literacies that differ according to time and space. Therefore, literacy is not the same in all contexts, and neither are the practices consistent across settings. Practices in various cultures and languages can be regarded as different literacies (Ibrahim, 2017), meaning that within a specific setting, there are various literacies linked with various spheres of life such as home and school, or school and the workplace. This view concurs with what Barton et.al (1998) suggest, that homes are often identified as primary fields in people's early literacy lives. Thus, Luke and Freebody (1997) and Gee (1990) argue that when children are taught to be literate, the emphasis should not be solely on teaching them how to acquire knowledge and transfer literacy from one situation to the next, but rather on involving them in ways of doing, gaining understanding, and knowing how to control the practices within their societies. Freebody and Luke (1990) developed four models of effective reading that draw on a variety of practices and tools that allow children to analyse where the child breaks the code of the text, participate in the meaning of the use of

texts, and work with analysing and modifying the text as they engage in reading and writing activities.

Since English does not strictly follow a letter-sound correspondence, phonemic awareness, and phonic skills, which constitute the art of decoding in reading (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998) will not be enough to bring about reading fluency. The letter combination ‘ch’, for example, is sounded differently in the words such as school, church, choir, and schedule in English (Grammarphobia, 2016), unlike most if not all African languages where there is a one-to-one letter-sound correspondence (Spaull, Pretorius and Mohohlwane, 2020). Automatisations in reading in English would, therefore, require a child to have a range of words in his/her vocabulary (Soares and Sousa, 2006).

These words, children can recognise and can speed up their reading ability and encourage fluency and such “automaticity of lexical access can free up cognitive processing capacity which can be devoted to the comprehension of text” (Abdulla, 1993) cited in Malivuk, Marijan, and Zergollern-Miletic (2018:11). Such children have more time and mental space to focus on the meaning of a text than the mechanical process of reading.

Teachers need to understand the importance of reading, the various components of reading and how to help young children on effective reading paths. Ehri (2005:168) puts it well when he says that words are the basic units that readers’ eyes pick up and process to construct meaning out of print. When words are spelt the same way every time they appear in the text, they become reliable units. All of this shows that vocabulary is a powerful predictor of reading success, especially for English without formal phoneme relations or symbolic sound relations (Horkof, 2015).

2.3 Literacy as a social practice

The conception of literacy as explained earlier in this section and contexts instead of being an autonomous set of technical abilities with universal application unaffected by sociocultural diversities (Polly, Allman, Casto and Norwood, 2021). Social practice describes how individuals in different societies around the world shape and are shaped by the cultural setting in which they live. Social practice has been re-framed as a set of socially organised practices in which individuals engage (Scribner and Cole, 1981) and produce cultural forms and literacy has been reframed as part of this social practice. Social practice attempts to articulate how

identity and individual agency rely on and produce linguistic and other forms of expression. Barton and Hamilton (1998) concur with this view that literacy practices are the cultural ways in which people draw upon their lives. This means that members of society gradually acquire the norms and characteristics of a particular cultural group through the practices they interact with as they grew up. They argue that literacy practices are more usefully understood as existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals. In the simplest sense, literacy practices are what people do with literacy. Also, according to Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), literacy practices involve children learning effective ways to read and write as they engage in various ways of reading and writing in everyday family life. The establishment of parental literacy as an important problem-solving and social process in which children can participate as an active and important part of their lives is central to this approach to literacy (ibid). Snow et al. (1998) argue that by involving their children in a variety of language-related play and everyday activities, parents can influence their children's literacy. Talking to toddlers, making, and using grocery lists, singing songs, and telling stories all help children develop their literacy skills. A positive attitude toward learning is another important factor. Children whose families communicate that success is expected and valued perform better.

Researchers such as Kantor, Miller and Fernie, (1992) and Street, (2003) adopt a sociocultural perspective of literacy, viewing it too as a social practice. The argument that is brought by this research shows that literacy must be seen as rooted in cultural and social practices to bring social and cultural transformation. So, when literacy is regarded as a social practice, the focus is not only on acquiring skills but on the way, according to Street (2003), people use written language in their daily lives. Social practice theorists like Street (1995) suggest that one cannot understand literacy practices outside of the social, cultural, and historical context (Burke, Joseph, Pasick and Barker, 2009) in which they are rooted. The way different cultures value and access different literacies, the community's ways of being and how they do things cause literacy to be regarded as a social practice (Vasquez, Egawa, Harste, and Thompson, 2004). In this view, literacy is used in the context of social practice within which meaning is mediated.

The assumption this study makes is that irrespective of social and cultural contexts, children engage in a variety of literacy practices at home that have relevance and implications for school literacy practices. I argue in this thesis that taking account of home literacy practices can potentially assist the language education community, policy developers, and classroom

teachers to bridge the gap between the literacy competencies that children bring to school and curriculum demands. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field (these will be discussed below) are pertinent to this study in that they allowed me to explain the literacy practices in the home and school fields, identify the home literacy habitus, and explore how this positions children in the school environment.

Different literacy practices that children are exposed to in the home predispose them, or not, to literacies that are recognised at school. This is because, as Weinberger (1996) suggests, the literacy practices of young children with their parents at home are often different from the literacy practices children meet at school. (Weinberger, 1996) in which they make meaning of their literate lives and that children from different social and cultural backgrounds will demonstrate different experiences of literacy. This means that much of children's literacy development is influenced by their social and cultural environment.

In summary, definitions of literacy have evolved from conceptions of literacy as a cognitive skill to literacy as a social practice. Put differently, literacy views have shifted from perspectives that view it as personal and individualised (a set of cognitive skills) to a focus on literacy as socially and culturally constituted and as a phenomenon that is contextualised and embedded (Olson and Torrance, 2001) as discussed in Section 2.2.

2.4 Bourdieu's concept of habitus

Bourdieu's (1993) theory of social practice is concerned with explaining the role of culture and social structures in the reproduction of identity and accounts for how agents in historical situations and instructional framework using different trajectories follow different trajectories in the field as they produce social action (Bourdieu, 1993). Bourdieu claims that practice is always based on our ability to control or understand our actions. Through our dispositions and values, we respond to situations or contexts in different ways, largely because of our second-nature response, that is, our habitus (Roswell, 2008).

As Bourdieu, 1977 suggested, habits are learned and shown in practice. In his theory of practice, the world's structural constraints form permanent dispositions, which are schemes of perception and thought (Bourdieu, 1977). He contends that practices are not simply the result of one's habitus but of the relations between one's habitus and one's current circumstances (Bourdieu, 1977). He describes this relationship as the meeting of two evolving logics, meaning

the physical and social space we occupy is structured in a way that gives rise to practices. According to Bourdieu (1977), the social world is formed by the interactions of two capacities that define habitus: the capacity to produce classifiable practices and works and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products.

Bourdieu's theory of practice helps in understanding and explaining the interaction between "people's practices and the contexts in which those practices occur" (Webb, Schirato, and Danaher (2002:55). According to Bourdieu (1977), practice is defined as a dialectical relationship between a structured environment and the structured dispositions engendered in people, which leads them to reproduce the environment even in a transformed form. For him, practice consists of three interconnected concepts: field, habitus, and capital. According to Eriksen and Nielsen (2001), Bourdieu (1977) developed the notion of habitus to account for the permanent internalisation of the social order in the human body while recognizing the agent's practice.

According to Bourdieu, habitus is the "system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted..." (1977:72); meaning that according to Bourdieu (1977:18), "as our experience comes to be consolidated and reinforced, the habitus becomes more durable and internalised as we habituate the way we think and behave."

The practical sense of persons is developed in and through the habitus. Habitus is a key term Bourdieu uses to explain identity and identity formation. It is a set of specific configurations. The habitus, as a set of embodied dispositions, is internalised by persons as they operate in institutional settings or fields (Bourdieu, 1990). "These dispositions are the systems of generative schemes that are both durable (inscribed in the social construction of the self), transposable (from one field to another), function on an unconscious plane, and take place within a structured space of possibilities and fields of operation" (Perinbanayagam, 2000:47).

Bourdieu, (1977) further argued that inertia is an inherent inevitability and is transformed into a series of tendencies that produce practices and concepts that give meaning. Habitus is a product of structure, a producer of practice, and therefore a replicator of structure. Bourdieu

(1990) believes that habits are produced in or through practice. Habitus is embodied and cannot be seen, but its effect can be seen in and through practice.

Bourdieu, (1990) makes the point that practices differ across space and time and thus people in the same field can acquire his, her, their, etc. different habitus. Through various social trajectories, those habits are embedded in a context. Bourdieu also believes that habitus is not only the principle of objective categorisable judgment but also the classification system of these behaviours (1986). In his view, habitus is the product of history and the producer of practice, and practice produces history (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu defines fields as places of production, distribution, distribution, and exchange of goods, services, knowledge, or status, as well as competitive positions held by actors in their struggle to accumulate, exchange, and control various types of power tools (capitals) (ibid.). Bourdieu (1990) further refer to fields as specialist domains of practice with their own logic that are constituted by a unique combination of species of capital such as financial capital, symbolic capital, or social capital. An appropriate representation for the field is that of the game. Skilled players acquire over time a feel for the game that allows them to improvise in a structured but seemingly effortless manner. The strategies for the agents in the game are only possible when there is a fit between the habitus and the field. As persons interact in the fields, relational social environments in which individuals are positioned and interact (e.g., home, school, church etc.) they assume roles, responsibilities and embody the expectations of them according to their position in the field. These positions are based on the capital resources (economic, cultural and/or social) that persons bring to the field (ibid.).

Habitus is informed by our past, which, Bourdieu (1990) suggests, is unconsciously produced, and leads to permanent and transferrable patterns from one context to another. For Bourdieu (1977), history is produced by incorporating an objective structure, which means that the subject produces and reproduces objective meaning, and its behaviour is the product of history. Bourdieu argues that we are compliant with the demands of the past. History is our present, which means who we are, for our habitus is formed through a social process rather than an individual process (Navarro, 2006). This also means that habitus emerges as the result of social, rather than individual behaviours, leading to patterns that persist and transfer across contexts, but also it shifts over time and with specific contexts. Habitus is not permanent and can change under unexpected circumstances (Navarro, 2006).

Bourdieu was interested in the structures and mechanisms that reproduce the social space (social world). Social space, unlike social class, is real and based on differences. “What exists is a social space, a space of differences, in which classes exist in some sense in a state of virtuality, not as something given but as something *to be done*” (Bourdieu, Sapiro and McHale, 1991: 637). Bourdieu’s habitus was used in my research to identify home literacy habitus and explains how this positions child in the school environment (home and school as both field and social spaces where children interact with one another).

Societies are constituted by a range of independent fields (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu argued that the realm is a social space where interactions, transactions, and events occur. As a result, practice takes place on the spot. It is the context that gives meaning to habitus. Fields are spaces with rules, regularities, and forms of authority (Grenfell, 2008). They are structured spaces of position, a ‘battlefield’ where individuals fight over authority. Bourdieu suggests that...

To enter a field, to play the game, one must have the habitus which predisposes one to enter that game and not another. One must also possess at least the minimum amount of knowledge, or skills or talent to be accepted as a legitimate player. Entering the game means attempting to use that knowledge, skill, or talent in the most advantageous way possible (1977:75).

This means therefore that, to participate, there should be some cooperation between those who have the capital and those who do not have it. Which therefore means that there is competition in the field. In Bourdieu’s terms, capital is thus,

“the currency of the *field*, what fuels its operation, defines what is included and excluded from the *field*, what is valued and not valued, what those present in the *field* need to accrue (status and/or power) in order to exert control over it. It is the medium of communication between *field* and *habitus* and is the basis of the ontological complicity that exists between them, of which Bourdieu writes (1982, p.47)”.

Bourdieu views the social world as made up of multiple fields which in turn could be divided into subfields. Each field or subfield has its internal logic, rules, regularities, etc. (Grenfell, 2014). Persons occupy more than one field at a time and all persons occupy a common field which Bourdieu call ‘the field of power’. The field of power “consists of multiple fields such as an economic field, the education field, the field of arts, bureaucratic and political fields, and so on” (Grenfell, 2014:4). What happens in the field of power can shape what happens in the social field and vice versa. There is an exchange relationship between fields. For example, the kind of schooling a person receives in the education field could affect his/her position in the

economic field. For example, poor parents understand that education is a powerful field for their children's social mobility.

Fields have been constructed historically, which means that they predate individuals. The relationship between habitus and field produces practice, that is, social structure determines social behaviour, that is, practice. Bourdieu (1977) contends that the study of objective structure is inextricably linked to the study of the genesis within the biological individual of mental structures that are integral to the internalization of very social structures, as well as the study of the genesis of these structures themselves.

Practices are initiated through fields, i.e., broader, relational social spaces in which persons interact and are positioned. Fields are “arenas of production, circulation, and appropriation of goods, services, knowledge or status, and the competitive positions held by actors in their struggle to accumulate and monopolize these different kinds of capital” (Swartz, 1997:117). Therefore, fields are a place of struggle and contestation. Fields are human constructions operating semi-autonomously. Each has its own set of beliefs, which justify the rules of behaviour in the field. These rules, behaviours, values, and discourses give each field its own distinctive “logic of practice” (Thomson, 2008: 69) and some predictability. “Social agents, who occupy particular positions in the field understand how to behave in the field” (Thomson, 2008: 69).

Fields constitute actions and representations and have their own rules. It is in the field that attitudes and dispositions, namely the habitus and practices, are produced and transformed (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu suggests that...

It is insufficient to look at what is said or what happens to understand the interactions between people and events or explain an event or social phenomenon. Bourdieu also argues that “an analysis of social space means not only locating the object of investigation in its specific historical and local/national/international and relational context, but also interrogating how previous knowledge about the object under investigation had been generated, by whom and whose interest is served by those knowledge-generation practices” (Grenfell, 2014:65.).

Fields are hierarchical spaces, fields of power, with dominant social agents and institutions having the power to determine what happens. They are not value-neutral spaces as ‘logics of practice’ exist, ways of viewing and behaving in the world and interests. The interaction in the field is determined by the position occupied by the social subject (Swartz, 1997). Persons in

fields are unequally positioned by the volume and weight of their capital in these social fields (Bourdieu 1985, 1998) and have an interest in winning or securing advantageous positions (Grenfell, 2008), struggling, and competing for transformation or preservation of the field (Grenfell, 2008). “At stake in the field is the accumulation of capitals: they are both the process within, and product of, a field” (Thomson, 2008:69).

Social agents can alter the structure of a field. Bourdieu suggests that “social agents are not particles subject to mechanical forces acting under the constraints of causes; nor are they conscious and knowing subjects acting with full knowledge of the facts, as the champions of rational practice theory believe”, (1998:24) but they are active knowing agents, equipped with a practical sense that is an acquired system of preferences, of vision and division, and a system of durable cognitive structures and all schemes of action which orient the perception of the situation and the appropriate response (Frauley, 2015). What Bourdieu suggests raises the question of how poor parents’ social class, as in the current study, affects their power as agents in the field of education. My study investigated whether parents who play an important role in home literacy practices in rural South Africa can also serve as social intermediaries by watching their children go to school from home.

As a property of social agents, the habitus, for Bourdieu, is “the result of an organising action with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a predisposition, tendency, propensity or inclination” (1977:24). It is a “structured and structuring structure” (Bourdieu 1994:170). Habitus is ‘structured’ through persons, past experiences, and circumstances (e.g., family upbringing, educational experiences, etc.) and ‘structuring’ in that it continually shapes present and future practices (Maton, 2008).

For Bourdieu (1993a, in Maton, 2008), habitus should not be confused with the habit; rather than focusing on regular practices (habits), Bourdieu is interested in the generative principles that underlie/underpin practices, that is, the “invisible relationships... obscured by the realities of ordinary sense-experience” (Bourdieu, 1984:22).

Dispositions are durable in the sense that they last over time, transposable in the sense that they can be/become active in a wide range of social situations, and function on an unconscious level in the sense that they become habitual and embodied (Crossley, 2001). Habit does not operate

on its own (Grenfell 2008). Bourdieu is not implying that people are “pre-programmed automatons” (Maton 2008:51) acting out the consequences of their upbringing but rather that practices are the result of an “unconscious relationship” (Bourdieu, 1993:76) between habitus and a field of action. Bourdieu (1986c:101) summarizes this relationship as an equation: [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice. When unpacked, practice results from current relations between one’s dispositions (habitus) and one’s position in a field (capital).

Fields and habitus are relational structures; mutually constituting, evolving and dynamic (Grenfell, 2014). “The field mediates what social agents do in specific social, economic, and cultural contexts. In other words, fields, and habitus constitute a dialectic through which specific practices produce and reproduce the social world that at the same time is making them” (Grenfell, 2014:73). Each has its history and internal logic and, thus, they do not match each other perfectly. The relationship between the two is based on degrees of fit. Bourdieu (1998) explains this ‘fit’ through the metaphor of a ‘fish in/out of water’. A ‘fish out of water’ suggests that the social field and habitus do not match whereas a ‘fish in water’ suggests a close fit between the habitus and the social field.

When the habitus matches the social field, the habitus matches the ‘logics of practice’ and the Doxa (the unwritten rules or assumptions in that field) for operating in the field (Maton, 2008). The literacy habits of poor children at home do not match those of school (Heath, 1982). Doxa is an implicit, taken-for-granted “set of fundamental beliefs” (Bourdieu, 2000a:16 in Deer 2008:120) unquestioned opinions and perceptions mediated by more than autonomous fields. It determines ‘natural’ practice and attitudes via the internalised sense of limits and habitus of the social agents in the fields (Nayar, 2018).

Doxa, as the keystone of the field, provides stability for objective social structures and the reproduction of these structures in and through the perceptions and practices of social agents; in other words, in that persons are “pre-programmed automatons” (Maton, 2008) acting out the implications of their upbringing the habitus. The mutual reinforcement between field and habitus strengthens the prevailing power of the doxa, which guides the appropriate ‘feel’ for the game of those involved in the field via presuppositions that are constrained in the doxa itself (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:6).

Doxa, in the field, takes the form of symbolic power mediated through capital accumulation (Deer 2008). This symbolic power “embedded in recognised institutions as well as in institutionalised social relations (education, religion, art)” works through the establishment of categories and allocation of differential values on symbolic goods thereby legitimising themselves. It requires that those subjected to the Doxa do not question its legitimacy nor the legitimacy of those exerting it (Deer, 2008).

Practice is the relationship between habitus (character), position in a field (capital) and the social field (social context) in which we interact. Practices are relations between one’s habitus and one’s current circumstances, i.e., the physical and social spaces we occupy. The relation between habitus and the physical and social spaces we occupy gives rise to practices (Manton, 2008). Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world. On the one side, it is a relation of conditioning, the field structures the habitus; on the other side, there is cognitive construction (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu’s habitus attempts to overcome the dichotomies of individual/social – as individuals, we are the products of social forces and we share the structures of others e.g., class, gender, race, etc.; subjective/objective – conceptualises these relationally; habitus is ‘a socialised subjectivity’, and the ‘social embodied’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992a:127, 128); and structure/agency; “the regularities of social fields must relate to the practical logic of social agents” (Maton, 2008:54) by providing the mediating link between these dichotomies (ibid). The choices people make depend on the positions they occupy in the social field and their experience shapes, which choices they can make. Therefore, the choice depends on the available choices, character (habit) and experience. Choices shape future possibilities by setting persons on paths that shape their understandings of themselves and their world (Maton 2008).

Bourdieu’s way of understanding how we became who we are is through practice, but others think differently. The way we understand the practice and how we get socialised into a practice, Bourdieu contends, is through habitus, and while Giddens (1979) argues it is through structuration, and Foucault through discourse. Bourdieu’s theory of practice offers the three interrelated concepts (field, habitus, and capital) and for this study, I only explore habitus and field to understand children’s everyday literacy practices as constituted by the social processes in their social space or field.

The formation of habitus takes place first in the family, the domestic and family habitus (Grenfell, 2014). The family field mediates the external conditions that determine how we see and act in the world. Bourdieu (1986) posits that family habitus underpins and mediates habitus at school and in the work environment; thus, as it relates to this study, children learn an enormous amount about literacy in their early years at home (Weinberger, 1996). This means children go to school with different experiences of how to act during literacy events and may have different beliefs about the nature of literacy (Kajee, 2011). For some children, these understandings are congruent with school while for others there is an enormous lack of congruence (Kajee, 2011; Heath, 1982). Children have trouble learning when home literacy differs from school literacy (Kajee, 2019). Home is a social space where children engage in a variety of out-of-school literacy practices, and it is a place where they demonstrate agency.

Bourdieu (1986) offers explanatory tools for this study as he describes how we come to hold the attitudes and dispositions that we hold through an explanation of the habitus and views the social space as the practical space of everyday life, where habitus is formed, produced, and reproduced.

2.5 Children's gain from social interaction and cultural contexts

Vygotsky (1978) sees literacy as a multifaceted interactive and interpretive process (Huang, 2019) whose development is influenced by cultural and social factors. He also proposed that the basic literacy process be transformed into a higher intellectual function through social interaction and the use of culturally determined tools and symbols (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Pacheco and Gutierrez (2009), a cultural-historical literacy approach is valuable in creating productive learning environments for all students. They consider a cultural-historical approach to learning and development to be a particularly strong theory because it focuses on the relationship between an individual's development and the developmental contexts in which the individual student has participated. Although the current study finds justification in using Bourdieu's theory of social practices, with its interrelated concepts of habitus and fields, as discussed in Chapter 2.4, it also engages with other theories, such as Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognition and cultural-historical activity theory, discussed in Chapter 3.4. According to Vygotsky (1978), literacy is social and is situated in human interaction. As a result, literacy is embedded in our daily practices.

2.5.1 Literacy in and through social practice: A Vygotskian perspective

According to Vygotsky (1978), the cultural context plays a significant role in mediating language and other symbols in human activities, and these can be known best when studied in their historical development. Through a Vygotskian lens, attention is focused primarily on the cultural-historical situations in which the development of both individuals and their social groups takes place. His focus on social individuals shows that it is necessary to recognise how a person expects the growth of participants in the context of cultural history (Smagorinsky, 2011). Vygotsky (1978) argues that both biological and sociocultural factors add to what an individual brings to a setting and its conventions, customs, and practices. A cultural-historical approach offers a way to get beyond the widespread assumption that characteristics of cultural groups are located within individuals. Treating cultural differences as traits makes it harder to understand the relation of individual learning and practices of cultural communities. Without situating social practices and the histories of participants in particular communities, approaches make it difficult to account for variation and change in individuals or practices (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003).

The work of Vygotsky has been prominent in underlining the role of social and cultural contexts in extending children's learning. He believes that the development of humanity begins with the needs of human beings, while the development of the individual depends on the widespread dissemination of the experience of others (Vygotsky, 1978). His theory stresses social interaction as a tool for passing on specific knowledge for learning how to create problem-solving activities (Don, 1996). This belief underlines the statement made by Vygotsky that every function in the child's cultural development appears twice, on the social level where the child interacts with peers and other human beings and on the individual level that is within himself. Thus, the relationships between the child and other people become key to the child's cognitive development. He also argues that learning is a result of social interaction between individuals and society, that learning, and development are interrelated from the day a child is born and that any learning a child encounters in school always has a history (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's theory will assist in understanding what children gain from social interaction.

Vygotsky believed in the importance of understanding the social relations in which an individual lives if one is to understand an individual. Cole and Wertsch (1996:254) suggest that "social processes give rise to individual processes, and interpersonal/inter-mental processes are the precursors and necessary conditions for the emergence of individual/intra-mental

(psychological) processes”. Children’s understanding or knowledge is created and shared in the process of communicating with peers. Consequently, active knowledge construction begins in the social world as children interact with and in their social world. When children interact with their parents at home and in the community, they get to understand the enormous amount of meaning of words as they engage in many words (Stephens, 2018). As children become sure of knowledge, they begin to own and use it independently (Sehgal, 2005). Thus, the role of the parent (or knowledgeable other) is central to the social context of a child. Central to Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory is that children learn through their association with other people through dialogue with a more knowledgeable person (Vygotsky, 1978). He emphasised the importance of interaction with family, other adults, and more capable peers. Hoff, (2005) on the other hand contends that through interaction with pretend friends, children practice and expand creative thought.

Also, the question of semiotic mediation, when the child uses signs such as spoken and written language, becomes crucial to all features of knowledge construction. Vygotsky suggested the importance of using signs and language to mediate social and individual functioning to connect the external and the internal, the social and individual (Vygotsky, 1986) “Knowledge is not directly internalised, but through the use of psychological tools” (Smith and Pellegrini, 2000:93). For Vygotsky, mediation is important to understand the functioning of the human mind concerning cultural and historical settings which form and provide the tools used in the cultural context as mastered by individuals e.g., teachers (Vygotsky, 1986).

Crawford (1996) saw Vygotsky as focusing on the connections between people and their social context to share their experiences through interaction. According to Vygotsky (1978), the community plays an integral role in the process of meaning making which means that what children learn from their communities, shapes later development. According to Vygotsky (cited in Sehgal, 2005: 9), “humans use tools that develop from a culture such as speech and writing to mediate their social environments.” These tools (e.g., language) are internalised by children before they are developed by them and can serve as social functions and a way to communicate needs, and the internalisation of these tools brings higher thinking skills (Sehgal, 2005). Through this organisational process, signs may become tools for regulation and mediation, and language is the main tool for promoting thinking, developing reasoning, and supporting cultural activities such as reading and writing (Smagorinsky, 2011).

Furthermore, signs mediate a person's assumption of cultural values and the means through which people communicate them (Vygotsky, 1978). It is essential to understand the way that culture recognises specific tools and signs. At school, much emphasis is put on the immense potential of speech, which centres on what written texts look like and emphasises students' need to approximate the conventions found in model texts (Smagorinsky, 2011). However, attention to the process of how to produce those texts is lacking. Even more than that, Smagorinsky (2011) contends that the formal analytical significance in school confines the use of language so that it often decreases students' use of speech as a means of determining what they have to say.

Thus, Vygotsky believed in the importance of culture and social interaction (1978) for the development of children's social and cultural practices. He also believed that the relationships between people and the community in which they act and interact play a significant role in the community in the process of making meaning. Hence, for this study, literacy activities needed to be examined in their sociocultural context focusing not only on the products but also on the processes (Mahn and John-Steiner, 1996) at home and at school.

Literacy acquisition has been one of Vygotsky's central concerns of sociocultural theory. Scribner and Cole (1981) for example, building on Vygotsky's examination of the role of literacy in the changing of children's learning, found that literacy can be autonomously acquired outside of schooling and that literacy practices used in different contexts have positive effects on cognitive abilities. Vygotsky (1978) believes that early experience is important in the process of literacy. Although the school is the official place for children to learn literacy skills, the family is still a major space, supporting them to master many literacy skills by participating in literacy activities such as play (Kajee and Sibanda, 2019).

In their research, Kajee and Sibanda (2019), explored young children's literacy practices through play and the implications of these practices for children's future careers as readers and writers. The study was conducted in a multilingual township in South Africa on young children's learning experiences with their family members and peers during play (Kajee and Sibanda, 2019). The findings showed that children's out-of-school practices have the potential to support literacy development later in school. Children frequently participate in literacy practices of their own will at home and in their communities, thereby exercising their agency. Another interest that Vygotsky had in literacy-related development concerned school learning

as informed by, and upheld in, real-world experience, thus suggesting the need to examine school as a particular kind of culture that fosters the development of scientific concepts (Smagorinsky, 2011).

Interaction is another important aspect of Vygotsky's theory. He contends that when children begin formal schooling, they have a foundation that is shaped by the nature of the caregiver-child interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Caregivers play an important role in the development of children outside of the home, according to Voster, Sacks, Amod, Seabi, and Kern (2016). Their research (Voster et al., 2016) on the exploration of caregivers' experiences of working at an early childhood development and education centre discovered the importance of caregiver care to increase children's early development, such as playing various games and singing.

This, then, shows the importance of building on what the child brings to the classroom which is what the current study sought to discover. Hiebert (1991) emphasised the importance of expanding teachers' views of children's backgrounds as well as their existing knowledge, and the experiences they bring to school all contribute to children's literacy acquisition. This could help teachers to understand children's experiences in everyday life and how they actively participate in literacy events. If such a broadening of focus is not adopted, Langer (1991) suggests, teachers will not be able to understand their children's endeavours in literate ways of thinking, and they will not be able to understand the learning opportunities to enable literacy acquisition for all children.

2.6 Understanding early literacy at home.

The term 'early literacy' has been encompassed as a complete and brief explanation of the knowledge, skills, and disposition that happen before learning to read and write (Ewing, 2016). Such a definition incorporates what young children need to know and be able to do if they are to enjoy the fruits of literacy including valuable dispositions that strengthen their literacy interactions (Roskos, et al., 2003). Early literacy is a process whereby young children grasp print as a tool for making meaning to communicate and combine both oral and written language. According to Gooden and Kearns (2013), early childhood communication development includes learning to understand and express one's thoughts, feelings, and information. Children's communication expression begins with the head, eye, and body movements, as well as simple vocalizations and hand motions, and progresses to gestures, spoken words, sign language, pictorial language systems, and communication boards, and

eventually to words, sentences, and conversations. According to Gooden and Kearns (2013), a child must have one of these functional means of expressive language before beginning school.

Children's early reading and writing are embedded in the developing system of oral communication (Tannen, 1982; Phillips, 1999; Roskos et al., 2003; and Kalu and Edadi, 2019), illustrating the interrelationship between speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In other words, children need spoken language to help them to learn and obtain reading and writing. Literacy relations are thus situated in a broader communication network of speaking and listening (Roskos et al., 2003). Spoken language is the foundation of future reading and writing success, and it is also the background for learning and practising reading skills (Shiel, Cregan, McGough and Archer, 2012). It stands to reason, then, that there is a link between oral language and later phonological processes of reading.

It has been argued that spoken language and pronunciation effects literacy and that spoken language and print knowledge are significant early literacy predictors. Strickland and Riley-Ayers (2006) concur with this view that there is a link between spoken language and the use of sounds in reading and suggests that spoken language and print knowledge serve as the early literacy predictors of reading and school success. Their view is that oral language development is integral to literacy development, which includes listening comprehension, verbal expression, and vocabulary development. As children use oral language, they develop a sense of words and sentences and develop sensitivity towards the sound system in ways that promote phonological awareness and phonics. Strickland et al. (2006) emphasise the importance of using their speech for children, suggesting that through speech use children can demonstrate their understanding of the meanings of words and written materials.

It is made up of print and language for learning (Masiello, 2007). It also refers to what children know about reading and writing before they learn to read and write (Ghoting, cited in MacLean, 2008). When children are actively engaged in using language to speak, read, write and explore print in their play, they learn how written (and oral) language works (NAEYC, 1998). This process is usually the case, especially for children who are exposed to a wide variety of literacy resources. However, all children have literacy experiences regardless of resources, as they are in an environment where people around them positively interact with them and are creatively involved in rich language through words, play or stories (Bloch, 2012). Regular interactions

between adults and children have a strong impact on the quality and quantity of their literacy experiences, and factors such as parents' attitudes and beliefs about reading and learning, children's motivation to learn, opportunities parents provide for their children, and introductions all influence the nature of such interactions (Snow, et al., 1998).

The pivotal role of early literacy is accentuated by the observation that early literacy engenders foundational and lasting effects on later literacy. Rosenberg (2010) confirms that there is a vast amount of literature and research affirming that children from a rich print socio-economic background have the advantage over their counterparts who are from a disadvantaged background. The disadvantaged children from print-poor homes lack the linguistic capital (Safford and Kelly, 2010) that is familiar with the school system's literacy forms and practices.

Unless there is an early intervention to forestall the cycle of disadvantage, the Matthew effects (Morgan, Farkas and Hibel, 2008), where those with little linguistic repertoire cannot maximally profit from texts or classroom talk and can, therefore not further develop their shallow repertoires from the texts and talk (Pretorius and Currin, 2010) will perpetuate the disadvantage. What the Matthew effect attests to is that early literacy success begets later literacy success as well as academic achievement (Saga Briggs, 2013). Again, early literacy experiences serve as precursors to children's later reading and writing development (Saracho, 2017). Conversely, failure to be able to read by the end of the third grade heralds the beginning of lifelong problems in academic attainment in all areas of learning.

Children's failure at the early stages encourages bitterness and fear of reading and so they cannot read to learn with success in the future. Schmitt and Gregory (2005) assert that, although early reading success is not a guarantee of future academic success, early reading failure is a sure predictor of academic problems in the future. According to Sibanda, "difficulties with reading literacy, in the Foundation Phase, if not addressed, then permeate all future educational undertakings as the gap between their reading literacy skills and the demand of the curriculum widens." (2017:1).

If there is no intervention in the basic stage, the children will continue to fall behind, and their difficulties become overwhelming after entering the Intermediate stage. "Early intervention...has proven to be effective in accelerating the progress of the lowest performing children in first grade reach average levels of performance" (Schulz, 2005:2). Quite a lot of

reading intervention programmes have been carried out in different school contexts (Nkomo, 2017; Pretorius and Mokhwesana, 2009). The findings from these interventions suggest the need for more books in African languages and stories to be made available at school that children can relate to. “Through access to a variety of reading materials and reading opportunities, learners demonstrated agency, criticising some ERP practices and modelling new ways, thus claiming and sustaining the reading programme” (Nkomo, 2017: ii).

Nkomo’s research into the exploration of the formative intervention of a bilingual Extensive Reading Programme (ERP) in two Grade 3 classes in Grahamstown revealed the effectiveness of combining both top-down and bottom-up reading methodologies. The study was conducted in two primary schools that were historically disadvantaged public schools. In school A, there were 37 participants and 34 participants in school B. Both schools were no-fee paying schools with similar language practices. IsiXhosa, the learner’s Home Language (HL) was used as a medium of instruction from Grade R to Grade 3 and English L2 was gradually introduced as a subject. In both schools, learners switch to English as a medium of instruction in Grade 4 and both schools used similar teaching methodologies for isiXhosa and English. The only difference of relevance to Nkomo’s research, she reports, was regarding the reading resources and the availability of the resources to the learners.

This study (Nkomo, 2017) revealed that the home, school, and community should work collaboratively if they intend to develop reading and positive reading attitudes. The importance of the acknowledgement of the diversity and richness of the experience and expertise that children bring to school (Nkomo, 2017) aligns well with what my study seeks to establish. A school should have a good reading environment to support what children bring from home. This means that at school there must be readily available reading material that is suitable for children’s levels. In this process, scaffolding becomes the core, and in this process, the teachers will help the children when needed. This process has also been proven in New Zealand’s programme of ‘Reading Recovery’ (Persson, no date) for children with reading problems at the earliest stages.

Literacy is a prerequisite for any subsequent academic attainment. Bruner, (in Sibanda, 2017:1) regards reading proficiency by the end of third grade as “...a key milestone in a child’s educational development and a sentinel indicator of future educational success.” Importance of early literacy is valued as early as from the birth of a child until she/he reaches Intermediate

Phase. When the child reaches that stage (intermediate stage), he must be able to read all the possibilities of learning with confidence to succeed in school and beyond.

The Foundation Phase, then, becomes a crucial period in which an enormous investment of time, energy and other resources should be made to solidify the foundation of children (Strickland, n.d.). Reading ability at this stage is a basis of success in future academic achievement than other components of literacy like writing, speaking, and listening and so merit some attention in the next section.

That literacy development starts soon after a child is born is evidenced by studies on early literacy development (Weinberger, 1996; The Orelana Hawks Puckett Institute, 2006; Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998; Strickland, 2009; McKend, 2010; Shanahan, Lonigan, 2013; Roskos, Christie and Richgels, 2003), all of which suggest that children prepare for literacy or become inducted into literacy long before they start schooling. During this process, Bloch (2013) suggests children learn and develop the skills required to be successful in school and later in life. Children develop and learn through socialization with their family and community members with whom they share their lives (Cairney, 2003). This process starts from birth and is the early stage of literacy development.

According to Commission for the Learning Together Research Program Report in South Australia (Spedding, Harkins, Makin, and Whiteman, 2007), children's early literacy experiences are primarily in the home, the community, and early childhood education services. They contend that during this period, early literacy is as much about relationships as it is about knowledge and understanding. In other words, children learn best when, with the support of knowledgeable others, such as adults and peers, they are actively involved and interested in whatever the activity is (Raban, Brown, Care, Rickards, and O'Connell, 2011). Hence, there is a need for a supportive adult or knowledgeable other interactions to support children with language and literacy learning that is related to real-life purposes (Raban et al., 2011).

During the process of literacy development, children respond to sounds, sentences, and experiences expressed by their parents, families, and other carers (Buckley, 2003). This process requires strong relationships with children and a supportive environment for literacy learning. Early childhood development theories such as Brock and Rankin (2008) suggest that children learn more effectively when they participate in rich experiences and practical activities

promoted through play. Hence, adults need to become a part of the play by both talking with and listening to the children.

Vygotskian theories of early childhood development (Bodrova and Leong, 2015; Lantolf and Appel, 1994) also argue that early literacy interactions are contextual, meaning that they occur in social and physical settings. Spedding et al. (2007) recommend that literacy skills start with children and their parents, caregivers, and family members chatting, singing, reading, playing, or observing the world around them (2007). Since this process happens incidentally in the context of everyday social and cultural interactions, literacy development is not viewed as contrived but rather authentic and as a part of the everyday.

When children engage in active interaction with adults as well as with other peers through listening and responding to, for example, stories or in daily interactions, their vocabulary is built and enhanced. Adams (1990) and Neuman and Dickinson (2006) concur that oral language, speaking and listening skills build a basis for later achievement with reading and writing. Also, Strickland and Riley-Ayers (2013) suggest that oral language (listening and speaking) is thus a foundation for literacy development as it provides children with a sense of words and sentences. In school and at home, oral language is the main medium through which learning takes place (Law, James and Levickis, Penny and McKean, Cristina and Nolan, Cathy and Goldfeld, Sharon. (2017). Due to this, oral language skills are important for school readiness, literacy development, and academic success.

It is almost always the case that children with poor literacy skills have poor oral language skills (Law, et.al. 2017). Hill (2009) in a study conducted in South Australia explored the connection between young children's oral language vocabulary and children's reading of the written language in beginning reading books concur with this view. Hill's study concluded that oral language provides the semantic base, syntactic base, and phonological base for a successful transition from oral to written language. The study examined the receptive oral language vocabulary of children in their first year of school in a socioeconomically diverse community. The results showed disconnects between children's receptive oral language vocabulary and their early reading aptitude. Reading levelled texts was higher for children who spoke English as a second language than for those who did not. According to this study (Hill, 2009), oral language does not neatly underpin reading development and that beginning to read is akin to learning a second language for most children.

The essential role of early literacy is accentuated by the observation that early literacy brings about foundational and lasting effects on later literacy. A study by Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling and Miller, (2002) reported the young adult follow up of the Abecedarian Project, an intensive early childhood intervention program, was provided for children from low-income families. The sample of the study comprised 98% African American and the findings revealed the differences among African Americans born into low-income families, who either did or did not experience the Abecedarian early childhood program. The findings of Campbell et al. (2002) study also revealed that high-quality educational childcare can make a dramatic difference in the lives of young African American adults raised in poverty.

This shows therefore that, when children are provided with effective literacy education in the early years, they are likely to achieve better academic outcomes and reading success later. This signals the importance of engaging children in rich language and literacy experiences in their social environments even before they come to school. Campbell et al. (2002) pointed out that the participation of rich language and literacy experiences in families and communities has created greater opportunities for the development of literacy. The need for children to be exposed to rich language – both oral and written – can thus not be overemphasised. Au (2002) suggests that children learn not only from the language addressed to them but also from the language they overhear around them.

The case of early literacy is one of giving the children a solid basis upon which all other learning will hinge. Early skills are regarded as building blocks for the next and higher set of skills to be acquired (Orellana and D'warte, 2010). Therefore, early literacy is a predictor of future academic achievement (Washington, 2001). It becomes critical therefore that much effort should be made to strengthen the literacy foundation of the children. We can do this by providing children with learning opportunities that are intentional and purposeful to develop their literacy skills, including oral literacy skills.

In the US, research by Heath (1982) and Strickland et al. (2004) showed that children in a family environment can be better prepared for school when parents can model the use of literacy and participate in activities that promote basic understandings of literacy. Children observe everything that adults do and in so doing develop language and literacy skills. As Hart and Risley (1995) observe, everything that adults do to support children's language and literacy

counts. Therefore, early literacy and language development should not be taught in isolation from each other but be regarded as interconnected.

In South Africa literacy experiences children have at home might be different from formal, schooled literacies (Kajee and Sibanda, 2019). Children's family homes are their first sociocultural context where they create meaning using oral language (Callaway, 2012). They learn by interacting with family and community members, which naturally occurs when families perform literacy activities in their daily lives. The role of parents, the home and the community become central to children's literacy development as children's first literacy learning takes place in the familiar settings of home and community. Weinberger (1996) suggests that literacy at home is almost invisible when the teacher meets the children and parents at school, an issue central to this study.

Some children come from homes where there is a presence of print in the form of books, which provides them with numerous opportunities to interact with print before they start school (McCarthy, 1997). Despite this, children from low-print environments have a wide range of literacy experiences because literacy practices are embedded in the socio-cultural contexts of their families and communities. Even though they come from print-scarce environments, they engage in a variety of literacy practices through oral languages, such as storytelling, playing, gaming, and so on. According to research (Rahiem, 2021), young children enjoy reading, writing, and listening to stories, which help them understand society and life in general.

Chall (1983) proposes six stages of reading development which can be identified as children grow through their stages of life. These include the pre-reading stage, also known as the pseudo-reading stage, in which a child pretends to read and can retell a story while looking at book pages. Early reading and decoding, in which a child learns the relationship between letters and sounds, as well as between printed and spoken words. Confirmation and fluency: a child read simple, familiar stories and selections with increasing fluency. Reading is for the purpose of learning something new, which is used to learn new ideas, gain new knowledge, and experience new feelings and attitudes. Reading widely from a range of complex materials, both expository and narrative, with a variety of viewpoints is referred to as multiple viewpoints. Construction and reconstruction stage where reading is used for one's own needs and purposes (ibid.). This is the stage at which the child pretends to read, retells the story when looking at

previously read book pages, names the letters of the alphabet, recognizes certain signs, prints his name, and plays with books, pencils, and paper.

Interest in literacy practices in the home has been a focus of research in South Africa for a while now. Research shows that literacy-related activities children learn with their families have an important effect on later literacy achievement at school and in their world of work (Cairney, 2002). Children live in a world of diverse opportunities for learning in which literacy is an important vehicle for this learning to occur. Cairney (2002) suggests that children have language and literacy in many forms which are enculturated into literacy practices, which may or may not match those of their teachers or caregivers.

According to Cairney (2002), the term ‘family literacy’ has frequently been applied to school-based programmes that do little more than introduce parents to school literacy practices and strategies to support these practices, which is a major weakness of the way much family literacy work has been conceptualised. This section focused on research that examined how children develop literacy in their home environments, which is relevant to my study, which focuses on rural poor children from diverse backgrounds. Some studies have literacy transition and literacy-related emphases, especially those that are closely related to the present study which tries to understand the interplay between children’s home and school literacy practices.

The period between birth and eight years old is the most important time in children’s early literacy development (Bloch, 2013). Many theorists and researchers have made the point that literacy development occurs long before children enter the formal schooling system. Children learn literacy when they engage in several activities in the family and community (Barratt-Pugh and Rohl, 2015). This learning takes place five to six years before enrolment (Clay, 2005).

Language and literacy develop from the first days of a child’s life (Mielonen and Paterson, 2009). Children become literate by listening and interacting with the people around them. A study by Mielonen and Paterson, (2009) examines how children develop literacy through play, by looking closely at the benefits of uninterrupted play and how it encourages language development. The study was a case study that took place in a home in a rural community in America. The participants in the study were two five-year-old Caucasian, Euro-American girls. The families of the participants were middle-class. Parents provided a comfortable and familiar

environment that was easily accessible for both the researchers and the young girls. Both children went to the same kindergarten at the same school.

The development of the youngest child of the participants was considered by adults as above average because she lived in a literacy-rich environment where she was read to daily by her parents and siblings. The girl was able to interact confidently with all people she encounters, and her linguistic abilities developed from social interactions with her older siblings whom she imitates constantly. The findings of this study revealed that both girls were immersed in language the entire time they were playing. Jenny used some language that Jamie was not familiar with. Throughout the play experience, the girls used language as a primary way to communicate. The girls developed literacy skills through demonstrations from one another (Mielonen, 2009). The results of this study, therefore, showed that children develop language skills including reading and writing competence through social interaction by simply engaging in play. When allowed to play together and learn through inquiry, young children naturally develop communication skills that support the development of reading comprehension and vocabulary (Mielonen, 2009).

Another study by Daniel, Weigel, Martin, and Bennett (2006) looked at 79 parents and their children's literacy beliefs and connections with the home literacy environment. These participants came from different areas such as Caucasian, Hispanic descent, as well as Asian American or Pacific Islander. The researchers (Daniel, et al, 2006) studied parental beliefs about literacy development, the relation of those beliefs with other aspects of the home literacy environment, and the relationships between parental literacy beliefs and preschool children's literacy development. The study used three main aspects to assess the family literacy environment identified by Burgess, Stephen and Hecht, Steven and Lonigan, Christopher (2002):

- Parental demographic characteristics
- Parental literacy habitus
- Direct parent-child literacy and language activities

Findings revealed that mothers believed that taking an active part in teaching children at home would provide chances for their children to do better in school. Reading books with children gives children various chances to learn vocabulary, knowledge, and morals, as well as

communication and life skills. Mothers also reported many challenges to reading at home, such as a lack of reading materials and a quiet place and challenges in engaging their children in shared book reading.

Another study, a yearlong project, Early Access to Success in Education (EASE) (Jordan, Snow and Porsche, 2000) was conducted in Minnesota to help parents develop their young children's literacy skills. The study was carried out with 248 kindergarten children with 77 children in a control group and 177 children whose parents participated in an experimental program including parent education sessions at school parent/child activities, and at home, book-mediated activities. The Project EASE was designed to increase fluency and quality of language interactions through book-centered activities and to give parents information about and opportunities in their children's developing literacy abilities (Jordan, et al. 2000).

The project offered parent education sessions, parent-child activities at school and book-centred activities at home. The study evaluated the effectiveness of the parent training and assessed the project's effect on children's language and literacy abilities over one year. There was strong evidence that efforts by schools to provide early academic support to students and parents may improve literacy skills and achievement. The study reported that children in the study were attending good schools and were not particularly at risk. Those whose families engaged in at school and at-home activities made significantly greater gains in language scores as measured on subtests of vocabulary, story comprehension, and sequencing in storytelling. The greatest gains were found in those low-achieving students who started with low language skills at pre-test. This study (Jordan, et al. 2000) has shown that reading to young children improves their parents' engagement in their children's developing literacy abilities. Also, Sénéchal (1997) adds that repeated exposure to specific books and literacy experiences may promote children's language development.

A three-year longitudinal study in the US tested and extended Sénéchal and Le Fevre's (2002) model of the relationships between preschool home literacy practices and children's literacy and language development (Hood, Conlon, and Andrews, 2008). The study looked at the extent to which preschool home literacy teaching and reading practices account for significant variance in emergent literacy skills (phonological awareness and letter identification) at preschool and in language and literacy skills in Grades 1 and 2. The study was conducted with 143 preschool children from three preschools whose home language was English. There was

no formal instruction in reading or writing but children were encouraged to write their names on artworks, were regularly read to and engaged in games to promote phonological awareness.

The results show that in the early family environment, parent-child reading, and parental literacy teaching practices are only weakly related factors, and they have different relationships with language and literacy results. The findings revealed that all parents were reading to their children once per week. All families owned at least one book per child and only a small percentage of parents reported that their children were not interested or slightly interested in being read to.

Another study looked at the formative role of home literacy experiences across the first three years of life in children from low-income families in the United States of America (Rodriguez, Tamis-LeMonda, Spellmann, Pan, Lugo-gil and Luze, 2009). The study aimed to examine the language and literacy experiences of young children from low-income families and to describe the relations between these early experiences and children's development. It focused on the language and literacy environments of 1046 children from low-income families across children's first years of life. The study explored child and family characteristics that might be associated with variations in children's early literacy and language and cognitive skills at and across the ages of 14, 24, and 36 months.

To address these issues, they examined the specific and combined influences of children's participation in routine literacy activities, the quality of parents' engagement, and the provision of learning materials on children's language and cognitive development at 14, 24, and 36 months in families from predominantly low-income backgrounds. The findings were that early and consistent participation in routine literacy activities, such as shared book reading, storytelling, and learning about letters and numbers provides children with a critical foundation for language growth and emergent literacy.

Another research project on phonological awareness as the foundation of reading acquisition (Milankov, Golubovi'c, Krsti'c, and Golubovi'c, 2021) was conducted on 689 primary school children in first through third grade who participated in a study in Serbia. This study aimed to examine the extent to which the development of phonological awareness facilitates reading acquisition in students learning to read a transparent orthography. The findings of the study revealed that phonological abilities are significant predictors of early reading and writing

development. Children with reading difficulties obtained low scores in phonological awareness within each subscale compared to those who do not have reading difficulties. Children with reading difficulties not only have impaired phonological awareness, but they may also have impaired verbal short-term memory, rapid automatized naming, speech perception, and visual form perception.

Conversely, Tanujaya, Mumu and Margono, (2017) suggest that students who have strong critical thinking abilities are more likely to succeed. They further postulate that human thinking skills are classified into two types: low-level thinking skills (LOTS) and high-level thinking skills (HOTS). The first three aspects of taxonomy bloom are known as LOTS: memory, comprehension, and use. HOTS represents the final three aspects of taxonomy bloom: analysis, testing, and creation. In other words, HOTS is ranked first in Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive areas. HOTS are an important part of teaching and learning. The ability to think critically is critical in the educational system. A person's thoughts can influence his or her ability, speed, and ability to learn. Students with strong critical thinking skills are more likely to succeed. Critical thinking skills are essential in the educational system. The ability, speed, and ability to learn a person can be influenced by his or her thoughts. Students with strong critical thinking abilities are more likely to succeed (Tanujaya, Mumu and Margono, 2017).

Research (Ariska, Gustine, and Setyarini, 2021) found how to promote students' higher-order thinking skills through teacher feedback in one state junior high school in West Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. This study included one English teacher and 31 students who were observed and interviewed. The findings revealed that teachers used four models when assisting students in increasing their HOTS: discussing students' reasoning; providing feedback that serves as scaffolding; providing feedback to students' responses with praise along with "what" questions and providing suggestions for students' improvement transformed into challenges.

2.6.1 Understanding early literacy at school.

Dixon (2008) deliberates on some of the similarities between Zomba preschools in Malawi and Kwen Basin primary schools in Mpumalanga, South Africa. The research aimed to engage with the challenges of teaching early literacy in Southern Africa, framed in a rural context. The level of schooling in Dixon's research is different as the schools are in two different countries. The highlighted concern is that many of those practices are taught separately, and the lack of connection makes learning literacy skills meaningless. The repetition of these practices in

primary school confirms the findings from the assessment studies discussed in Chapter 1.4 which revealed that children are unable to read for meaning. After identifying the literacy challenges that are facing both countries with large numbers of children performing poorly as evidenced in assessments cited in the study, the research sought to find out the conditions under which literacy teaching and learning can take place and the kind of literacy practices that are implemented in early classrooms (Dixon, 2008). The results revealed the major teaching practices used for literacy teaching as these rural children move through school.

These practices related to elements of early literacy learning such as the principles of letters, the use of printed matter, writing and oral expression. While the alphabetic principle, access to print, writing and orality were pointed out as deep-rooted and highly valued traditions, the form that they take in the schools does not convey the richness of the communities' oral practices. It seemed that there was a gap between literacy practices that took place at home and that at school. In this case, the form orality taken in school may be weakened because of the expectations of what is considered appropriate as a school practice. There is a dearth of research on the relationship between children's home and school literacy, even though it has been widely acknowledged that the literacy experiences children have at home and in their community have a significant influence on later literacy success in school (Cairney, 2002). My research aimed to address this to advance the literature in this area. Children from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds may be at risk because, rather than because the learning styles in their families are inferior, their culturally defined learning styles may not match the expectations of literacy at school (Curry, Reeves, and McIntyre, 2016).

To improve literacy experiences for all children and strengthen ties between home and school and to better understand the impact of literacy on the family, which is one area where the current research seeks to contribute, these researchers (Curry, et al., 2016) suggest additional research on home literacy programs. In a qualitative study, Curry et al. (2016) investigated the early literacy experiences of three low Socio-Economic Status (SES) mothers and their preschoolers. In accordance with ethnographic principles, mothers and their preschoolers were audio recorded and interviewed as they shared both common and unusual stories at home. The transcripts of the interviews and shared reading sessions revealed several methods for promoting young children's literacy development, including tools that teachers in schools can use.

Other research (Lemphane and Prinsloo, 2013) was conducted on the language and literacy practices of the children from two families, the Bolton's and the Mahlale's, engaging with digital media in their home settings. The research examined children's early multimodal engagements with electronic media across contrasting socio-economic settings. It also looked at how language and literacy interactions are located within specific activities and around materials that are available and examined children interacting and playing with each other and with electronic media resources. In both cases, the researchers focused on the language repertoire and the use of new media resources. The two cases were studied and compared. One family's language is a Sotho language and the other is Setswana and both families live in the Western Cape. Research conducted in the Western Cape is mainly conducted in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English. Although both languages spoken by the two families are among the eleven official languages in South Africa, there is no Sotho/Tswana-language mother tongue school in the Western Cape (Lemphane and Prinsloo, 2013).

Another finding was that the children's exposure to unique pronunciations, such as the South African English pronunciation at school and American English which they heard from television in their electronic media play, helped them develop meta-awareness around language while obtaining flexible high-status resources and dispositions. Furthermore, the study discovered that the Boltons' monolingual English language movements differed from the Mahlele children's isiXhosa dialect. These movements, Lemphane and Prinsloo (2013) suggest, point to their contrasting class paths and consequently to their likely contrasting futures in school and beyond. Both sets of children's engagement with digital electronic and networked resources in their emerging literacy practices showed how elements of inequalities were produced and processes of class reproduction started to happen in the home contexts of new media resources (Lemphale et al., 2013).

Heath (1982) studied the reading habits of three communities with different socioeconomic status (Maintown, Roadville and Trackton), and found that there are great differences in literacy habits in each environment. Heath found that socio-economic status has an important part to play in the development of literacy and how children are socialised into literacy practices. The results also indicate that there is an incongruence between community and school literacy practices. Teachers in this study individualise literacy, separating it from its social and oral roots, thus ignoring the traditional literacy practices of black Americans and working-class, white Americans. In Maintown, the middle-class home environments where

children were exposed to books from an early age, children were able to adapt to the literacy practices in schools with ease, as the literacy habits developed at home concurred with those promoted in schools.

In the Roadville and Trackton communities, where there was little or no print, the children's home literacy practices differed substantially from those in school, particularly in the early years. Both communities share a practical view of literacy learning that of watching and doing whatever is going on around them. Both value the Trackton community more than Roadville and storytelling, and mainstreamists are accustomed to the decontextualised language and connecting it to communication and knowledge outside of their own experiences. By examining the various ways parents and communities initiate children into ways of knowing, Heath in her research illustrates the different approaches to literacy and learning that differing cultural and communicative traditions produce, including orality. Heath's research focused on how each community acquires different literacies in the process of becoming socialised into the norms and values of their communities. Though both communities (Roadville and Trackton) placed a high value on success in school, their children were unsuccessful in school.

However, Heath's research suggests that the problem does not pertain to the home environment per se, but how the teacher links the literacy practices of children at home and that of the school. Children "need to have conventional or school habits offered in the activities that are familiar to them, with explanations related to their habits of taking meaning from the environment" (Heath, 2010:73). This implies that teachers need to be familiar with the home literacy practices of the children in their classes to plan suitable literacy activities in the school and bridge the gap between what the children bring to school with their literacy competencies and what the curriculum requires and expects.

A research project (Pretorius and Mokhwesana, 2009) which looked at the development of reading in Northern Sotho (South Africa) was conducted in a disadvantaged township primary school where an intervention programme for reading had been implemented to improve reading levels in the school. The school was one of the poorest-performing primary schools in the township with over 600 children and 16 teachers. It was a no-fee paying Quintile 1 school. This study was a longitudinal study focused on the Foundation Phase starting in Grade 1. These children ranged from the ages of five to eight years, and they were assessed in literacy components such as letter and sound identification, phonemic awareness, story recall, book

behaviour, vocabulary, word recognition and letter sound. The focus of this study was on improving reading levels at school. It also focused on the approach teachers used to teach reading to children at school.

The findings from the study revealed that, like other classrooms in Grade 1, a phonics approach formed the basis for reading instruction. Teachers' approach to teaching was that of the letters/sounds of the alphabet and of syllables and sight words from the chalkboard with children chanting appropriate responses at once. Activities in the workbooks helped to strengthen the phonics principles.

Bloch (2000) also states that primary schools emphasise the understanding of phonics and learning sight words such as learning words by heart and by identifying their written shape. She points out how teachers have been trained was that of seeing their task as one of simplifying and classifying the difficulties of print into controllable bits in a specific order. When teachers deal with writing, their focus is on phonics, neat handwriting, and accurate spelling. They exclude self-expression, communication or meaning making.

According to Bloch (2009), teachers tend to abandon spoken language and spoken literature inspired by the community, and the community should be the basis for building and expanding to print in school. Most of the print that teachers tend to rely on is often communicated to the children in a foreign language which is English in most cases. She also states that most teachers in South Africa (Bloch, 2004), have been trained to teach reading without using books.

Another study by Prinsloo (2004), researching Khayelitsha outside Cape Town in South Africa, found that teachers' practices include little that supports children's future success in literacy. Teachers' literacy teaching practices are primarily based on the autonomous view of literacy (Prinsloo, 2004; Stein, 2008), a view that my research argues against, as the emphasis is primarily on drilling the basics of the alphabet and syllable coding and decoding, that is, sounding out letters and words (Prinsloo, 2004). The teacher understood literacy teaching to be simply drilling the basics of the alphabet and syllable coding and decoding.

Research conducted by the Western Cape Education Department (2010) into Foundation Phase teachers' literacy teaching practices shows that teachers promote collectivised rather than individualised reading opportunities (in other words, children read in unison); provide few

opportunities for developing reading fluency; and do not teach children strategies for making sense of texts.

The Daily Dispatch article EC School's literacy (George, 2016) reported on an overcrowded Grade R classroom in Beacon Bay and its impact on teaching. This research revealed that 200 Grade R children were taught in one classroom and that overcrowding results in ineffective teaching. These children are likely to contribute to the high dropout rate within the schooling system as they might not complete matric (George, 2016). The report also revealed that in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, 27% of Grades 1 to 3 children were learning in classes with more than 55 children which is getting worse than what is reported in 2015 by Spaull and Kotze.

The concern raised by Spaull and Kotze (2015) was that in the two provinces, between 10% and 15% of Grade 1 to 3 children are in very large classes with more than 55 children. The overcrowded classes limit teachers' capabilities and chances to carefully observe and facilitate literacy learning (Spaull and Kotze, 2015). It is strongly recommended that, unless children learn to read in the Foundation Phase, they will be excluded from meaningful education in later grades because they cannot read to learn. Many Foundation Phase teachers in South Africa lack the teaching skills and content knowledge base to teach children to read, even inappropriately sized classes (Spaull, 2016) with 35 children in each class.

West and Meier's (2020) study confirms Spaull's (2016) research that overcrowding is a major issue in South African Foundation phase classrooms. In their study (West and Meier, 2020), they tried to identify overcrowding in classrooms as being linked to academic failure. They discovered that inadequate infrastructure contributes to overcrowded classrooms in the South African education system. Their study included ten participants with teaching experience in overcrowded classrooms in the South African Foundation phase. Also, Fatima, Mushtaq, and Fatima (2019), research has confirmed West and Meier's (2020) research that the challenge of classroom overcrowding in the South African education system is a common problem. Participants of the study (Fatima, et al. 2019), were teachers at public schools in the Muzaffarabad district of South Africa. They have found that classroom discipline, student participation, evaluation by the teacher and other physical problems exist. They, therefore, recommend that the school be well-organized to address visible barriers and that teachers be provided with training to deal with large classroom management. The authors, (Fatima, et al.

2019), recommended that school students, like teachers, be rationalized, that physical barriers be addressed, and that teachers be trained to handle large classes.

On the other hand, Sirkko, Kyrönlampi, and Puroila's (2019) research focused on the opportunities available to first-grade children in Finnish primary schools. The study looked at how children's agency manifests itself in photos taken by 16 children during their school experiences, as well as discussions about the photos with the researcher. In the case of the school, it appeared that the children's agency was involved in the ongoing coordination of children's rights and adult powers and authority. In terms of pedagogy, the findings suggest that adults who work with children should pay more attention to children's voices to improve opportunities in classrooms and support children's sense of choice.

Also, Sirkko et al., (2019) study concentrated on the primary school setting, where children are frequently dependent on their teachers' decisions and actions, which can enable or prevent children's agency. The school environment is heavily influenced by adult perspectives. Adults have a lot of control over school classes and other places like lunchrooms, outdoor areas, and curricula. The pedagogical relationship between children and teachers assumes some form of adult pressure. When teachers design practices and structures to support children's agency, they must accept that these structures may instead constrain children's agency and that pedagogical actions can both close and open doors for children's participation, according to Sirkko et al., (2019). Similarly, children's actions can either promote or prevent the agency of other children.

The literacy research described above where the focus is either on the home environment, which does not adequately prepare children's entry into formal schooling or on the teacher for inadequate or inappropriate literacy teaching practices, tends to ignore the intersections and relationships between the two and thus ignores how what children bring from home is taken up at school, a gap the third kind of research seeks to fill.

2.5.1 Research on the whole language approach

According to Patzelt (1995), a whole language is an approach or attitude toward learning rather than a teaching method, and it goes hand in hand with the phonics/phonemic awareness focus in literacy pedagogy. Each whole language teacher applies whole language theories to a

specific class as he or she sees fit. As a result, each language classroom will be distinct. Learning in the whole language is based on the learner's prior knowledge and real-world experiences. A whole language is a learning approach that views language as a whole entity and believes that writing, speaking, reading, and listening should all be integrated when learning, according to Patzelt (1995). Whole language learners and teachers, according to Patzelt (1995), concentrate on meaning and comprehension in language use. The most important goal of any language activity is the expression of meaning and writing is meaningful to a child who can relate it to his or her own experience.

On the other hand, Maddox, and Feng (2013) see the whole language as child-centred reading instruction that focuses on constant interaction and frequent exposure to real, vocabulary-rich literature. Maddox and Feng (2013) investigated the effectiveness of whole-language instruction versus phonics instruction in improving reading fluency and spelling. The study's participants were first-grade students in the researcher's general education classroom at a school in the U.S. They used stratified sampling to divide the twenty-two participants into two instructional groups at random. One group was taught using whole language principles, with the children only reading words in the context of a store' and receiving no phonics instruction. The other group received explicit phonics instruction, with no story or contextual influence.

The results, after four weeks of treatment, revealed that there were no statistical differences between the two literacy approaches in the effect on students' reading fluency or spelling accuracy. In reading fluency, both groups improved, but the phonics group made greater gains. In spelling accuracy, the phonics group showed slight growth, while the whole language scores decreased. Overall, the phonics group demonstrated greater growth in both reading fluency and spelling accuracy.

Children in whole-language classrooms appear to develop a greater ability to apply phonics knowledge than children in more traditional classrooms where skills are practised in isolation (Weaver, 1996). Whole language teachers, according to Brooks and Brooks (2005), are expected to create print-rich environments while using culturally diverse literature with high-quality vocabulary. Whole language instructors do not teach spelling, vocabulary, and grammar as isolated events; rather, the whole language teaches these language functions contextually.

In another study (McIntyre and Freppon, 1994), six low-income children from two different instructional settings learned the alphabet in two different instructional settings: skills-based and whole language. Despite differences in the rate at which the children acquired alphabetic knowledge, all six children learned concepts and skills needed for successful reading and writing. Both settings provided explicit phonics instruction, as well as time for children to read and write books of their choice. Children in the skills-based classroom primarily learned the alphabet by reading basals and writing from them. Children in the whole language classroom gained the same knowledge by reading self-selected literature and writing texts. The children in the whole language classroom gained the same knowledge by reading self-selected literature and writing texts on self-selected topics.

Regardless of the instructional setting, all six children exhibited largely the same chronological acquisition pattern. By case study, the sophistication of knowledge and the rate of acquisition of alphabetic awareness were also very similar. The differences discovered in this two-year study were not in how quickly or well children learned the alphabetic system, but in what they did with their new knowledge. When decoding isolated words or individual words in basal sentences, children in the skills-based group exhibited alphabetic knowledge for the most part.

The debate over phonics in primary school has been conducted as if whole language and phonics were two sides of the same curricular coin. According to Dahl and Scharer (2000), the debates have been conducted on the basis that phonics and whole language are separate subjects. Dahl and Scharer (2000) provide details of how they selected the classrooms and the range of whole language classroom practice they represented. They screen prospective classrooms nominated by the whole language community. Their findings are presented as new evidence about phonics instruction and student achievement.

Some of the schools they chose, served the urban poor, while others were magnet schools that drew students from a variety of economic backgrounds. Others worked in small towns or the suburbs. Most of the schools were public elementary schools, except for one private Catholic school that served as a site.

Their findings about phonics teaching and learning solidly question debates attempting to place phonics and whole language on two opposite ends of an instructional continuum. Given these

findings, they believe that discussions about phonics and whole language must move away from an artificial, simplistic dichotomy that does not reflect the reality of practice in whole language classrooms. Although discussions of phonics often centre on reading, an important finding of their research was the linkage between reading and writing in those classrooms and the contribution that the linkage with writing made to children's understanding of letter-sound relationships. As children used their reading experiences in their writing, their need for knowledge about letters, sounds, and words became both immediate and purposeful.

2.6.2 Teachers' academic expectations of their children: The Pygmalion effect

The Pygmalion effect (PE) describes how children in a classroom perform better because they are expected to do so (Fleisch, 2008). The Pygmalion effect is that teachers' expectations affect academic achievement: low expectation leads to low achievement and high expectation leads to high achievement. When teachers let their children know that they believe in them and expect them to do well, children begin to believe in themselves and do their best to achieve success (Naude and Meier, 2014). During this process, teachers communicate the expectations and attitudes that they have towards their children which in turn influences their instruction. The expectations might be formed based on gender, home language, socio-economic background, school records, etc. Teachers usually form these expectations early in their contact with children and must create a supportive environment so that their children can feel valued in such an environment. On the other hand, as the teachers in my study displayed, they had expectations for the children early in the allocation.

Brophy and Good (1970) devised a model to illustrate the way teachers' expectations operate in the classroom. The model proposes four stages. First, the teacher forms expectations for each child's classroom performance and other behaviours. Second, the teacher, because of these expectations, interacts differently with each child. Those whom she expects to succeed are praised and given several opportunities for success while those she does not expect to succeed are called upon less often and are given less time to answer questions. Benson-Goldberg and Erickson (2021), argue that praise is often highlighted as a specific tool that teachers should use to reinforce both behaviour and learning. Since praise statements are positive evaluations of students' performance or behaviour, they are thought to be an encouraging, motivating, and affirming tool for reinforcement. Third, the child becomes sensitive to the different ways a teacher behaves towards him or her in the class and as such the child notices the teacher's irritation at his continual mistakes and begins to label himself or herself as the one who is

unable to perform, which will eventually affect his or her social and academic behaviour in the class as well as his or her self-esteem. Fourth, over time, each child's performance comes to conform to the teacher's expectations (Brophy and Good, 1970).

These expectations, Cooper, and Tom (1984) suggest, affect the classroom climate where the teacher when teaching high-expectation children is more likely to repeat or rephrase a question spending more time explaining for the benefit of these children. High-expectation children receive more praise from the teachers and less criticism than low-expectation children (Naude and Meier, 2014). The way teachers show expectations of different children is through how they arrange them in their classes. The low-expectation children are seated at the back of the class or set up in a group and not much attention is given to them during the interaction. Usually, teachers view these children as slow learners. According to Vasudevan (2017), a slow learner is capable of learning like any other child and does not require special education but may require extra time and assistance in the regular classroom. She attributes factors such as culture, poverty, family inadequacy, parental disharmony, and in a few cases, unfavourable school conditions, and school absences to a child who teachers perceive as a slow learner or low-performing child. Even the Department of Basic Education has identified slow learners as a pressing issue (Ojo and Mathabathe, 2017). The DBE committee reported that efforts had been made to reduce the assessment content load, but teachers' and students' comfort remained uncertain.

While the research conducted in America (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968) on the Pygmalion effect showed the powerful effect of teacher attitudes on children's ability and their performance in the classroom situation, South African studies suggest that teacher expectations influence achievement in a different way, i.e., teachers have low academic expectations for all their school children (Fleisch, 2008).

2.6.3 Children learning through play.

There are various ways that children learn and develop which require adults to be aware of the features of early learning so that they can structure activities suitable for the development of children's learning (Allen, 2015). The environment in which children grow up should provide learning opportunities. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is based on the idea that children learn through their interactions with other people and dialogue with a more knowledgeable person (Vygotsky, 1978). When the cultural context supports children's learning, they become highly

motivated (Allen, 2015). The family is the first environment for conscious learning and other daily environments (such as children gathering to play with other older siblings). According to Vygotsky (1978), the community plays an important role in the process of meaning formation, which means that what children learn from their communities influences their future development.

For children, play and learning are the same, their focus is the activity they engage in. Excell and Linington, (2011), report on the observations in Gauteng classrooms that shows a growing emphasis on worksheets and formal literacy instructions which is the case in almost all the classrooms across South Africa and the Eastern Cape where this study was conducted. The importance of building upon informal literacy is said to provide the foundations upon which formal literacy instruction is based. The importance of considering context in which literacy develops is vital before teachers consider the intellectual processes of literacy. This is apparent in my research, which has looked at the interplay between home and school literacy practices where the emphasis is on the importance of considering what children bring from home to school and how teachers, uptake this. According to Excell and Linington (2011), Children's learning is best supported through a play-based, informal approach towards teaching and learning.

Another study (Mielomen and Paterson, 2009), has looked at the benefits of uninterrupted play by examining the literacy development of children through play in a home context. The study was conducted with two young girls from a rural setting in America, engaged in play. The results of the study showed children engaged in language through communication during their period of play. The two girls used language as a primary tool of communication and literacy skills were developed through demonstrations from one another. These findings demonstrate the importance of social interaction in promoting children's language development at home and that teachers can build upon the information that children have for literacy development at school. These researchers (Mielomen and Paterson, 2009) state that play is a social phenomenon and the implementation of social interaction in classrooms can give children the opportunity to communicate with peers in natural ways.

Zosh, Hopkins, Jensen, Liu, Neale, Hirsh-Pasek, Solis and Whitebread (2017) showed that children like to play, and play provides a wealth of learning opportunities. Their white paper examines research on the role and significance of play in the lives and learning of children in

the US. During play moments, children become inventors of various games where they initiate some games. This activity is called pretend play, which promotes certain skills and develops children's language thus developing learning. The play also involves imitating, whereby children learn by engaging in the behaviours of adults and older children. During this process, they afford themselves a chance to practice and acquire new skills (Zosh et al, 2017). Because it involves emotion, cognition, language, and sensorimotor actions, pretend play is more likely to engage many areas of the brain, and thus may promote the development of dense synaptic connections (Bergen and Coscia, 2001).

Joseph, Ramani, Tlowane, and Mashatole (2014) conducted a performance-based ethnography of South African black children's pretend play. The activity was a make-believe play of a South African game called 'Masekitlane'. The research results show that, in addition to all other common features shared by games and all pretend games, other unique features include expanded monologues, a meta-communication framework for realistic thinking, and the complex relationship between social games and isolated games. The researchers (Joseph, et al. 2014) reported that their findings supported Vygotsky's developmental stage theory. Literature (Singer, 1973; Ariel, 2002; Berk and Meyers, 2013) suggests the importance of make-believe play or pretend play whereby children reconstruct familiar situations by role-playing characters, representing everyday scenes, miming actions, and relating a story. Joseph et al. (2014) suggest the importance of play to develop children's minds through the internalisation of other people's perspectives. It is of special importance as one variety of play through which children recreate familiar situations by role-playing characters, representing everyday scenes, miming actions, and narrating a story. There are other games such as riddles that contribute significantly to developing children's literacy.

Though riddles are important games that promote children's literacy, however, they are not taken into consideration in most Foundation Phase classrooms. Children usually play riddles at home during playtime. Some riddles children learn from old books at home, but in most cases, they learn from older siblings. Riddles are found to be more beneficial in improving and promoting children's critical thinking skills (Zablocki, 2013). Children's minds need to be fostered with something that allows them to think more (Kids World Fun, 2016). By so doing, children's creativity, as well as their thinking ability, develop through their growing stages, which will later help them to be good thinkers at school. When riddles are combined with stories, they can provide children with the opportunity to think, learn and develop themselves

(Kids World Fun, 2016) for future success at school. Also, children, when exposed to riddles could develop language skills as they are exposed to a range of language that contributes to their thinking abilities.

According to Madonsela (2020), in Africa, riddles are commonly regarded as a type of art form and have always been included in studies on oral literature. Her study looks at the role of Siswati riddles in enhancing children's cognitive development from an African perspective. She discovered that riddles provide a portrait of the meaning of life within a society, as well as its unique existential challenges. She also found that riddles capture wisdom, traditional knowledge, and environmental and societal values. According to Madonsela (2020), riddles are part of an effort to revitalize African culture by developing children's understanding of nature in an African context. The ability to derive meaning from print is so heavily reliant on the development of word recognition accuracy and reading fluency.

Novac Djokovic Foundation Admin (NDF Admin, 2015) suggested that riddles can enable children to link thoughts and think, be creative, and be able to draw conclusions, which are considered a good way to learn and remember things quickly and easily. Riddles can also improve thinking skills (NDF Admin, 2015) because, in this process, children must be asked to think before they can understand riddles. The NDF Admin also suggests that children had to link ideas, think and are creative when trying to find an answer to make conclusions.

Rap music is known to be rich in themes about life as it contains community themes such as "group-level realities, the value of community experiences, community roles, and community aspirations" (Travis, 2012:149). It is popular music that combines dancing, gestures, and lyrics, and a kind of music used by children in rural areas in their performances. Some of the music imitates what is done by popular musicians in the world of hip-hop. It is well-known by researchers (Cutler, 2007) for its innovation in terms of its grammar and vocabulary.

Vocabulary, according to Alefeshat "is an important factor while learning any language" (2019:3). It helps people learn more words and find synonyms (Alefeshat, 2019). During the process of developing their vocabulary, children gain the opportunity to pronounce, and pronunciation is a skill that helps in the communication process. A study conducted in the United States looked at the evidence that exists in research to support the value of esteem,

resilience, growth, community, and change as empowering dimensions that are outlined in the individual and community empowerment framework (Travis, 2012). The results showed that rap music is a discourse in literacy development.

Research on energy science courses (Frank and Jewett, 2001), that studied what was a high-quality fuel focused on the action of teachers and learners and how action realised meanings and shaped classroom interaction. The research was conducted in London with Year 9 students aged 14. The findings revealed that action communicates meaning and shapes interaction in the classroom in many ways.

The researchers (Franks and Jewett, 2001) believe that the physical action of socially organised persons is a powerful mode of realising meaning in the classroom and learning takes place when people act in and on the world. They also see meaningful action as structured, transformational, communicative and generative, meaning that patterns of action can be examined as evidence of learning when looking at the way teachers teach, and pupils learn (Franks and Jewett, 2001).

In addition, meaningful actions include verbal actions and other forms of physical communication, such as gestures, posture, and movements in and around space (Franks and Jewett, 2001). The combination of action, visual and language resources is called multimodality (Franks and Jewett, 2001). Also, “gestures and movement are particular kinds of muscular action which are in turn activated and controlled by levels of mental action that emerge through the processes of internalisation and development of thinking” (Franks and Jewett, 2001:204). Likewise, Language is one mode of action as suggested by Franks and Jewett (2001) as well as gesture and movement as particular kinds of muscular action.

Other research (Jewett, 2005) looked at new model configurations and explore how they impact students’ text production and reading in English schools. It looks at the changing roles of writing on the screen, especially how the visual characteristics of writing and the increasingly dominant role of images make the advantages of words shaken and dispersed. The research used ICT illustrative applications and students’ interaction with these in school English and science and games in a home context, the researcher explores how these illustrative examples seem to promote image overwriting. Jewett (2005) discusses what it meant for literacy and how readers of school age interpret multimodal texts. The findings revealed that the multimodal

character and facilities of new technology require that print-based concepts of literacy be reshaped. This means, therefore, that, to be literate during the digital era where the internet is being used, is different from what it was during the early days. According to Jewett (2005:315), “print-based reading and writing are and always have been multimodal.”

There is not much research done in South Africa (SA) that has looked at what children bring with them from home to school in terms of literacy. Mnyanda and Mbelani (2018) in their research on the nature of learners’ digital resources at home and how those resources could be meaningfully and critically used to advance literacy, seem to agree that there is little research that has been conducted in SA to investigate learners’ out-of-school literacy and how teachers could build on that out-of-school literacy to advance school literacy. They researched Grade 9 learners’ practices of digital communication from two King Williams Town schools (rural and township). The focus of their research was on the kind of visual literacy knowledge that Grade 9 children bring from home to make sense of visual images in classrooms and how teachers draw on children’s visual literacy that they bring from home to develop school visual literacy in the English first additional language (EFAL) classrooms. The results showed that many learners were becoming digitally literate irrespective of their socio-economic status or rural-urban location. Yet, the results from their research revealed that digital literacy did not seem to be used as a base to advance literacy advocated in the new curriculum and assessment policy statements.

Rosenberg (2010) suggests that there is sufficient literature and research which confirms that children from linguistically and materially rich backgrounds have a head-start over their counterparts who are from linguistically and materially disadvantaged contexts. He further confirms what Safford and Kelly, (2010) suggest that children from disadvantaged home backgrounds lack the linguistic capital that is attuned to the school system’s literacy forms and practices. By ‘disadvantaged’ he means that children who are from poor families tend to face more academic challenges than those who are from well-resourced families. Researchers also propose that the most academically successful children are those whose family literacy practices are more congruent with school literacy practices (Cairney and Ashton, 2002). Home literacy practices, therefore, play an important role in how children encounter and interact with literacy and become literate beings (Weinberger, 1996). Incongruency between home and school literacies may result in the discontinuity between the literacy practices children confront

at the home and at school which may lead to low levels of literacy in schools, such as is the case in primary schools in South Africa.

Low levels of literacy are mainly attributed to a lack of exposure to literacy materials (Fleisch, 2008). The home has been found to have a strong influence on the promotion of children's early language and literacy development. Kajee and Sibanda (2019) found that children's out-of-school practices can support literacy development in school.

2.7 Summary

The study's focus is on children's literacy practices which are viewed as social practice and habitus formation which primarily takes place in the family setting (Bourdieu, 1986). This view recognises that literacy does not only exist cognitively in people's minds or on paper, but it is fundamentally social, and it is situated in the interaction between people. The next chapter (Chapter 3) discusses the Methodology of this research.

CHAPTER 3

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of how data were generated and analysed. It describes how this research was conducted and gives detailed decisions that were made during the research process such as the choice of research design, and methods used to establish the interplay between young children's home and school literacy practices. The chapter includes an explanation of the site and sampling of the participants and the research process. It ends with a discussion of ethical standards. Reliability and validity were considered as well as how the limitations of this research were dealt with.

3.2 Choice of research design

Sacredheart.edu (2011) sees a research design as a plan, a protocol, or a structured framework of how the researcher intends to conduct the research process to solve the research problem or question. The research design describes the nature and the pattern that the research intends to follow and should include aspects such as the research methodology, approach, and methods (Creswell, 1998). The purpose of the research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximised (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Forero, Nahidi, De Costa, Mohsin, Fitzgerald, Gibson, McCarthy, and Aboagye-Sarfo (2018), suggest that researchers need to make a series of decisions along the following four dimensions. First, they must consider the purpose of the research; second, the theoretical paradigm informing the research; third, the context within which the research is carried out; and, finally, the research techniques employed to collect and analyse data. Research design, therefore, includes the research questions stated in sub-section 1.9 of Chapter 1, the purpose of the study, the appropriate context that will support responding to the research question, strategies appropriate for answering the question, as well as the philosophical foundation on which it is based (Creswell and Clark, 2011).

A qualitative orientation seemed most appropriate in research of this nature typically produces results that derive from 'real world' settings where the activities or phenomena being investigated unfold naturally (Golafshani, 2003) and where "knowledge claims are based primarily on constructivist paradigm" (Creswell, 2003:19). Neuman (2006) says that three main influential paradigms underpin the research design, namely, positivism, interpretivism,

and the critical approach. In each one of these theories, it is important to determine the ontological, epistemological, and methodological bases. Ontology specifies the form and nature of reality (Guba and Lincoln, 1994); epistemology refers to how the creation of knowledge is theorised; methodology specifies how the researchers go about practically studying whatever they believe can be known (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). This study is informed by ontological and epistemological assumptions that are based on interpretivism.

Interpretivism acknowledges that reality exists outside of our minds and is conditional upon human experiences and interpretations. The interpretive researcher's design reflects an interest in contextual meaning-making rather than generalised rules. The focus is on individuals or small groups studied in their natural settings using an in-depth case study which often involves a single case. The interpretive researcher uses ethnographic research and looks for rich detailed information of a qualitative nature through in-depth interviews, observations, or interpretation of documents (Rhodes Environmental Education Unit Research Methods Short Course, 2001).

After establishing that this research is interpretive, a semi-ethnographic orientation combined with a case study design was deemed most appropriate. It is to some extent ethnographic in that the focus is on the literacy practices of children from their cultural settings (homes and school). This study has an element of ethnographic design because I stayed in the homes of each of the four participating children for 3 weeks observing, participating, and recording rather than staying longer as understood in full ethnography (For further details, see section 3.5.4 below). In total, I spent 60 days in all homes. Ethnography helps to study the behaviour of people in their natural settings (Morgan-Trimmer and Wood, 2016), with a specific focus on the cultural understanding of behaviour (Cronk, 2017). The aim is to provide an explanation of what people do in specific settings; what results from their interactions; and how they understand what they are doing (Brian and Phakiti, 2015). Also, ethnography seeks to describe the set of understandings and specific knowledge sharing among participants that guide their behaviour in that specific context, whether it is the culture of community, classroom, event, or programme (Cassell, Cunliffe and Grandy, 2018).

At its very core, an ethnographic approach attempts to make a comparison and contrast between what people say and what people do in each context to represent more fully what is going on (Sagepub.com, 2011). Ethnography offers researchers tools to answer such questions; what is happening, what it means, and its significance to the social group from an emic perspective rather than from an etic perspective (Grenfell, Bloome, Hardy, Pahl, Rowsell, and Street, 2013)

It addresses the interaction between theory and process and links the research question and the data. In the current research, it addresses both questions; “What are the home literacy practices that children bring with them to school?”; “What are the literacy practices in Grade 1 classes?” and “How home literacy practices are taken up at school (if at all) and what are the implications for understanding schooled literacy practices?”

Ethnography then provides a means of exploring socio-cultural contexts and groups (Naidoo, 2015). In the current study ethnography assisted in revealing the complex identities embedded in culture, values, knowledge, practices, and behaviour of children as they interacted in their daily settings such as home and school. On a particular day, I accompanied the family to fetch wood from the forest. The picture, Figure 3.1, illustrates the level of participation with various activities of the family I was engaged in. This is the picture of Okuhle, my participant, with her mother and two siblings on the way home from the forest. This is one activity that is part of the community’s culture with which children from disadvantaged backgrounds engaged.



Figure 3.1: Forest trip by Okuhle’s Family (18/02/2012)

According to Sandiford (2015) ethnography expects extended periods of observation and interaction during the research process and data collection, and an investment in building trust with the participants (see Section 3.8 below). My relationship with the subjects began after our first meeting on 1 December 2012 and during my stay with them. Almost all my participants’ parents came from homes where the grandparents were illiterate. While I was staying with each family, I also observed whether there were books available in each HAS or any reading material. There were no adult books in the four HASs except for HAS4 where there were only about two ABET books and one Grade 11 isiXhosa book that was used by Nomhle when she was at High School. Because these families did not have enough food, I provided them with some groceries and ate with them for the duration of my stay. It is also a principled effort to describe the everyday, cultural life of a social group and it seeks a holistic, description of the multiple dimensions, aspects, practices, and settings of the social group (Bloome, 2012). It was for this reason that I stayed with the participants for a period of 60 days as discussed in Sub-sections 3.5.4 of this chapter.

While ethnography is qualitative, quantitative data such as demographic information (Reeves, Peller, Goldman and Kitto, 2013) is also used to fully describe the setting. As a method, it predominantly relies on observation and interview data but includes various written and non-written resources such as documents, pictures, storybooks, and reports. It never relies on only one source of data because this would hinder the researcher's ability to triangulate the data which is necessary to enhance the validity and reliability of the information by comparing the data from the various sources to see where the similarities and differences lie (Watson-Gegeo, 1988). As a result of this, I used various sources of data collection as discussed in Section 3.5 of this Chapter.

3.3 Case study design

This study adopted a case study approach. The case study was appropriate as it enabled the study of children's lives with their families. Gillham (2000) defines a case study as a unit of human activity embedded in the real world which can only be studied or understood in context. Human activity is the literacy practices that children engage in at home and school. Case studies focus on one or a few instances of a particular phenomenon. The view is to provide an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences, or processes occurring in that instance (Denscombe, 2017). Musavengane and Muzeza (2021) also defines case study research as "...an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon, within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used." In the case of the present study, the contemporary phenomena are children's home and school literacy practices.

The selection of a case for this study was based on several reasons. First, the approach allows me to focus on a single event and study it in its natural setting. Using a case study enabled me to focus on children's literacy practices from their homes and school settings. Second, it provided the opportunity to study the phenomenon in depth creating a rich, detailed, and thick description of this phenomenon. Third, it allowed me to make use of various methods of data collection to generate rich data of a qualitative nature as suggested by the interpretive approach.

The case study approach generates in-depth and contextualised information to understand the interplay between home and school literacy practices of the four children under study. An in-depth study of children's literacy practices generated a wealth of information providing the researcher with detailed information and discover things that might not be apparent through

more superficial research (Denscombe, 2017). It is purposive and contextualised. Thus, the sample was purposively selected as detailed in Section 3.5 of this chapter.

3.4 CHAT as an analytical tool for examining children's home and school literacy practices.

To understand both individual and community learning, it is necessary to investigate the nature and forms of cultural artefacts and tools used, as well as the social relations, rules, and division of labour, as well as the historical development of individuals and communities (Gutierrez and Rogoff, 2003). The Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), on which this study is based, is one theoretical resource that provides useful tools and concepts for analysing literacy practices (and other social practices). CHAT is a theoretical framework that helps to understand and analyse the relationship between what people think and feel and what they do. According to Foot (2014), there is a significance in each word in the label cultural-historical activity theory. The term activity refers to what people do together and is modified by both cultural and historical to convey its situatedness and theory is used to denote a conceptual framework for understanding human activity (Foot, 2014). CHAT is appropriate in the current study as it offers the analytic apparatus to first analyse literacy practices in both home and school fields and thereafter examine their interplay. The other strength of CHAT as a theory is that it is broad and includes a variety of activities that human beings engage in their daily lives and that it can be used in all that people do. CHAT was used to analyse and therefore make sense of both home and school literacy practices as Engeström (1999) suggests that CHAT helps to make sense of human practices within a given context.

CHAT focuses on how we understand the real world as well as on how we draw meaning from that understanding and engage with the real world (Capper and Williams, 2004). As a semi-ethnographer, I was a participant-observer in the homes and just an observer in the school. Therefore, using CHAT was useful to interpret human activities as this could be a major challenge for me as a researcher. CHAT also encourages in-depth analysis of the activity systems which can bring about change and development (Engeström, 2001). Moreover, CHAT has based on the proposition that learning is a cultural social process that draws on historical achievements (Capper and Williams, 2004) which made me look at the principles of CHAT as discussed in the section below.

3.4.1 Application of the five principles of CHAT in the study

Engeström (2001) conceptualised five principles that are key to the analysis of an activity system. The way the five principles were enacted in the study is shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Five principles of CHAT established by Engeström (2001)

Five principles	How they were enacted in the study
1. The prime unit of analysis is a collective, artefact-mediated, and object-oriented activity system seen in its network relation to their activity system.	1. Two activity systems (literacy practices of four Grade 1 children and their families as well as their four teachers from the same community and same school) were analysed.
2. The multi-voicedness of an activity needs to be heard as the activity will be different for everyone revealing multiple layers and perspectives,	2. In this analysis, I paid attention only to the voices of the participating children, their parents, teachers as well as siblings, and peers from the wider community.
3. The historicity of an activity system “takes shape and gets transformed” over time (Engeström, 2001:136) with the analysis uncovering its history.	3. I relied on the history I gathered from the participants through interviews and informal conversations. Because these were young children, I relied on parents and teachers.
4. Contradictions as driving forces of change in activity – clashes between “opposite starting points” (Engeström, 2001:137) with the analysis.	4. Primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary contradictions were analysed as they emerged in the two activity systems and are presented in my data Chapters 4 and 5.
5. Expansive transformation in activity systems – new understandings of activity arise from participants addressing contractions and questioning their actions, leading to new possibilities.	5. For this study (that of establishing the intersection between the two activity systems as stated in my third research question), I did not go as far as expansive learning, and I did not discuss it in the study.

I give a brief explanation of history and culture as important features of the study.

History

Understanding the history of the participants was one key issue that was significant in the study that helped in the understanding of the participants’ literacy habitus. Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning is a result of social interaction between individuals and society and any learning a child encounters at school has a previous history. To understand children’s literacy practices, I had to start by staying with the families of the participants (children) in their homes before they could even start with Grade 1. This gave me enough opportunity to get to understand the participants better. Through interviews with parents and teachers about their understanding and background of literacy, I was able to make sense of the data from both home and school activity systems. Most of the activities were observed and informal interviews and conversations that

triggered questions on the background of literacy activities they engaged in were also conducted.

Culture

Vygotsky believed in the importance of culture and social interaction (1978) for the development of children's social and cultural practices. He sees the mediating tools as important within and across cultures in children's learning and people use these tools that develop from a culture such as speech and writing to mediate their social environments (ibid.). Literacy learning is socially and culturally embedded and children acquire literacy from their cultures, communities, and their families (Kantor et al., 1992). Children in this study engaged in a variety of literacy activities from the literacy activities they participated in with their parents and peers in their homes. Thus, to understand the activities that humans participate in, it is best done through an analysis of the system in, from, and through which practices are produced, mediated, and reproduced.

CHAT in the study was suitable because it offered the elements of the activity system that I employed to describe and explain literacy practices from both Activity Systems. An activity system has six core components, each of which holds cultural and historical dimensions. There are six key elements of the activity system to describe and explain literacy practices: subject(s), tools, object(s), rules, community, and division of labour. These elements are discussed in detail in Sub-section 3.4.2 below.

3.4.2 Generations of activity system and the application in the study

There are three generations of activity theory: the first, second and third generations activity theory. Figure 3.1 shows the first-generation activity theory which drew on Vygotsky's concept of mediation. The first generation of activity theory takes an individual as the unit of analysis. This activity theory explains the relationship between subjects, objects, and tools (Kuutti, 1996). It suggests that the subject acts on the object using tools and the basic unit of analysis is the individual.

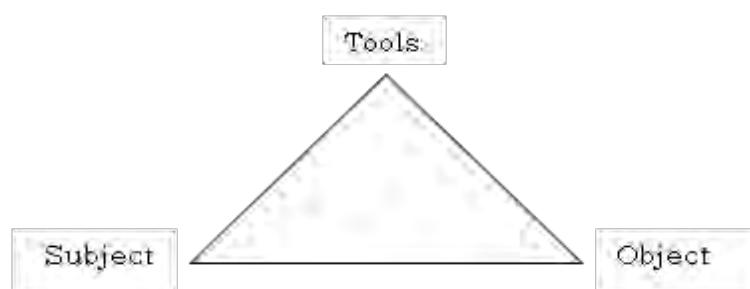


Figure 3.2: First generation CHAT – Vygotskian model of tool-mediated action (Foot 2001)

This model (Figure 3.2) could not explain some of the systemic relations between an individual and his or her environment (Kuutti, 1996). It is restricted to an individual as the unit of analysis and due to this limitation, second generation activity theory was developed. Due to the limitations of the first-generation activity theory which tends to focus on the individual and could not explain some of the systemic relations between an individual and his or her environment (Kuutti, 1996), the study looked at the second generation of activity theory.

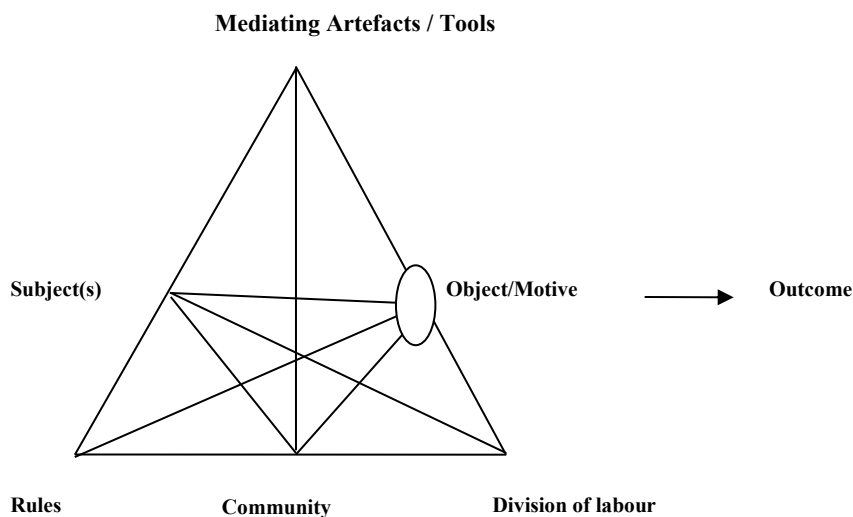


Figure 3.3: The structure of a human activity system (sourced from Engeström 1987)

The second-generation CHAT was developed by Engeström based on the first-generation CHAT and the work of Leont'ev which added the community, rules, and division of labour in the first generation. This signifies the interrelationships between the individual and the community. The unit of analysis in this second-generation CHAT are the complex interrelationships between the individual and the community. Engeström (2000) sees joint activity or practice as the unit of analysis for activity theory, not an individual activity. According to Masara (2010) the importance of activities is associated with the object of understanding how human minds develop as they develop their objects. Also, the second generation looks at one activity system and does not consider other activity systems.

Again, the second-generation CHAT had some limitations for the current study as it only looked at one activity system and not two as the study required. Due to this limitation, this study draws on the second and third generations of activity theory because it focuses on networks of interacting activity systems and multi-organisational fields of activity which are home and school, in the case of this research. Hardman (2005) suggests that learning is viewed

as the complex result of tool mediated interactions, rather than as something which happens in a student's mind. Using CHAT as a tool for analysing children's home and school literacy practices helped to understand and make sense of these literacy practices by engaging with the components of CHAT used from both activity systems, Home, and School Activity Systems.

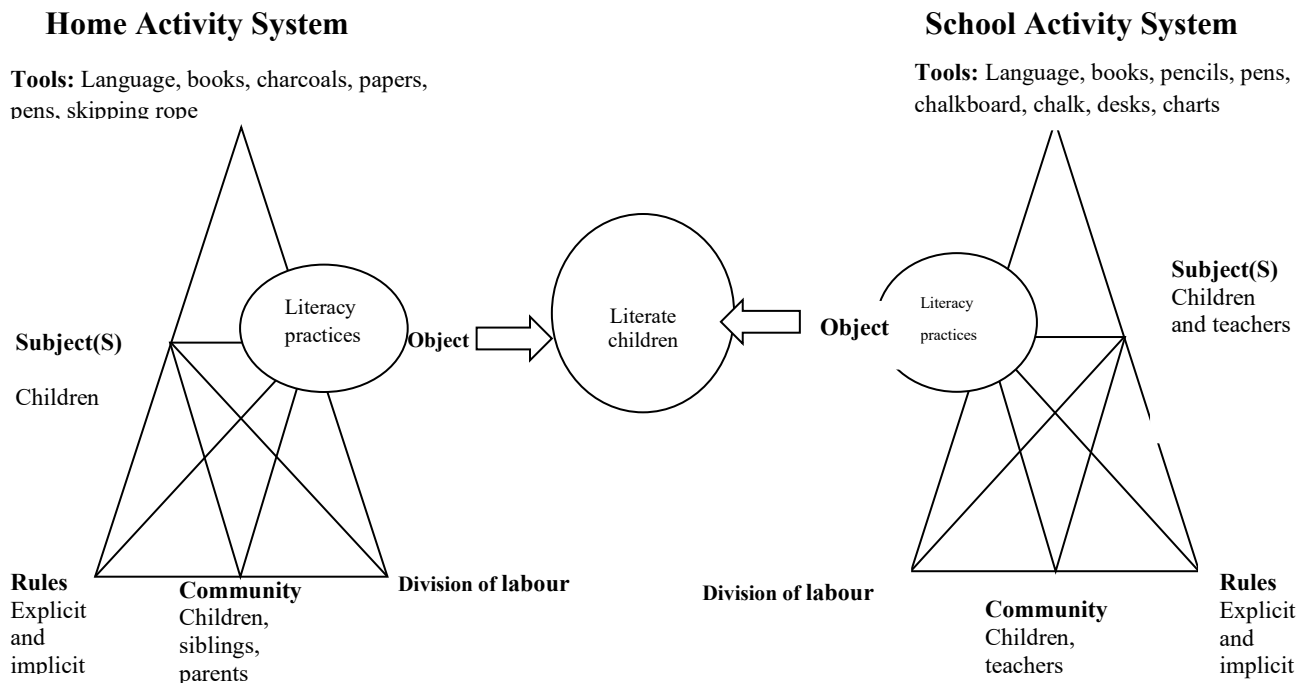


Figure 3.4: Two interacting activity systems (Engeström, 2001:136)

Third generation CHAT as shown in Figure 3.4 endorsed the understanding that all activity systems are part of a network of activity systems that in its totality constitutes human society (Roth and Lee, 2007). An activity is realised through concrete actions that are goal-directed and are framed by individuals. In CHAT, Roth, and Lee (2007) argue that actions and the goals they accomplish are the dominant features in human consciousness during an active engagement with the world. Third generation CHAT describes four different levels in which contradictions occur. These are: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary (Cole and Engeström, 1993; Engeström, 2001; Daniels, 2008). These four levels of contradictions may happen between or within an activity system. Contradictions at level one is called *primary contradictions* which occur within a single element of the activity system. A level two or *secondary contradiction* is a tension that arises between two components of the activity system such as subject and tool as they interact. A level three or *tertiary contradiction* may arise when new ways of thinking and doing come in conflict with currently accepted ways of thinking and doing between the activity system (Engeström, 1987). A level four or *quaternary contradiction* occurs when an activity system clashes with any of its neighbouring activity systems.

Karanasios, Riisla and Simeonova (2017:1) state that, “a fundamental analytical concept of activity theory is the notion of cultural-historical contradictions and tensions, which occur within an activity and/or between multiple interrelated activities and promote dialectical transformation”. Nkomo (2017) suggests that when contradictions are resolved, learning happens, and a more advanced activity system emerges. The contradictions that are surfaced or emerged in this study should be regarded as opportunities for improvement and not as signs or obstacles of weakness (Nkomo, 2017).

Activity is what happens when human beings operate in or on their environment to satisfy a specific need. During this process, information flows through the activity system (AS) to achieve the desired outcome. The tools are used to manipulate and get information from the environment which mediates the things we do. CHAT gives the researcher tools to identify and analyse literacy activities at home and at school to make sense of the practices that children and teachers engaged with. Also, human systems within which we work, such as social, cultural, and organisational, mediate how we conduct activities (Engeström 2001).

Kain and Wardle (2004) state that activity theory is intended to study how people engage in all kinds of activities from learning at a university to working in a manufacturing company, to shopping in a grocery store. In this study, activity theory was used to make sense of the relationships between children’s literacy practices at home and school. It gave the researcher an understanding of the tools used by the participants to achieve their activities, and the goals they have for the activity. The first activity system in this study was children’s homes (Homes A, B, C, and D), and the second activity system was the school, hence the third generation CHAT to understand and analyse the intersection between the activity systems.

In an investigation of the challenge around children’s underperformance in literacy, I looked at the literacy practices at home and school as activity systems. These might be defined in a different way depending on who the subject is. Each participant might be a member of various communities. For example, in this study, children are the members of both home and school communities as well as teachers and parents who engage in many activity systems. In the case of my study, the children, parents, and the Grade 1 teachers as the focus of the study are the *subjects* of the activity system who in turn are the members of the *community* who subscribe to certain *rules*. The four children who are participants in this study are the *subjects* as well as

members of the *community* for both home and school ASs while teachers were the *subjects* in the SAS.

Each activity system had its rules whether explicit or implicit. The home activity system, for example, had no explicit rules as all the rules were only parents' rules except for when children were engaged in an activity such as games that had implicit, specific rules. One example was that of storytelling where there were implicit rules that the participants were bound to do to be part of the game. Extract 3.1 below shows an example of the activity of storytelling with rules that the members or participants in the game had to follow.

Extract 3.1: A story of dengana, the jackal and the wolf at HAS 2 (21/01/2013)	
1.	Okuhle: 'Camngceshe' ndabazolwimi. <i>False news.</i>
2.	Nathi: Eyi! Hayi mama. <i>Eh! No mother.</i>
3.	Sikho: Kengoku! <i>And then!</i>
4.	Interviewer: Uyitsho kakuhle nje. <i>She is saying it nicely.</i>
5.	Alizwa: kwahlala-kwahlala kwayintsomi. <i>Once upon a time.</i>
6.	Nathi: Thula Alizwa, kuzakulandela utata ukwenza intsomi. <i>Quiet Alizwa, father is going to be the next to do the story.</i>
7.	Lizeka: Kodwa utata ka Alizwa makaqale. <i>But Alizwa's father should start.</i>
8.	Sikho: Heyi! Kulungile ke, sukela ngantsomi. <i>Hey! It is fine then, once upon a time.</i>
9.	All: camngcetshe ndabazolwi. <i>False news.</i>

The rule of the story was to agree with the teller after a saying “*kwahla-kwahla kwayintsomi or hlala ngantsomi*” which means ‘*once upon a time*’.

However, at school, there were both explicit and implicit rules. Explicit rules included the school rules and the implicit rules included classroom rules set by the teachers and at home those that were set by parents. The participants (*subjects*) who are members of the community subscribe to certain rules accepted within the *community*. The *community* was comprised of children, parents, siblings, and teachers who acted upon the literacy activities (*objects*). The *subject* would use a variety of *tools* (tools used varied according to specific activity) to produce the desired *outcome* (literate children). Some of the *tools* used at home were different from those used at school though there were some commonalities. In both research activity systems, language and books were the common *tools* used. The *object* for both activity systems was the literacy practices that produced the literate Grade 1 children as an overall *outcome*.

According to Engeström (2001), the *outcome* which is goal-directed represents the goal of the activity and what is produced for the goal to be achieved. For this study, the *outcome* may be literacy practices for the participants who are the *subjects* of this activity system. To accomplish this *outcome*, children need to produce certain *objects* such as literacy-related activities like storytelling, role play, games, songs, etc. The children are members of the *community* who

subscribe to certain *rules* or ways of doing these activities that have become recognized whether formally or informally at home and/at school. There may also be a *division of labour* within this *community* that enables the work of this *community* to be shared or controlled depending on the power relations within the *community*. The *subjects* used a variety of *tools* to produce the *object* which may include signs and symbolic tools (such as text or words to create text or speech) or writing to create signs such as words and text as suggested by Vygotsky in Chapter 2 Section 2.5.1.

The first step in AS is to identify the shared *object* of the activity being done. Engeström states that it is always the case that activity systems have multiple objects, some of which are held by the whole system, and some are held by one or many of the actors in the system. So, the first step in a CHAT approach is to analyse these multiple objects and surface the tacit or unspoken ones for us to understand why people do things the way they do and why those observable actions often seem to conflict with the stated objects of the system (2001). Once the shared *object/s* have been identified, the next step is to analyse the structure of the system using some guiding questions (Capper and Williams, 2004) which are relevant to translate the literacy practices being examined. Answering these questions helps the researcher to pinpoint areas of focus during the investigation. At times there were challenges that the subjects encountered during an activity that created *tensions and contradictions*. Engeström (2011) suggests that the participants, in their everyday lives, are confronted with challenges. The participants study the challenge/s and develop new ideas which are not expected of the researcher. However, because, in the case of this research, I stayed with the participants in their homes, I was able to put them at ease and explain everything about my intention of staying with them in their homes.

To understand the nested triangle concerning my research, the components of an activity system are unpacked as follows: *tools* or *instruments* were used by the *subjects* who are participants to operate the *object* which are all the literacy activities in the case of this study. *Tools* or *instruments* were used to mediate all the activities that the participants were engaged in. The *tools* such as the language, books, pens, charcoal, old papers, skipping rope were used at home while at school *tools* such as language, books, pens, pencils, chalk, chalkboard, desks, chairs, pointing sticks, charts were used. The *subject/s* are the participants or individual/s who were engaged in activity both at home and at school to act on an *object* using the *tools* to achieve a specific *outcome*. The *outcome*, in the case of this study, is literate children. Once children master literacy development they will be literate. The members of a group such as

parents, children, and siblings form the *community* in an activity system. The *community* that is referred to in this discussion is not the broader community where the study was conducted, rather the narrow *community* that is focused on a specific *object* being shared. In turn, the members of a *community* subscribe to certain *rules* which afford and sometimes constrain the behaviour. There is also sharing of the work amongst the members of the *community* which is referred to as the *division of labour*. This helps the work to be controlled.

3.5 Research process

3.5.1 Choice of the research site – District, school, and Community

As indicated in Chapter 1, this study forms part of a larger research programme that seeks to contribute towards an understanding of South Africa's complex literacy landscape and formulate strategies that may address the challenges of children's low levels of literacy achievement in isiXhosa, particularly in the Foundation Phase. I will now describe the context where the research was conducted. As an ethnographer interested in the social ways in which these children construct and are constructed by their social practices, I attended to the ways their habitus was formed through examining their literacy practices from their social settings, in the home activity system (HAS). The aim was to understand the social environment and background which shape these children's habitus as they engage with literacy practices in their social space.

The area of research is called KwaNomzamo according to Statistics South Africa, but the people who reside in that area call it Thabo Mbeki also known as Megacom. KwaNomzamo was the name of the informal settlement from where people were moved and relocated to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)⁴ houses which they call Megacom. Megacom is the name of the building company which built these RDP houses and because they were built during the then President Thabo Mbeki regime in 1999, people also call the place after his name. The place is now known as Megacom or Thabo Mbeki. I got this information when I was tracing the background of the place as I could not find the name Megacom from Statistics South Africa. None of the families who form part of the research knew the name KwaNomzamo. They all know the place as Megacom. I went back to the School Governing Body (SGB) member I met when I started with my research for help. She then called an old community member who was one of the people who first came to reside in the place during

⁴ RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is a South African socio-economic policy framework implemented by the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994 to address socio-economic problems, such as alleviating poverty and addressing the imbalances in the economy.

1999 when the RDP houses were built. She is the one who provided me with the history of the area and the origin of the two names, i.e., Megacom and Thabo Mbeki.



Figure 3.5: Both Megacom and Eziteneni community

This is one of the rural areas in the Eastern Cape that continues to be poorly developed, with many people lacking access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The area is situated 2 km away from Libode town. These houses were built for the people who were not working. The area has 854 RDP houses. Attached to Megacom is another informal settlement called Eziteneni just at the end of the area next to a big river and a forest (See the far-left lower part of Figure 3.5). This area was named after a small company that used to make red bricks, hence its name Eziteneni, meaning red bricks.

These RDP houses have electricity and piped water. Despite having piped water, water was scarce in the area. The area usually goes without water for more than a month to a year. This is what the community members said. During all that time I stayed with the four families, they had no water, they relied on the river that is next to the forest to get water to drink and/or cook. Those who had the means, hire vans (mini trucks) to bring water from the shops and some use their cars, but most of the community members did not have the means to fetch water. The water from the river is not clean as all the animals graze and drink next to this river. Fobosi (2013) argues that access to safe drinking water is a very important human need and is consequently perceived to be a human right that remains unrealised in most rural areas in the Eastern Cape. The whole area had no flush toilets (both Megacom and Eziteneni) and at Eziteneni no piped water, no electricity, and no built toilets at all, which poses health challenges. This community was chosen because many children in the school are from this community. Very few children come from other surrounding communities. It is also the closest disadvantaged community that is served by the school.

Sixty schools were purposively and conveniently selected by the larger project, the European Union Foundation Phase Cape Consortium research team and the school under study is amongst them. Patton (2002) suggests that purposive sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study. Different criteria were considered in selecting these schools. These included the quintile⁵ in which they fall, the language used as a medium of instruction, the accessibility of the school from town, and the number of Foundation Phase learners in each school. The project targeted non-fee-paying schools in Quintiles 1 and 2 in all the districts in the Eastern Cape. These schools also had to be using isiXhosa as their medium of instruction. The schools selected had at least 200 or more Foundation Phase (FP) learners and needed to be accessible. The project team, in their contextual profiling, went to all the selected schools and conducted interviews with the Foundation Phase teacher. One of the key questions they wanted to understand was whether Foundation Phase teachers were trained to teach in the FP. This also made me as the researcher for the current study to ask question when conducting interviews with the participant teachers as my research was going to be part of the research that is going to inform the larger study, EU FP Cape Consortium.

Many schools where isiXhosa is the medium of instruction are in the Libode, Mount Fletcher and Mount Frere districts of the Eastern Cape. These are also some of the most rural schools, where unemployment and poverty are high relative to other districts in the province. The study was conducted in Libode, a rural district of the Eastern Cape. Libode is one of the poorest areas of South Africa with an unemployment rate of 85% in 2008 and 97% of the people speak isiXhosa as the First Language (Wikipedia, 15/10/12).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:25), “A relevant research design situates the researcher in the empirical world and connects him or her to specific sites, persons, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretative materials including document and archives.” I selected the school through convenient sampling. Convenient sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where participants are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. I selected to work with only one school that was accessible and convenient as it is located 30 km away from Mthatha where I reside and it fulfilled the criteria

⁵ All South African public ordinary schools are categorised into five groups, called quintiles, largely for purposes of the allocation of financial resources where quintile 1 is the poorest and quintile 2 is the next poorest (Grant, 2013).

identified by the larger study, discussed in Section 3.5.1 above. The school offers a curriculum from Grade R up to Grade 9. IsiXhosa is used as a medium of instruction up to Grade 3; thereafter, English is used as a medium of instruction. Almost all grades had more than one class with four, three to two teachers per grade. The total number of teachers including the principal was thirty-four (34) (See Table 3.2. below).

Table 3.2: Total number of teachers in the entire school				
Total number of teachers including the principal	SMT members	Administrative member/s	Caretaker	Total
34	07	01	02	34

3.5.2 Sampling of children, homes, parents, and siblings

Children were selected from different homes but one school. There were some changes in the selection of children. I could not find children who did not attend Grade R; there was only one child who entered Grade R but left school early in February due to the lack of funds. Before the changes the sample criterion was as follows: (1) A child who did not attend Grade R; (2) A child who has siblings at home; (3) one child with parents who are working; (4) a child with parents who are not working. There were, however, some changes during the actual data collection as reported earlier. The reason for this criterion was that it would give me an insight into the literacy practices of different homes. This criterion did not operationalise as planned due to the nature and uniqueness of both the homes for the selected children as well as the school as reported. After the changes, the participants were: four children with their families who attended the same school and were all going to start Grade 1 the following year (2013) as the data collection was started in December 2012.

Table 3.3 contains biographical information about the families as well as profiles of the children who participated in the study.

Table 3:3 Participants biography in the study (families)

HAS	Parents	Gender	Age	Education	Employment	Housing status	Child	Gender
HAS1	Nosange	F	40	Grade 10	Unemployed	RDP house (not owner)	Angel	F
	Nicholas	M	44	Not known	Employed			
HAS2	Lizeka	F	37	Primary education	Unemployed	Informal settlement	Okuhle	F
	Sikho	M	47	No education qualification	Unemployed			
HAS3	Kholeka	F	43	ABET (not completed)	Unemployed	RDP house (not owner)	Kuhle	M
	Simbonile	M	47	No education qualification	Unemployed			

HAS4	Nomhle Sinethemba	F M	31 46	Grade 11 No education qualification	Unemployed Employed	RDP house (not owner)	Likho	M
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Because of the limitation of the time and access for fieldwork, I chose children who were in the same school and class as Stake (2007) suggests that our time and access as researchers for fieldwork are almost always limited. Since literacy practices are not easily changed, I decided to observe children before they start school for twenty days and continued after they have started school for forty days which equals sixty days of observation plus four days of the meeting with the principal and SGB chairperson.

3.5.2 Sample selection of teachers

The study's teacher participants were drawn from the feeder community of the school chosen for the larger project. Megacom is the most populous community, and its children attend this school. Though purposively selected, there were a few changes concerning the sampling procedure. One of the changes was with the number of teachers selected to participate in the study. Initially, only one Grade 1 teacher was selected to participate in the study, but due to the nature of the allocation of children in Grade 1 classes in the participating school, I ended up with four Grade 1 teachers who participated in the study. The sample in this research was twofold comprising four Grade 1 children with their parents and four Grade 1 teachers from a rural community of Libode district in the Eastern Cape Province. It was twofold in that it involved homes and children and the school and teachers.

Four teachers formed part of the study. The reason for having four Grade 1 teachers instead of one Grade 1 teacher as planned was that the school had two Grade 1 classrooms and four Grade 1 teachers, meaning, each Grade 1 class had two teachers. Also, due to the allocation procedure of the children into these classrooms, the children under study were not allocated in the same class, as I had anticipated. The teachers could not put them all in the same classroom as the allocation was done alphabetically. Therefore, three of the children were in the same class (Grade 1A) and the fourth one was in another class (Grade 1B). The total enrolment for the Grade 1 class was +128 with each class having 64 children. The tables below show the number of teachers in the school, as well as the number of teachers in each grade level in the FP, as well as their profiles, teaching experiences, and professional qualifications.

Table 3.4: Foundation Phase teacher's profile

Teachers	Gender	Grades taught	Years of training	Professional teaching	Teaching experience	Years Foundation Phase (FP) teaching
Hlumisa	F	1	3	Senior Teacher's Diploma	20	20
Zoleka	F	1	3	Senior Teacher's Diploma	6	6
Faith	F	1	3	Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma	19	19
Nathi	F	1	3	Primary Teacher's Diploma	22	17

I only met with the Foundation Phase teachers at school. I did not do the visits to their homes as I did with the children. All four teachers did not live in the RDP houses as children, three of them occupy their own houses in different parts of Libode. One of the three teachers owns a house right in Libode town and the two live in the nearby surrounding villages of Libode not very far from the school, but they also own their big houses. The fourth teacher lives in Mthatha and she used the transport that is used by other staff members to travel every day from Mthatha which is about 33,8 km to school. This shows that teachers occupy a different class and their social position is different from that of the children. This social conditioning of the teachers contributes to a specific habitus, the professional habitus, produced by the practices they come across as suggested by Nash (1999) that there must be more than one identifiable habitus within a class if the trajectories of people within a class are not the same. This means therefore that; the field of school education is where the teachers practice their power of agency. Below is the table showing the number of teachers per grade in the FP.

Table 3.5: Number of teachers per grade in the FP

Grade	Number
R	02
1	04
2	03
3	03
Total: 12	

3.5.3 The cyclic approach to this research

This study used a cyclical research approach whereby I spent a week at each home before school started (i.e., twenty days, five days with each child) and then returned when school started during the first term to spend another twenty days. During the second visit, I conducted a home-school observation and accompanied the child from home to school. During the third term, I also returned for another twenty days of home-school observation. This research was conducted in three phases: (1) identifying and visiting homes through the member of the SGB, the headman, and with the help of the school principal; (2) actual visits to the homes; (3) tracking the child from home to school.

I had the opportunity to conduct interviews with the Grade 1 teacher as part of a larger study, EU FP Consortium, prior to beginning the research. Before beginning my research, I approached the foundation phase teacher and scheduled a meeting with her. I began by meeting with the principal to request permission to enter the school. I forwarded the letter of permission (see Appendix 2) and requested permission from the principal to meet with the teacher at our first meeting in November 2012.

On our first meeting, we finalized the permission with the teacher and discussed methods of identifying the children as research participants. The principal suggested that we schedule another meeting and invite the chairperson of the SGB and a Grade R teacher to assist with the identification of the children. This was our second two-day meeting, which took place in November 2012. The Grade R teacher assisted with the names of the children who were in Grade R and were going to start Grade 1 in January 2013 from the class of 2012 register.

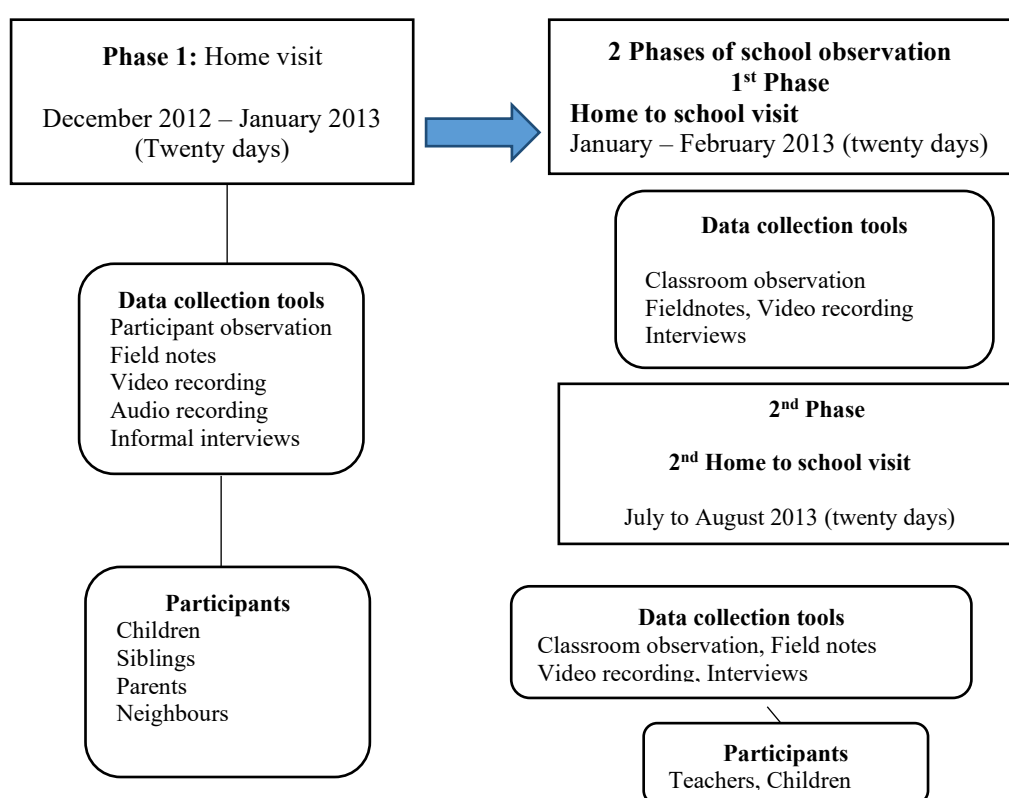
The principal identified Megacom as a disadvantaged feeder community with many children attending the school. Because she lived in the same community as the participant children, the SGB chairperson assisted in locating their homes and parents. Following this meeting, I requested that the SGB chairperson assisted me in gaining access to the community. She scheduled our first meeting with the parents, and I only met with the SGB member and the parents of the chosen children on December 5th, 2012, and that was the beginning of my relationship with the families. To gain trust, the SGB chairperson accompanied and introduced me to the families. Initially, the SGB member and the parents agreed that I would sit with them during the day and sleep with the SGB family at night. I did that on the first day, and we both realized it wasn't going to help my research because most of the activities took place in the evening, when everyone was at home. It was also unsafe for me to move from one family to the next due to the crime rates reported by the families. Hayward's study (2018) in Nyandeni confirms what the parents said that Libode is a high-crime area and that in 2018, 750 contact crimes were reported to Libode Police, with 87 of those crimes being murders. As a result, the parents unanimously agreed that I should stay with the family I was visiting and sleep with them.

Table 3.6: A summary of the processes and the days for Phases 1, 2 and 3 2.

The process of gaining access to the school and community	
School visit	Home visit
20/11/2012 First meeting with the principal for gaining access to the school and participant identification. 22/11/2012 Meeting with the principal, SGB member and Grade R teacher, to identify children and their homes. 01/12/2012 First meeting with the SGB member and parents of the participating children 05/12/2012 Meeting with the community leader to gain access to work in the community.	Phase 1 of data collection 10 - 14/12/2012 (HAS1) -First home visit for actual data collection for 5 days. 17-21/12/2012 (HAS2) - Second-home visit, 5 days 26-30/12/2012 (HAS3) - Third home visit. This is the only time of the two I spent weekends with the families because on Monday 24th which was Christmas eve and on the 25th I did not go. After all, it was Christmas day. I also spent five days. 03– 6/01/2013(HAS4) - Fourth home visit and I also used weekends as the 1st was a New Year's Day and I did not want to disturb the families. I also spent 5 days. Total for phase 1 = 20 days Phase 2 of data collection: home school visit 15-18/01/2013 (HAS1) - The first week of home-classroom observation with Angel, participant 1, four school days. 21-25/01/2013 (HAS2) - The second week of home-classroom observation with Okuhle for five days 28/01 to 01/02/2013 (HAS3) - Third week of home-classroom observation with Kuhle for five days. 04-08/02/2013 (HAS4) - Fourth week of home-classroom observation with Likho for five days. Total number of days for phase 2 = 19 days Phase 3 of data collection: home-school visit. 15-19/07/2013 (HAS3) -The first week of home-classroom observation with Kuhle. I Started with Kuhle my third participant (family arrangement) for 5 days. 05-09/08/2013 (HAS1) -- The second week of home-classroom observation with Angel for five days. 12-16/08/2013 (HAS2) - Third week of home-school observation with Okuhle for five days 19-23/08/2013 (HAS4) -Fourth week of home-school observation with Likho for five days. Total number of days for phase 3 = 20 days
The total number of days spent at the research site, including meetings with the principal, the SGB, the community, the teacher who was initially going to be the only participant for the research before the changes, and the community leader, was sixty-four.	

I spent a total of 60 days at the research site to collect all my data. The richness of the data and the way I immersed myself in the context of this research are what distinguish this study as a semi-ethnographic study rather than a case study. Table 3.6 above depicts the procedure for carrying out the research. Figure 3.6 below also provides an overview of the phases of data collection.

Figure 3.6: An is an overview of the summary of phases 1 and 2 data gathering strategies.



3.6 Methods of collecting data

From among the wide range of strategies that can be used in the field for data gathering in qualitative research, I utilised a multi-method-data-collection-approach (Bland and Tobbell, 2015) such as tools: participant observation, non-participant observation, interviews (See Appendix 10 for teacher's interviews) audio recording, video recording, and the field notes. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:4) suggest that these empirical materials and processes “describe the routine and problematic moment and meanings in individual's lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand”.

3.6.1 Participant observation

Ciesielska and Jemielniak (2018) identify three types of observation. Firstly, there is participant observation, where the researcher strives to engage him/herself in a specific culture over a period. Secondly, non-participant observation is where the researcher tries to understand the world, relationships, and interactions in a new way. Lastly, an indirect observation where the researcher relies on observation done by others on various types of documentation, and recordings. Mohajan (2018:23) states that “participant observation is one of the key

methodological principles where the researcher researches her subjects, not only as an observer but involved in the very culture under study”.

According to Becker and Geer (2007) observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said and questioning people over some length of time. Participant observation in nature enables the researcher to focus on depth rather than breadth of data. Denscombe (2017) states that the key to participant observation is preserving the naturalness of the setting and minimizing disruption so that participants can see things as they happen, unaffected by the fact that research is taking place. Gaining information about cultures or events that would otherwise be hidden from view if the researcher used other methods is important to Denscombe, which is why he chose ethnographic research for this study, which focuses on people's behaviours and cultural patterns.

In this research, I used both participant and non-participant observation. At home, as a field in Bourdieu's terms and an Activity System in CHAT's terms, I was a participant-observer while at school I used non-participant observation. Though Bourdieu sees the field as a social space where habitus is formed, and in the case of this study the field refers to home and school, I refer to home and school as Activity System throughout this study to capture the literacy practices as taken from both Activity Systems. During my stay with the families as a participant-observer, I was involved in almost every activity that took place at home, from assisting children with their chores during the day when the parents were not present, to accompanying them to the river to fetch water, and even going to the forest with the family on occasion (See one example of the activities at home in Figure 3.1).

At home, I observed and recorded the nature of the activities taking place between the children while they were alone during the day and in the evenings while they were together with their parents. The focus was on those activities which were literacy related as I wanted to understand the families' literacy practices that are their family habitus. During my stay with the families, I observed children when they were playing as well as doing their daily chores. I also observed parents when they were talking with their children and doing activities at home. At times I observed and participated in some daily home activities that were not literacy related as I was like a part of the family members.

3.6.2 Non-participant observation

At school, also as a field and as an Activity System, I was a non-participant observer. I did not take part in any classroom activities except for observing what teachers and children were doing in class. I only recorded (using both audio and video recording) and took field notes as well as conversed with the participants during break times about certain information observed in the classroom. During observation, I recorded using a Smart Scribe Pen which helped to write as it records simultaneously. Smart Scribe Pen is a ball-point pen with an embedded computer and digital audio recorder. It records while it writes for later uploading to a computer and synchronises those notes with any audio it has recorded. Later the pen gave me some problems such as after I came back from the field I had to focus on other things and start the writing-up process later. As the pen was not in use for a long time, when I came back to continue with my data from the pen, it was no longer working. After that, the Smart Scribe pen would no longer work but I used the computer to retrieve the data which the computer later also crashed, and I used the hard drive where I also backed up my data.

My observation at school had two phases. Phase one was at the beginning of the year when schools open, for twenty days. Most lessons observed were structured as summarised in the table below though there were differences in some instances. This is a typical isiXhosa literacy first lesson of the day when I observed these children at school for two periods of 20 days each.

Table 3.7: Classroom observation; CAS 1A and 1B

Phase 1 (January to February 2013)	
Participants and period of observation:	Number of isiXhosa lessons observed
Angel (CAS 1A): Teachers - Hlumisa and Zoleka 15– 18 January 2013	1 lesson (pattern drill)
Kuhle (CAS 1B): Teachers – Faith and Nathi 28 –January to 01/02 2013 (5 school days due to sports activity)	Pattern drill (daily) I I I I I; O O O O, m m m m;
Likho (CAS 1A): Hlumisa and Zoleka 04-08 February 2013	Pattern drill and vowels, a, e, i, o, u (5 days).
Okuhle (CAS 1A): Teachers – Hlumisa and Zoleka 21 – 25 January 2013	Pattern drill (daily) I I I I I I; O O O O and numbers 1 - 5
Phase 2 (July to August 2013)	
Angel (CAS 1A) 05 – 09 August 2013	3 lessons observed
Kuhle (CAS 1B) 15 – 19 July 2013	3 lessons observed - Reading, - filling in the missing vowels, - introduction of OO sounds
Likho (CAS 1A) 19 – 23 August 2013	4 lessons (1 lesson per day) - Word building
29/07/2013	1 lesson observed
Okuhle (CAS 1B) 12 – 16 August 2013	5 lessons observed (1 per day) Spelling task, vowels and consonants

While I conducted focused observations at school of each of my participants for one week, in CAS 1A where there were three participants, I also observed the other participants in CAS 1B. Table 3.7 above shows the periods I observed these children at school. Each afternoon I went back home with them to sleep over in their homes.

I was in both classes for twenty days. The number of days I spent in each class was determined by the number of participants enrolled in that class. The first observation's goal was to establish literacy practices at school in the Grade 1 classroom. The second phase lasted for another twenty days during the third term. I returned to the school for the second time because there had not been much progress during the first phase due to numerous school activities that diverted teachers' attention away from teaching time. In addition, my participants were only in Grade 1, and I wanted to track their literacy development at school during the second phase.

In the classroom, I observed and recorded the teachers teaching. The focus was on the teachers' teaching practices, especially their literacy lessons, although at times I also observed other lessons as well. Sometimes it would not clear if the teacher was going to teach literacy or another subject and at times the teacher would start by teaching literacy and in the middle of the lesson there would be a shift to another curriculum area and return to literacy again. Though I observed four teachers as I report in this section, in Table 3.8, the summary of the lessons given was that of a typical IsiXhosa lesson taught by two teachers (Hlumisa and Nathi). Lessons for the other two teachers (Zoleka and Faith) were not included as they taught English, and the study's focus was on IsiXhosa literacy lessons though sometimes English lessons were observed. Another reason to observe all four teachers was because of the role each teacher played during teaching such as keeping the discipline while the other teacher was teaching. Classroom observations were conducted for forty days in total in two Grade 1 classrooms with four teachers.

3.6.3 Video and audio recording

All the lessons at school, as well as literacy activities at home, were audio and video recorded to supplement observations and precisely capture all the incidents from all of the sites as they occurred, which aided me during transcription as I played and replayed them several times to aid the analysis process. The advantage of the videos was that I could ask participants to repeat events or sayings if something was not clear. Also, the participants were allowed to watch the videos and listen to the recording clips. Field notes were also used to support the observation. The Smart Scribe described in Section 3.6.2 above together with a notebook were used to

record field notes. These field notes were then transferred to the computer as a backup. Also, the researcher, during transcription, would call the participant's parents for clarity if there was any information that was not clear, or the researcher could not hear from the video or recorder.

3.6.4 Interviews

The interview, according to Denscombe (2008:174), "is a meeting intended to produce material that will be used for research purposes and the interviewee understands and agrees to it". The purpose of the interview was to develop an insight into the lives of children, parents and their teachers to understand what happens in the home and at school concerning literacy practices. There are various types of interviews and for this study, I used a combination of unstructured and semi-structured interviews because of their flexibility and that they have no predetermined set of questions (Srivastava and Thomson, 2009). This was because some of the literacy activities occurred spontaneously as children play and one could not predict what was going to happen at a given time and space. Hence the researcher chose the type of interviews elaborated in this section above and in the next paragraph.

In this type of interview (unstructured interview), the interviewer starts the conversation with a broad or holistic question which enables the respondent/s to be free to express their views. According to Arksey and Knight (1999:34) qualitative interviews allow the researcher to "explore ... things in-depth (and to learn) about the informants' perspectives and about what matters to them". Also, Keller and Conradi (2019) describe the semi-structured interviews that semi-structured interviews give an open framework that is a fairy and that creates the opportunity for respondents to focus and be able to express their views. Interviews enable participants (both the interviewee or interviewer) to explicitly make their perceptions, feelings, preferences, knowledge, attitudes and understanding about reality or the world clearer (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Given the nature of my research, interviews provided insight into participants' understanding of literacy and how parents' habitus shaped children's habitus. Therefore, primary data was collected through interviews with parents and teachers (See Appendices 9 and 10). Dejonckheere and Vaughn (2019) suggest that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to probe participants' views and opinions where it is desirable for respondents to expand their answers. This helped me to probe the parents and teachers about their understanding of literacy. Some of the examples of questions the researcher asked to teachers were 1). What is your understanding of literacy? 2). What literacy activities were you engaged in while you were

still a child? 3) Do you think literacy is important? 4) Why literacy is central or important in teaching? (See Appendix 10 for teacher's interviews for all other questions). Also, the questions asked to parents were 1) Do you know anything about literacy? 2) What is your understanding of literacy? 3) what literacy activities where you involved in when you were a child? (See Appendices 10) for parent's interview questions.

This offered the opportunity to ask questions about children's literacy practises at home and school such as the stories they tell, books they read, games they play. During this process, interviews were held with the following people: parents and the Grade 1 teachers to understand children's home and school literacy practices and to understand the interplay between home literacy and school literacy practices by identifying these literacy practices.

All interviews were audio-recorded, and transcription followed at the end of each week. Before data collection, I planned to transcribe the interviews at the end of each day but because of the nature of my research, this was not possible as I stayed with the children and their families. More activities occurred in the afternoons or the evenings when everybody was home. Because of this, I had to observe more activities that happened in the homes, and I participated as well. Most issues about this are explored further in the data analysis section.

3.7 Data analysis process

This section explores techniques employed in making sense of data analysis in the study. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data and should occur concurrently with data collection as the researcher can test any emerging conclusions (Maxwell, 2008). Gray (2009) and Bernard and Ryan (2010) also acknowledge that data analysis begins at the initial planning stages of the research study because data gathering, and analysis are interlinked. The presentation of data in qualitative research is presented in words as descriptive narration to understand situations as they occur in their natural settings (Mohajan, 2018).

Nevertheless, data analysis for this research could not happen simultaneously with data collection due to the reason/s explained in the interview section above. However, it did begin with the research process, sampling, and data collection tools. Cohen et al. (2007: 461) describe the process of data analysis as "...involving organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; ... making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities." Furthermore, they admit that "there is no one single or

correct way to analyse and present qualitative data; how one does it should abide by the issue of fitness for purpose” (Cohen et al., 2007: 461).

To analyse observation and interview data, I adapted Mwanza’s eight-step-model (columns 1 and 2 in Table 3.8 below) to formulate an observation scheme/schedule in column 3.

Table 3.8: Observation and interview schedule for home and school literacy practices (Adapted from Mwanza’s eight-step-model (Mwanza, 2001))

Activity system components	Question to ask	My adaptation
Activity	What sort of activity am I interested in?	Does the activity embed literacy development?
Object	Why is this activity taking place?	What literacy activities are done and for what purpose? How are they done? Does that enable or constrain literacy development? How and why?
Subjects	Who is involved in carrying out this activity?	Who is playing a leading role in each activity? How does the person enable or constrain literacy development? Are subjects fixed or rotational?
Tools	By what means are the subjects carrying out this activity?	What tools were used in both ASs and how were they used to develop children’s literacy? Did the use of these tools enable or constrain literacy development?
Rules and regulations	Are there any cultural norms, rules and regulations governing the performance of this activity?	Are there any said or unsaid rules or regulations that enable or constrain this activity system? Who monitors these rules?
Division of labour	Who is responsible for what when carrying out this activity and how are the roles organised?	Who does what in these literacy activities?
Community	What is the environment in which the activity is carried out?	What/who is the community in this activity system? How many members? What are their different characteristics?
Outcome	What is the desired outcome of this activity?	Does the activity lead to the development of a literate child?

Mwanza’s Eight-Step Model provided questions that the researcher used as an observation schedule on the various components of the Activity System as shown in Table 3.8. Transcription was one important tool for both interview and observational data to maintain the integrity and relaying information in an unbiased manner. Following transcription, information was coded to determine various themes and how they related to one another. After this process, the data needed to be interpreted to reveal new themes and categories, which were then discussed in Chapter 6, as well as the connections between those categories.

Themes that emerged were imitation, indigenous games, media as a tool to enhance children's home literacy practices, children's literacy engagement at home, teacher's qualifications, physical access and quality in education, ability grouping, the classroom – a space for literacy practices. The process of analysis was done in two phases, Chapters 4 (HAS) and Chapter 5 (SAS), after which I report the findings from both Home and School Activity Systems in Chapter 6. The findings reported were based on the observations from four homes of the participants and the two Grade 1 classrooms as well as from interviews from both parents and teachers. All the participants were isiXhosa speakers and all the communication including observations at home were in isiXhosa. The data set of observations which included children's play, reading and writing, storytelling and acting were done in isiXhosa and were translated verbatim into English for analysis purposes unless where is specified otherwise.

During translation, I tried to maintain the original words and meaning of the participants as much as I could. However, during translation, some of the originalities of the expressions were lost since some words in isiXhosa were difficult to find in English unless children used some English words in some of the games during play. An example of a skipping game with the name '*calendar 2013, January, February, March...*' and other games that are included in the transcriptions (see Appendices). The duration of the games and storytelling vary from home to home and not all of them are included in the presentation of data. The rest are included in the Appendices. The ones included and translated in the thesis are children's writings from the four HASs, storytelling for both children and parents, play where they were available as indicated in the summary of observation in Table 4.1 in Chapter 4.

Also, the data set of observations of literacy activities from both Grade 1 classrooms were transcribed from isiXhosa where the literacy activity was done in isiXhosa and translated into English except for where the literacy activity was in English. Refer to Table 3.7 of this chapter for the classroom lessons observed from both Grade 1 classrooms with four teachers. Although, teachers did allocation for the subjects they taught, almost all of them did teach literacy, whether it was isiXhosa or English and only one lesson from each teacher was presented in the data. I decided to select one isiXhosa literacy lesson to capture teacher's literacy practices and the way they teach. All other transcriptions were included in the Appendices (See Appendix 8). In the data, the first analyses presented were teacher's teaching lessons of literacy which intended to generate data to respond to the second research question which sought to examine

the literacy practices children encounter at school followed by teacher's interviews to understand their literacy habitus and their understanding of literacy.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Participant observation can pose ethical problems (Denscombe, 2008; 2014). Van der Mescht and Craig in the readings for case studies prepared for the research design course held at Rhodes University (2011) propose three key aspects to look at when discussing research ethics: (1) respect for democracy, (2) respect for truth, and (3) respect for persons. As much as I as a researcher expect freedom to investigate and ask questions, I have the responsibility to respect the subjects, be truthful in data collection and analysis and in reporting the findings and recognising the person's initial ownership of the data. I gave the participants verbal assurances about secrecy, consent, and confidentiality, and that I would return and show them videos and photos of their children before I used them for my thesis, which I did. I went back to the families of the participants and replayed the videos and showed them the photos I was going to use, and I gave them the liberty to choose whether they agree or did not agree that I should use their children's photos. I even left a copy of the video for each family. I did this because this study is a part of a larger Foundation Phase research project, and the photos were at some point requested during the development of a thematic guide.

I was aware that entering private homes to study children's literacy practices and their families was particularly sensitive as it involves invasion into personal and private space. I would like to emphasise that all these families and the whole community shared the same culture, values, language, and rurality with me. I was, therefore, accepted as one of them and they referred to me as teacher just like they did to all teachers. This was a familiar setup as many teachers stayed in the villages where they taught. As an adult, I would assume the role of a parent when the biological parents were not there. For example, I would go with them to harvest vegetables or mealies and guide them where necessary. Sometimes, children will have their arguments on this or that and I would intervene and guide them in a similar way as the parents would do.

Despite being called teacher, I was always aware of my position as a researcher, and I kept informing them that I was interested in finding out how their children were getting prepared for formal schooling. Again, I did not allow my academic status to dictate how I lived with each family and did not get any specific attention. For example, I slept on the reed mat just like the children. All in all, I respected and embraced each family's life without changing the norm.

I sought the written permission of all concerned - the school, the teachers, the parents, and the headman (See Appendices 2, 3, 4, and 6). I did not have written permission for the children as these were young children of six years old. Written and verbal guarantees were made that the research data would be used in no way that would harm the informants.

Since the study formed part of a larger programme, The European Union: Strengthening Foundation Phase Teaching and Teacher Education (EU: SFTE), I explained to the informants that some of the videos might be used by the project. I made a verbal promise that, before the use of those videos, written permission would be obtained from the parents as well as the teachers and that those videos identified would be re-played to the informants concerned before issued to the project and copies of the videos were made available to each family. This was to ensure the commitment of protecting the informants.

For ethical reasons, all informants' real names were replaced with pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. I talked to the parents about it, and all the mothers agreed to give their children pseudonyms⁶. Some used names that they claimed were unknown to the community or anyone else, and which were also not used by the families themselves. The informants were not compensated in any way for allowing me to stay in their homes. The only thing I did was to bring groceries for the duration of my stay with them. It should be noted that this grocery was not in any way a form of compensation, but it was an addition to what was going to be eaten. Apart from Okuhle's home, the other three homes had vegetable gardens with spinach, cabbage, potatoes, and mealies. During the interview process, informants had the freedom not to respond to any questions that made them uncomfortable. In cases where the participants would require to be briefed on the research findings, the research report would be made available to them.

As the study is part of the larger Foundation Phase research project as outlined in this section above, gaining access to schools was negotiated by the project and permission was granted by Rhodes University (See Appendix 1 for ethical clearance) and by the Department of Education at both provincial and district levels to the principal and teachers in schools. This means that I only needed the consent of the principal and the teachers involved in the study (See Appendices 2 and 3).

⁶ The names of the children, Okuhle and Kuhle are not for the same person. Okuhle is a girl and in isiXhosa, the 'O' usually signifies a girl.

The time and number of days that I spent observing in the classrooms were negotiated and agreed upon. Though I initially aimed to observe one Grade 1 class at a time, I ended up observing the two Grade 1 classes side-by-side because my participants were placed in two different classes, especially during my second visit. I moved between the two classes to observe literacy lessons as sometimes the teachers were not following the same timetable for each class. The hours spent, though, were equal to what Grade 1s spent at school each day and I would go out at the end of each school day at 12 o'clock midday. I was welcomed at school by the principal and the Head of Department for the FP as well as teachers. They were willing to work with me and were cooperative if I did not interfere with their work.

3.9 Validity and reliability

Maxwell, (1992) states validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques; rather, it is like integrity, character, and quality, to be assessed relative to purposes and circumstances. Since the study used a variety of perspectives – the interviews, observation, and field notes - triangulation brought them together and examined them as they were contrasted to give authority to both the findings and the comprehensiveness of how I treated the data. This promoted the quality of qualitative research (Flick, 2007) which entails using different data sources on the same phenomenon under study. As observed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005:208) “validity is not the triangle – a rigid fixed two-dimensional object. Rather the central imagery is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi dimensionalities, and angles of approach.” To ensure the integrity of the data, rich data was generated through interviews with the research participants and observations both in the home and at school over eight weeks. This provided a better picture of children’s and teachers’ literacy practices.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I described the methodological framework and the specific methods that I used in the research process. The chapter also included a description of the site and sample, research process, ethical considerations, and validity and reliability of the study. The chapter that follows presents and discusses phase 1 data collection of the Home Activity System in which the research was conducted.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS: PHASE ONE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data derived from observation and interviews during the home visits in response to the first sub-research question: What home literacy practices do children engage in before entering formal school? These data also included observing children during play as well as samples of their writings. The data selected and presented in this chapter include literacy-related activities that took place in the four homes during my first visits. This chapter analyses and discusses the four Home Activity Systems (HAS). It discusses issues such as the role of imitation in the development of children's home literacy, the role of indigenous games in the development of children's literacy, media as a tool in enhancing children's home literacy, and the role of parents, siblings, and neighbours in promoting children's home literacy development.

4.2 The role of imitation in the development of children's home literacy

According to the study findings, children at Nosange's, Lizeka's, and Nomhle's homes spent a significant amount of time imitating different types of songs, playing make-believe, gossiping, and using a non-functional cell phone. Kholeka's home was very quiet because no children visited Kuhle to play, and Kholeka was too busy with housework and caring for the small baby to sing to the baby or Kuhle.

4.2.1 Singing

This imitation of different genres of songs occurred mostly when children were with siblings or peers outside during the day or indoors, especially during the evenings, and not engaged in play or household chores. First, at Nomhle's home children sang rap music during the day. The children rapped in English, IsiXhosa, and a dialect known as '*tsotsitaal*' as shown in Likho's and Khanya's examples below.

1. **Likho:** Igama lam nguPaul ndihlala eBhofolo imin'imqaba-qaba ndidl'umnqgosho everyday uDud'uswelekile sisifo seswekile I'm sorry baby girl ndakuchol'udlaka-dlaka ndakutyis'ichakalaka ndakubona ngamalahle ndaqond'ub'u, mh tshe mh, mh tshe [after this each one does it alone]. *[My name is Paul. I live at Bhofolo, the day is fine I eat samp every day Dudu is dead from sugar diabetes. I'm sorry baby girl, I met you very clumsy and gave you chakalaka and saw you through charcoal and think that mmh.*
2. **Khanya** (peer from the neighbourhood): Igama lam ngu Khanya ndandivela eskolweni ndidlala usphamandla ndadibana nomjita wath'ubab'uswelekile ndangen'ekamereni ndaguqa ngamadolo ndath'unkos'uz'ubenam ndathath'intsimbi yam ndafak'imagazine ndathi khinxi khonxo ndangena

kwaMandlovu Ndabamb'ichicken burger ndathi xa ndiphuma ndadibana ne cherry ndayibuz'igama layo yathi ingu Nandi kwaye imnandi ndathi xa ndihamba ndadibana neChina lathi King Kong ndathi nying nyo *[My name is Khanya. I was coming from school and play sphamandla. I met a certain guy. He told me my father was dead. I went to my room and knelt on my knees and said God be with me. I took my gun and put the magazine and say 'khinxi khonxo' [this is a sound when the magazine is put into a gun]. I went to Mandlovu's place and bought a chicken burger. On my way out I met a girl and asked her name. She said her name is Nandi and she is nice. When I went on, I met a Chinese who said, 'king Kong' and I said 'nying nyo'*



Photo 1: Likho and Khanya rapping at Nomhle's home (14/02/2013)

Likho's and Khanya's rap music confirms Travis' (2012) finding that rap is known for including life themes such as the value of community experiences, community roles, and community goals, and it is used as a mode of communication for children's experiences as well as a discourse in the development of literacy. Their songs speak to lack of food, destitution, and the death of a father to mention a few experiences. Both children combined dancing, gestures and lyrics in similar ways as suggested by Cutler's (2007) research, which found that this type of music is performed by children in rural areas or [in low-income family homes]. Rap is also well-known for its grammar and creativity (ibid.), which is a good start for children to increase the complexity of their language. Alefeshat (2019) extends to say that while learning to use a new word, children gain the opportunity to pronounce it, and pronunciation is a skill that aids in communication. This music also encourages children to expand their vocabulary an important factor for learning which greatly developed children's listening skills. To follow the words and meaning of the rapping song, children paid close attention to the rhythms (ibid.).

In addition to rap music, religious songs were the most popular genres that were sung by children especially at Nosange and Kholeka's homes. Despite the absence of a TV signal at Nosange's home, a TV and a DVD player were used as tools to play these songs and they

stimulated Nosange's children to sing by imitating popular singers such as Rebecca Malope whose DVDs were frequently played. Nosange's children including Angel sang alongside Rebecca as the DVD was played. In some instances, they sang without the TV playing. Below are the lyrics of Malope's song.

Ngegazi lemvana, ngegazi lemvana ngegazi lemvana ngiyosindiswa. Abangani bam bandijikele bathi mina ndizenza ngcono ngalo Jesu wam inkosi yam oh bawo baxolele. (*By the blood of the Lamb, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the blood of the Lamb I shall be saved. My friends turn against me and say that I am doing better with my Lord Jesus my Lord oh father forgive them*) (13/12/2012).

In addition to commercial gospel songs, Lizeka's children including Okuhle sang church songs by heart while waiting for dinner imitating singing during church services that were attended by the whole family.

Song 1: Owaqal' esemncinci ukumkhonz'uThixo wakhe uyavuya yena. (*The person who began serving God at a young age is happy*).

Song 2: Noba ndihlupheka, noba ndihlupheka noba izihlobo zindishiya ndobekezela Jesu ndobekezela. (*Even if I suffer, if I suffer or if friends leave me, I will endure, Jesus, and I will endure*).

Song 3: Singabahambayo thina kulomhlaba siya ezulwini. (*We are the ones who travel from earth to heaven*) (27/02/2013).

In imitating these religious gospel songs, these children did not just absorb and repeat, but they engaged in high social cognitive abilities such as empathy, communication, and intersubjectivity (Zhou and Duo, 2016). According to Zhou and Dou (2016), learning by imitation is not limited to children and extends to adults. Their research documented the critical role imitation played in undergraduate university students. Imitation is a lifelong survival skill and strategy in developing literacy and culture. This finding strongly disagrees with many decades of strong criticisms, which labelled imitation as a "low-level, non-cognitive behaviour" (Ibid).

This imitation of songs at Lizeka's HAS demonstrates the importance of children's participation in this object of the home activity system as a major factor in their literacy development, which Kuhle at Kholeka's home lacked. This singing extends Pacheco and Gutierrez's (2009) suggestion that participating in such practices as religious activities allows children to build practice repertoires with resources to help them navigate the intercultural exchanges of everyday life. In this study, elderly people sang religious songs at church services, funerals, or even community celebrations such as weddings. According to Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) children engage in

activities that stem from observing and participating in cultural practices. The singing of these songs shaped these children's culture through observing their parents. These children are a great part of AmaXhosa, a South African dominant tribe that is largely associated with the history and culture of singing to express specific feelings such as joy, sorrow, fear, a desire for something, and despair (Hansen, 1981). According to Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016), songs are a rich and long-lasting resource from which young children can learn not only reading skills, but also mental, language, and social skills that will help them become active global and cultural citizens. Alefeshat (2019) added that music can help children develop their language skills. De la Fuente and Carol (2021) extend on the findings of Nomlomo and Sosibo (2016) and Alefeshat (2019) by seeing songs as a means of gaining access to language acquisition and a better understanding of culture. Team cohesion, interpersonal relationships, and a sense of community can all benefit from the song (de la Fuente and Carol, 2021). In the early childhood curriculum, songs are recognized as the most significant method of education (ibid.). Furthermore, songs are one of the ways in which cultural traditions are passed along (Tannen, 1982). For a child's literacy development, singing can be a fantastic place to start because it can improve children's listening and speaking skills, as well as their vocabulary, which will later improve children's grammar and pronunciation (Alefeshat, 2019). Imitation of songs provides a robust basis for literacy development (Mielonen and Paterson, 2009; Gooden and Kearns, 2013). The imitating of religious songs at Nosange's and Lizeka's homes supports Zhou and Duo's view that imitation has great potential because it "involves the ability to learn socially from others and to incorporate behaviours seen in others into the behavioural repertoire" (2016, p. 6).

However, it should be noted that these songs, in addition to developing home literacy, introduce children to cultures associated with the songs. Rap music that children sang was often cross-cultural and linguistic in nature, employing tsotsitaal and/or isicamto, and was associated with gangsterism, crime, violence, and an explicitly male-dominated world, which may lead to young children imitating inappropriate behaviours. Khanya's raps involve murder, vengeance, and viewing women as objects of men's desire. Unlike Christian songs, the rap music activity system required parental supervision before children's characters could be formed.

4.2.2 Rhyming

Another finding was that Kuhle engaged in rhyming with his mother at Kholeka's home. Children's literacy skills improve when they participate in rhymes with their parents and older

siblings. They learn a lot about the meaning of words while rhyming with their peers and sometimes with their parents at home and in the community. Kuhle's mother, Kholeka, also assisted Kuhle with the rhyming. The following is an example of a rhyming activity performed by Kuhle with the help of his mother.

Kuhle: Intaka ezimbini zikhwele'emthini. *Two birds, climb on a tree.*

Kholeka: Yathi enye. Awuyazi na? *The other one said. Don't you know? [His mother reminds him]*

Kuhle: Yathi enye ubona ntoni phaya, yathi enye masizimeleni yathi enye i... ithini? *The other one said, what you see there. The other one said let us hide and the other one said ... what did it say? [Asking from his mother]*

Kholeka: Asoyiki thina. *We are not afraid [whispering on Kuhle's ear]*

Kuhle: Asoyiki thina, sakhal'isabham sathi gqu isabham, sakhal'isabham sathi gqu isabham. *We are not afraid, there comes the sound of the gun.*

Kuhle's mother guided him through the rhyming activity, and during this process scaffolding becomes core as she helped Kuhle when it was needed. This guided process is critical in children's overall literacy development before they enter formal schooling. The family and home literacy environments, according to Bonci (2008), have a significant impact on children's early literacy development. Prior to entering formal schooling, home literacy environments and parental literacy interactions are regarded as critical components in children's overall literacy development. A rich home literacy environment (HLE) fosters students' academic achievement, according to Dong, Ying, Dong, and Tang (2020). As a result, it is believed that the family and home literacy environments have a significant impact on children's early literacy development (Bonci, Mottram and McCoy, and Cole, 2011).

4.2.3 Imitation and sharing of narrative stories

I found that children imitated and shared narrative stories in different ways and at different times of the day. As an illustration, when alone during the day, whether they were outside, inside the room, or gathered in a commonplace, they would sit down, form a circle, and begin to tell stories. I also observed stories being told late at night while children waited for food and at bedtime. There were also moments of storytelling among members of the community, including parents, older siblings, and children.

The following is an example of a story told by a neighbouring boy, Lunga, the older sibling from the larger community, at Nomhle's home (Megacom). Unlike other stories told during the day or evening, this one by Lunga was told in the afternoon when the children were gathering and was told in isiXhosa. Likho was the only participant present because the activity was close to his home and far from the homes of the other participants.

Lunga: *There were many animals, and they love food. Some were eating others. The snake was eating an animal. All of them were eating each other. The tiger called all the animals. He said they should come and not eat each other. They should try and eat together, work together, and put the food in one room, and then one of the animals should look after it. He said they were going to plough and brought them food. All the other animals agreed except the jackal who refused to do that. (The group disturbed him, and he tried to quieten them. He continued with the story). The jackal said he would not be able to do that. Why he should carry the food while they saw how he looked. The other animals said, ok, you just sit and don't listen. But the jackal went and when he went, they said they should go and look after the food that was left. The big animal went and looked after the food. The jackal came and sang a nice song. Everyone listened to that nice song, and he entered where there was food and sang nicely for the big animal and he fell asleep. After he slept, he ate all the food that was kept and went away. After he went, the big animal woke up and when he looked there was no food. He woke up and called all the animals...*

These stories gave children the chance to tell their stories using a variety of information. This finding supports Mui and Anderson's (2008) finding that older children learn different ways to present information to younger children, teaching them important literacy knowledge while also enhancing and reinforcing their literacy.

Below is an example of bedtime story by Zimi, Angel's younger sister at Nosange's home.

Zimi: Kwahla-kwahla kwayintsomi indaba zolwimi zimnandi. Kwakukho uDengana noLumnkwana. Wathi uLumnkwana masiye emotweni. uDengana wathi masiqale siye etown siyothengela abantwana ikeyki. Hayi yintoni emasiyithenge kuqala. Masiyothenga iyogathi. Bahamba, bathatha iibhegi zabo ezazinzima. Bathatha iibhegi zabo bahamba bagoduka. bathi abantwana basezilalini. Yayingumnkwana noDengana kuphela kunye noPhekeza gqikishakha. uPhekeza wafunda wathi uDengana hayi ndifuna ukugoduka. Ndifuna ukudlala eskolweni. uLumnkwana wathi, awuyi eskolweni sifuna ukudlala nawe. uLumnkwana wahamba noDengana wahamba waze wathi uLumnkwana asiyi eskolweni. Liphela apho ke ibali. *Once upon a time, false news is nice. There were Dengana and Lumnkwana. Lumnkwana said let's go to the car. Dengana said let's first go to town to buy children's cakes. No, what should we buy first? Let's buy a yoghurt. They went, they took their bags which were very heavy. They took their bags and went, they went home. They said the children were in the village. That is Lumnkwana, Dengana only, and phekeza gqikishakha (Referring to other names). Phekeza learned and Lumnkwana said no I want to go home; I want to play at school. Lumnkwana said you are not going to school we want to play with you. Lumnkwana went, Dengana went and Lumnkwana said, we do not go to school. That was the end of the story.*

Zimi's story demonstrated how young children develop their communication skills by listening to and watching their older siblings tell stories. According to research (Gooden and Kearns, 2013), learning to communicate is an important developmental skill for children in early

childhood because it allows them to interact with the people in their environment. Parlakian and Sa'nchez (2006) expand on Gooden and Kearns' findings, arguing that children learn to communicate within the context of their home culture. My research findings about the way that Zimi told the story confirm the findings of Gooden and Kearns (2013) and Parlakian and Sa'nchez (2006) that Zimi used language such as, once upon a time, she learned from her siblings when they told stories as well as her everyday language she learned from the community.

Furthermore, according to Gooden and Kearns (2013), understanding and expressing one's thoughts, feelings, and information is an important part of young children's communication development. Zimi's story included her understanding and knowledge of playing and going to school. Angel was present during Zimi's storytelling, but she did not participate because it was not her turn to tell a story. Zimi was conflicted about what was going on in the story. According to Mallan (1991), telling their own stories helps children's intellectual, social, and emotional development. Her expressions, such as body movement involving the eyes, head, and hands as she imitated the animals in the story, contributed significantly to her language development, which also confirms Gooden and Kearns (2013) finding that child's language begins with head, eye, and body movements, as well as simple vocalizations and hand movements. Language expression progresses to words, sentences, and conversations through a variety of methods such as gestures, spoken words, and sign language, and a child must have one of these functional means of expressive language before beginning preschool (ibid.). These expressions aided Zimi's literacy development because they allowed her language skills to grow.

Even though both stories are about animals, they contain elements of creativity, confirming Palmer, Harshbarger, and Koch's (2001) assertion that storytelling is a rich interactive process that fosters imagination and creative thinking. The way Lunga, one of the neighbouring children, narrated the story (as cited above Zimi's story), revealed that he is a novice storyteller, so he could tell the story as is, whereas Zimi is an average storyteller because she was creative and included even her own ideas and incorporate them into their daily lives. According to Palmer, Harshbarger, and Koch (2001) children actively construct their own understanding and language abilities during storytelling which in the case of Zimi were cakes and yoghurts which were unusual to include in a story about animals. These ideas, which she incorporated into the story, were not present in traditional storytelling.

These story moments gave children the opportunity to be exposed to the rich and complex form of language thus promoting their narrative skill that they learn when they tell stories. According to Ergul (2012), narrative is a fundamental type of discourse that underpins all forms of communication. The gathering of these children with older siblings facilitated their literacy development because of the various literacy activities in which they participated, which the children benefited from during play. This demonstrates that becoming literate necessitated not only interaction with books and writing materials, but also involvement in other literacy activities such as storytelling.

Another example of imitating and sharing narrative stories was done at Nomhle's and Nosange's home through other forms of literacy practices such as make-believe play, also known as 'role-play,' they called 'Isixoxiso,' using old books, papers, a pen, and/or a pencil to act out the game whether the pen was writing or not. This game was played by children when they gather during the day in the absence of their parents and sometimes when the parents were at home. The children usually act out events that occurred in the community, what they heard from their parents or other community members, and even things they wished for as shown in the example below.

1. **Siwaphiwe:** Vula incwadi (*Open the book and poke with the pencil at these people*)
2. **Likho:** Nkqo, nkqo, nkqo, nkqo [*Knock, knock, knock, knock*]
- 1 **Khanya:** Ngena (*Come in*)
- 2 **Likho:** Uzivile ezandaba ekuthiwa kwaban-ban kwenzeke ingxak'ethile funeka sikhe siye pha aba bantu abaya kuthiwa abaya bantu babulele kodwa zababo aba zabebile kodwa babo bathi bona kwebi lo kodwa babo aba zebebile mas'khe siye pha siqonde (*Have you heard the news that there's been some trouble at so and so's place. We should go there to those people because it is being said that those people have killed but it's them... but it's them that they stole there. They said they've been robbed but it's them who stole. Let's go there and find out?*)
- 3 **Khanya:** Bazothini bona aba bantu? (*What are they going to say to those people?*)
- 4 **Likho:** Nkqo, nkqo, nkqo, nkqo (*Knock, knock, knock, knock*)
- 5 **Khanya:** Ngena (*Come in*)
- 6 **Likho:** Ye wena uzivil'ezandaba kuthiwa aba bantu [suxoxisa wena, emnqanda ngesandla], uzivil'ezandaba kuthiwa aba bantu bona kuthiwa babo aba bebile. Ndafika ekhapha kugcwele kuthe qhu, ndaqond'uba ngamehlo am na. Hayi ke nyani lo mntu lo maskhe siyobambisa yena inoba azovuma amapolisa akanongavumi amapolisa. Nkqo, mkqo, nkqo emapolisene. Niphilile mapolisa (*Have you heard the news that... don't poke on the book yet... Have you heard the news that those people... it is said that they are the ones who stole? When I arrived here it was full and I thought to myself, is it my eyes or what? That's it, let's go to this person right here... Let's go and call the police. I hope the police will allow us. Knock, knock, knock at the police station. How are you police? ...*)

Likho and Khanya used gestures to emphasize the meaning of the action being imitated during isixoxiso, confirming Frank and Jewett's (2001) finding that gestures and verbal action are used as modes of bodily communication. During isixoxiso, Likho and Khanya poked with a pen and a book, whether the pen was writing or not. Though this activity has a positive aspect

in that it teaches children proper pencil handling, which will help them when they start school, poking the books, on the other hand, has a negative impact because children scratch the book during the process. In the long run, this activity may cause children to disregard books as valuable resources. Poking also encourages children to develop reading habits such as line reading rather than pointing to words, which contradicts formal school practices. Poking may align well with Snow's et al (1998) stage 1 of reading development, emergent pre-reading which occurs in the first five years of life, where children sample and learn from a wide variety of pictures, stories, exposure to print, reading and writing materials, and casual speech.

According to Joseph, Ramani, Tlowane, and Mashatole (2014), this game is more than just role-playing characters, representing everyday scenes, miming actions, and narrating a story; it is also a design game in which children visualize objects or situations and begin to replace them, which is known as an imaginary game. Likho and Khanya acted out scenarios like people dying, theft, and robbery in this game. Based on their social context, their role playing revealed that they were aware that when such events occurred, police should be involved, and the perpetrator of the crime should be reported and apprehended.

This game includes a narrative element in which Likho, and Khanya tell the story of an event that occurred while sharing stories and role-playing. Narrative enhances children's literacy development by allowing them to hone their narrative skills while acting and/or narrating the event. Narrative skills are one of the early literacy skills that researchers believe are necessary for children to learn to read and assist children in comprehending what they hear and read (Idaho Commission for libraries, 2009). This study's findings contradict those of Girolametto, Wiigs, Smyth, Weitzman, and Pearce (2001); Scarborough (2001); and Paul and Hernandez (1996) claim that some children from disadvantaged backgrounds enter school with insufficient pre-existing knowledge of narrative structures and, as a result, have greater difficulty meeting the demands of school life and are more likely to be identified as having learning difficulties. According to Berk and Meyers, pretend play is important because it allows children to reconstruct familiar situations by role-playing characters, representing everyday scenes, miming actions, and telling a story (2013). Joseph et al. (2014) agree with Berk and Meyers that pretend play is important because it helps children's minds develop by representing everyday scenes, miming actions, and narrating a story.

4.2.4 Gossiping (ukugobhoza)

Another finding from this study was that one of the literacy practices that took place at Lizeka and Nomhle's homes occurred when children gathered during playtime. It happened when the children were alone during the day and sometimes when they were with their parents, especially at Nomhle's house, where she was always present during the day because she was not working at the time of my research. Children were able to practice their language skills through literacy activities such as acting. As shown in the example below, gossiping (ukugobhoza) was about Zizo, a sick woman who had just returned from Durban, sick with HIV/AIDS. Though ukugobhoza was performed by Siwaphiwe, Likho's sister, and her friend Nandi, all the children, including Likho, my participant, were present.

- 1 **Nandi:** Masidlaleni ukugobhoza. Sithi uZizo watshipha (*Let us play gossip and say Zizo never come back from work*)
- 2 **Siwaphiwe:** Wabuya, wabuya seyephelile (*When she came back, she was finished*)
- 3 **Nandi:** Washiya umntwana wakhe elusana uyabo (*She left her child while she was very young, you see*)
- 4 **Siwaphiwe:** Hayi, hayi, hayi (*No, no, no*)
- 5 **Nandi:** Ok! Watshipha wabuya, wabuya se esislender engathi yingalo, uyabo (*Ok! She stayed and when she came back, she was so slim like an arm; you see?*)
- 6 **Siwaphiwe:** Ewe (*Yes*)
- 7 **Nandi:** Ye mamgo (*Mamgo*) [meaning gossipers]
- 8 **Siwaphiwe:** Nkqo-nkqo (*Knock, knock*)
- 9 **Nandi:** Ngena mamgo (*Come in Mamgo*)
- 10 **Siwaphiwe:** Mholweni (*Hallow*)
- 11 **Nandi:** Ewe (*Yes!*)
- 12 **Siwaphiwe:** Ubuville uba la mfazi kuthiwa ubuye egoli ephelile (eqhwaba izandla) engaka (elinganisa ngomnwe) (*Have you heard that that woman came back from Gauteng very sick? [Clapping hands] like this, [showing her finger] ...*)

In the preceding example, only Siwaphiwe, Likho's sister, and Nandi from a neighbouring house pretended to be gossipers. Nandi suggested to Siwaphiwe that they play ukugobhoza about Zizo, who had gone to work and never returned. They both began brainstorming ideas for the pretend play about Ziso. Siwaphiwe suggested that they pretend Zizo was ill when she returned, and Nandi added that Zizo had left her young baby at home when she went to work. They also agreed that she never returned from work, but when she did, she was extremely thin and sick. This game has rules that both girls must agree on before beginning ukugobhoza, such as the type of topic to gossip about, as shown in lines 1–6 of the above example. This is a type of pretend play in which children act out a scene.

Pretend play has the potential to improve children's literacy because it promotes specific skills and language development in children, which leads to improved learning. Bergen and Coscia

(2001) report on the role of pretend play in the development of children's cognitive skills, claiming that pretend play is more likely to engage many areas of the brain, promoting the development of dense tight connections. Zosh, Hopkins, Jensen, Liu, Neale, Hirsh-Pasek, Solis and Whitebread (2017) expand on Bergen and Coscia's (2001) suggestion that children can practice new skills during pretend play. It was significant when the game took on the form of imitation because it allowed children to incorporate other people's ideas (Joseph et al., 2014). It also aided Likho, as an audience member, in learning and developing thinking skills, as well as promoting problem-solving skills in new and interesting ways. While acting out scenes, these children were able to explore their cultural identities. Gutierrez and Rogoff (2003) contend that common human ways of doing things can be studied from a cultural and historical perspective to comprehend the individual history of involvement in various communities, such as race or nationality, as well as others, such as education or religious community.

These children paint a picture of HIV/AIDS in this role play by mimicking the behaviours of those around them and practicing the behaviours they are experiencing, demonstrating that to reduce the stigma of not knowing, children must be taught about diseases such as HIV/AIDS at a young age so that they become well-informed and compassionate adults.

4.2.5 Cell phone

I also found that while these children in my study did not have access to functional electronic gadgets such as cell phones, they did have access to an old phone that was no longer functional, which they used to pretend to make calls during their playtime, according to my observation of this research. Regardless of their background, these children observed their parents using cell phones and were able to imitate the use of the only non-functional device available to them. My finding revealed that the only cell phone children had access to at Lizeka's house was an old one that they used when playing during the day, implying that they had little exposure to electronic gadgets. The image below shows an Okuhle pretending to use a non-functional cell phone.



Photo 2: Okuhle pretends to be on a call using an old phone.

The above example shows Okuhle at Lizeka's home engaged in school play during the day with her sister, Alizwa, and the other older siblings from the neighbouring homes. While Alizwa and the other children were busy focusing on writing, Okuhle was busy pretending to be in a call using the non-functional cell phone that they have access to at her home. Having no access to working gadgets such as cell phones did not hinder these children from Lizeka's home from communicating through pretend play using the non-functional phone that was available to them. Children who pretend to use cell phones have the advantage of engaging in language and developing communication skills by imitating their parents' use of cell phones. While research by Flewitt and Clark (2020) shows that devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers enable children to search for information, play games, and watch programs, even the children in my study learned how to use the devices by observing their parents because their older siblings did not own any of these devices though they did not use the gadget for searching information, watch programs or even play games.

This analysis about children's imitation contributes a great deal to children's literacy development because of the role played by activities such as singing, sharing narrative, gossiping as well as cell phone use. It should be noted that imitation was a common factor in all the reported games, including role-play (isixoxiso) because children imitated all the games from what they learned in their community. The games children imitated were all spoken/or oral literacy activities and very few use books or pen and paper. Imitation, according to Meltzoff, Kuhl, Movellan, and Sejnowski (2009), is required for many socio-cognitive abilities because it accelerates and multiplies learning opportunities. When children internalise the perspectives of other people through play, the mind develops. During this process, children use symbolic play, including language to transform their everyday reality through their imaginative representations (Joseph et al., 2014). According to Hoff (2005), communicating with imaginative friends allows children to practice and extend their creative thinking. The various

pretend activities in which the children participated were a result of what they observed their parents and older siblings doing in their daily practices, which confirms Gutierrez and Rogoff's (2003) definition of linguistic and cultural repertoires as activities that children engage in because of observing and participating in cultural practices. They also confirm that children's interests, combined with their individual background experiences, can prepare them to engage in specific forms of language in literacy activities (ibid.). According to Pacheco and Gutierrez (2009), participating in these practices allows children to develop repertoires of practice with resources to help them navigate the intercultural exchanges of everyday life.

4.3 The role of indigenous games in developing children's home literacy

It was noted that while parents were away during the day, children from Nomhle, Nosange, and Lizeka's home engaged in indigenous games such as 'Umlabalaba' (boardgame), skipping rope, and riddles. As noted in the Section 4.2 above, Kuhle at Kholeka's home had very limited exposure to a variety of literacy activities that my other three participants engaged in because there were no children visiting him to play.

4.3.1 Umlabalaba (boardgame)

Umlabalaba is an indigenous game that can be played by two people at the same time using a board and two sets of stones, one painted black whilst the other was red. Children in my research, at least at Nomhle, two children, Likho and Khanya, played umlabalaba using a paper with a square and sharp points at the corners written with a pen. When children from impoverished communities, like the ones in my study, play the game, they use tools like handwritten paper or a scrapped box, as well as small stones. Before Likho and Khanya played the game, I interviewed members of the community, including Nomhle and her children, as well as a neighbour who joined the conversation later, about the purpose of playing umlabalaba, its significance, and the benefits of participating in the game. See the extract from the interview below.

An interview about umlabalaba game at Nomhle's home (20/08/2013)

Interviewer: Yintoni injongo yokudlala umlabalaba? *What is the purpose of playing Mlabalaba?*

Khanya: Wenza ukuba ube fast. *It makes you to be fast.*

Interviewer: Ube fast enini? *Be fast in what?*

Nomhle: Ube fast ekucingeni especially ekubaleni. *To be fast in thinking especially in counting.*

Likho: Ewe ukwenza ucinge, ubale fast. *Yes, it makes you think and count fast.*

Interviewer: Kwenzekani emntwini othatha ixesha elide ukucinga. *What happens if a person takes a long time to think?*

Siwaphiwe: Uyaphuma. *He is out.*

Interviewer: Wazi njani ukuba umntu uthatha ixesha elide ukucinga? *How do you measure if someone takes long to think?*

Siwaphiwe: Siyambona. *We see him.*

Interviewer: Nawufundiswa ngubani umlabalaba? *Who taught you Mlabalaba?*

Likho: Ndawufundiswa ngumhlobo wam yena wawufundiswa ngu sisi wakhe yena ewufunde esikolweni waza wandifundisa mna ndazobafundisa apha ekhaya. *A friend of mine taught me and he was taught by his sister and his sister learn about it at school and he taught and then I taught them here at home.*

Interviewer: Kodwa angathi uwazi ngaphezu kwalomntu wakufundisayo nje? *But it looks as if you know it more than the person who taught you?*

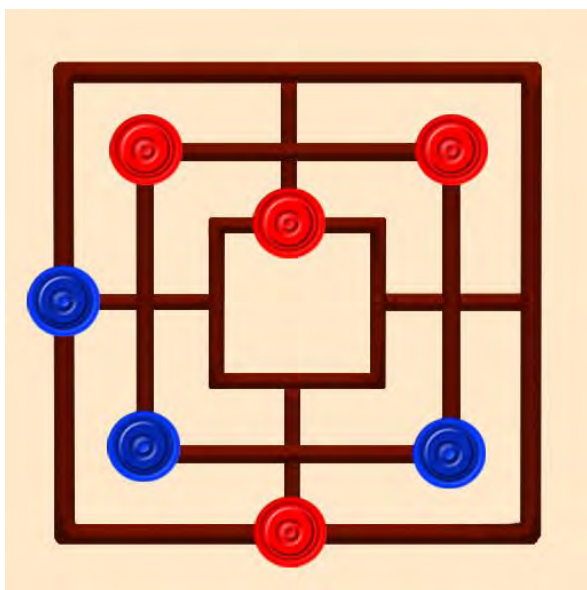
Nomhle: Nam ndamfundisa kuba bendiwazi ndiwazela eHigh School. Besidla ngokuwudlalo eHigh School. Yiyo lento uLikho ekhangeleka eclever kungoba ndamfundisa. [kwangena ummelwane wacela ukubajoyina adlale nabo]. *I also taught him because I knew about it from High School. We used to play it at High School. This is why Likho is clever it's because I taught him.*

Interviewer: Uqhelile ukudlala nabo? *Are you used in playing with them?*

Neighbour: Ewe [ummelwane noNomhle bevuma bobabini]. Ewe ndidla ngokudlala nabo. *Yes [both Nomhle and the neighbour agree]. Yes, I use to play with them.*

According to the interviews, both children and their parents enjoyed playing the game because they saw it as something that encourages quick thinking and counting, which will help children's literacy development. This statement confirms Nkopodi's (2009) observation about Morabaraba, Sesotho name for Mlabalaba, that learners enjoy playing the game even though he saw it as benefiting them in Mathematics in the classroom, which was also confirmed by my participants that the game aids in counting. Many of them confirm that playing Mlabalaba improves one's ability to think quickly and count, as evidenced by Khanya, Nomhle, and Likho in lines 1–6. The Mlabalaba experience and views that children gain from playing the game can be translated into the classroom if teachers are aware of such games that children engage in at home, as the game connects well with what the school requires. Furthermore, the level of participation among all role players as community members aided children's communication skills. All this conversation about Mlabalaba took place before the game started by Likho and Khanya as explained below.

Likho and Khanya played the game with stones they found outside, and each child had three of them, which they called iinkomo (cows). Their stones were similar, but each child had to keep a close eye on his stones throughout the game to avoid losing them. When they began, the paper was clean with squares, and Khanya began placing the stone on the outside line, followed by Likho. They kept going until each of them had all three stones in a row to win. According to my observations of the game, each child wanted to place his three stones on any of the lines on a piece of paper, as shown in the example of a board below.



Source: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.millgame.alignit&hl=en_ZA&gl=US

When umlabalaba is played, there are two teams which represent the community, with two players chosen from each side of the community. In the case of my research there were two players, Likho and Khanya, the researcher and Likho's mother as part of the community who were watching while the players play. This game enabled children's literacy development as it involves communication of the rules before the players can start playing which confirms Nkopodi and Mogege (2009) suggestion that the indigenous game Morabaraba [seSotho version of Umlabalaba], as they call it, encourages spontaneous interaction among children by allowing them to communicate their activities to other participants. My findings about the Umlabalaba game confirm the findings of Nkopodi and Mogege's (2009) research, which found that children played an active role in communicating this activity. Players (*community*) must communicate and agree on the rules to be followed during the Umlabalaba game. The rules may be changed during the game, but the players must agree on how the rules should be changed. Both players follow the same *rules*, and there are win-win situations in the game, and each player wants to win (Nkopodi and Mogege, 2009). When playing Umlabalaba, children take turns, and one of the rules was to give up and allow another member of your team to take over and continue the game until all members had had their turns. Because the game is played by communities as well as cultures, it has cultural aspects and can be used in South African classrooms for teaching and learning (Nkopodi and Mogege, 2009). This game promotes school readiness in children by incorporating brain, eye-hand coordination, and critical thinking, all of which are important for the development of fine motor skills in young children

as well as communication skills, which later prepares children to hold pencils and books correctly when they begin school.

4.3.2 Skipping rope.

Another finding of indigenous games was ugqaphu (skipping rope), in which children participated in groups of four to five (community). Two children held the rope while the other two or three skied simultaneously. It was the most popular game in at least three HASs (Nosange, Lizeka, and Nomhle), and it was known by various names such as calendar 2013, Emely wulazana (played as a song), and likhabe elohashe [kick that horse], with girls dominating. Except for the calendar 2013 game, which was played in English, all the skipping games were in isiXhosa and the rules were the same for all of them, as shown in the examples below.



Photo 3: Skipping game at Nomhle's and Nosanges's homes.

The game was typically played by four children, with two holding the rope and the other two skipping. The two players would skip as they said the game's words and the times for skipping would vary depending on whether the game was in the form of a song or a saying. For example, if two children holding the rope say calendar 2013, the first player must be prepared to skip three times calling the first three months of the year, (January, February March), and the second player must do the same calling the following three months (April, May, June) and so on until all the months of the year has been said. On the second round, two months of the year (January, February) are called, and each child is expected to skip twice; on the third round, one month of the year (e. g. January) is called, and each child is expected to skip once, and the next player calls the second month and so on. The player should avoid being touched by the rope whenever she skips. If the rope accidentally touches you, the player is out, and she takes the rope, and the person who was holding the rope joins the skipping game, and so on.

This is one game that promotes language development that children bring with them to school. The language was used as a *primary tool* to enhance literacy development and the *material tool* used for the game was the skipping rope. The game also promotes children's vocabulary which is a strong predictor of reading success, particularly for English. The finding of this game reveals that in its current form it encourages children to play in groups (*community*), giving them the opportunity to practice eye-hand, mind-body, and body coordination while communicating. Mielonen and Paterson (2009) claims that the game's communication skills aid in the development of reading comprehension and vocabulary. Alefeshat (2019) agrees with Mielonen and Paterson (2009) that one aspect of literacy promoted by the skipping rope game is vocabulary, which is an important factor in learning any language.

4.3.3 Riddles

The study also discovered that riddles were a type of game that children enjoyed. The game took place only at Nomhle's home. This game has *rules* such as taking turns and being punished on the hand if the answer is incorrect. It was a fun game that the children enjoyed, and it was also done in the evening to go along with the storytelling. The game riddles are illustrated below.

1. Likho: Rayi-rayi ndinanto yam... ndinanto yam ndiyijula iphind'ibuye [bephakamisa izandla ukuze abakhombe] *Rai-rai I have something that I throw, and it comes back again [Children lift their hands]*
2. Siwaphiwe: Ngamehlo [Eyes]
3. Likho: ndinanto yam, ndinabafazi bam bapheka bedunuselene. *I have my thing; I have my wives when they cook, they cook back-to-back.*
4. Hlehle: Zinzipho. *These are nails*
5. Likho: Ndinanto yam, ndina... ndinahatshi lam aliphali lingenamsila [baphakamisa izandla kwakhona, akhombe umhlobo] *I have my thing; I have my horse cannot ride without a tail [they all lift their hands, and she points to her friend]]*
6. Hlehle: Yinaliti [it's a needle]
7. Siwaphiwe: Hayi wena miss awundikhombi. *No Miss you you don't point on me.*
8. Likho: Xa itheni? [What about it?]
9. Hlehle: Xa ingafakwanga naliti... xa ingafakwanga rhali ayithungi [When there is no needle... when there is no cotton put in it, does not sew]
10. Likho: Ndinanto yam idla ithi ngxe [I have my thing when eating it says excuse]
11. Siwaphiwe: Sisitshetshe esi sivalwayo [It's a knife that bends]
12. Likho: Rayi-rayi ndinanto yam... ndinanto yam ndiyijula iphind'ibuye [bephakamisa izandla ukuze abakhombe] *Rai-rai I have something that I throw, and it comes back again [Children lift their hands]*
13. Siwaphiwe: Ngamehlo [Eyes]
14. Likho: ndinanto yam, ndinabafazi bam bapheka bedunuselene. *I have my thing; I have my wives when they cook, they cook back-to-back.*
15. Hlehle: Zinzipho. *These are nails*
16. Likho: Ndinanto yam, ndina... ndinahatshi lam aliphali lingenamsila [baphakamisa izandla kwakhona, akhombe umhlobo] *I have my thing; I have my horse cannot ride without a tail [they all lift their hands, and she points to her friend]]*
17. Hlehle: Yinaliti [it's a needle]
18. Siwaphiwe: Hayi wena miss awundikhombi. *No Miss you you don't point on me.*
19. Likho: Xa itheni? [What about it?]

20. Hlehle: Xa ingafakwanga naliti... xa ingafakwanga rhali ayithungi [*When there is no needle... when there is no cotton put in it, does not sew*]
21. Likho: Ndinanto yam idla ithi ngxe [*I have my thing when eating it says excuse*]
22. Siwaphiwe: Sisitshetshe esi sivalwayo [*It's a knife that bends*]
23. Likho: Kaloku andizukubona uhleli aph'ecakwam uthe nca kum [*I will not see you because you are seated very close next to me*]
24. Likho: Ndinabafazi bam ba... ndinabantu bam bahlala ndawonye kodwa soze babonane [ekhomba umhlobo] [*I have my wife ... I have my people who stay together but will never see each other (pointing to her friend)*]
25. Siwaphiwe: Me, me teacher
26. Likho: Yima pha ngomlenze omnye [*Stand here with one leg*]
27. Nomhle: [the mother] uHlehle akayazanga? [*Hlehle did not know*]
28. Likho: No, yima apha ngomlenze omnye [*No, stand here with one leg*]
29. Siwaphiwe: [ephakamisa isandla], me, me teacher, ngamehlo [*Lifting her hand, me, me, teacher, its eyes*]
30. Likho: Ke ngoku wena awuwazi amehlo [ebuza umhlobo ngelixa ame ngomlenze omnye]. Ndina... ndinanto yam idla ileli ngecala [*Now, you don't know eyes? (c) Asking her friend while she is standing on one leg. I have, I have my thing that sleeps while eating*]

This type of game necessitates critical thinking and creativity as children had to devise ways to find the correct answer. Riddles require quick thinking from all the members of the community thus promoting the development of children's minds which enables children's literacy development. According to Madonsela (2020), riddles emerged from African culture as an attempt to revive African culture through the development of children's understanding of nature in an African context. They help capture wisdom, traditional knowledge, and environmental and societal values (ibid.). The benefit of doing riddles, according Zablocki (2013) and Kids World Fun (2016), is to improve children's mental ability and promote critical thinking as children engage in critical thinking during the game. When children play riddles, they are presented with a problem and must devise a solution, as shown in line 9 of the preceding example: "Hlehle: Xa ingafakwanga naliti... xa ingafakwanga rhali ayithungi [*When there is no needle... when there is no cotton put in it, does not sew*]"

To come up with a correct answer, Hlehle had to think critically about what happens when someone sews something with a needle and cotton. When her parents were sewing clothes, she used what she saw every day in her society. According to Vygotsky (1978), society plays a significant role in the process of meaning-making, which means that what children learn in their communities influences their future development. Allen (2015) backs up this statement about children's environments by emphasizing the importance of cultural context in supporting children's learning and stating that children growing in such environments become highly motivated. Playing riddles has a significant role in promoting children's literacy development supporting what Kajee and Sibanda (2019) suggest that children's actions outside of school can help them develop literacy later in life. Riddles involve an enormous amount of language

which children use as a primary tool. According to the NDF (2015), riddles can help children form groups, combine ideas, and think, be creative, and make decisions; all of these are excellent ways for children to learn and remember things quickly and easily. When solving riddles, the form of learning is usually involved memorization and quick thinking. While the riddles were performed by children at Nomhle, including Likho my participant, parents appeared to be interested in listening to their children as they guessed some answers.

When riddles are linked to stories, they can provide children with opportunities to think, learn, and develop, allowing them to succeed in school in the future (Kids World Fun, 2016). Notable in this game was that it has a pretend school setting and required children to apply their minds before they answer. The underlying principle of the game was based on the behaviourist principle of punishment for those who do not know the answer. Hence, there was no explicit reward for those who got it right. To put them on the spot and foster collaboration, the announcer would purposefully pick on one who was thought as not knowing the answer. Kids World Fun (2016) suggests that children's minds need to be fostered with something that allows them to think further.

Games are beneficial for children's literacy development because they allow children of all ages to participate in game processes such as making rules, communicating with other peers, and using language. They can practice the game by participating in what they know and learning language as they practice what they do not know through game repetition until they have all mastered the game. Participating in these games and interacting with other players assists children in developing literacy skills such as listening, thinking, and communication which confirms Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which holds that children learn through their interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978).

4.4 Media as a significant tool in enhancing children's home literacy.

This analysis revealed the important role of media in developing children's home literacy, such as television viewing, recall of a radio news reader, and punching of electric numbers.

4.4.1 Identification and discussion of soccer players on TV

Even though there was no signal and, at times no electricity, the analysis of data indicated that TV was used at Nomhle's Home as an important tool by Likho to engage in discussions with his father. While watching a Liverpool United match, Likho told his father that many people

around the world only know about the Chiefs, Pirates, and Sundowns and are unaware of other soccer teams. He claimed to know about the Chiefs, Sundowns, South African football, Pirates, Supersport, Celtic, Amazulu, and Liverpool United by watching television. See the conversation with the father and the follow up questions I asked him in the following example.

Likho: Abantu abaninzi apha emhlabeni bazi ichiefs, nePirates neSundowns qha abazazi ezinye iiteam. Mna ndazi iChiefs, Sundowns, South Africa, Pirates, Supersport, Celtic, Amazulu kunye neLiverpool United. *(Other people in the world know Chiefs, Pirates, Sundowns only. I know Chiefs, Sundowns, South Africa, Pirates, Supersport, Celtic, Amazulu and Liverpool United)*

Interviewer: Uzazelaphi wena? *(Where do you know them)*

Likho: Ethivini. *(From the Television).*

Interviewer: Leliphi iqela olithandayo. *(Which team do you like)*

Likho: Bendikade ndithanda iSundowns ngoku ndithanda iLiverpool. *(I used to like Sundowns but now I like Liverpool United)* (03/01/2013)

Though Likho's father did not answer him, Likho continued with the conversation with his father about Liverpool United's players. Likho confidently identified and described players during the interaction, demonstrating that he was fully aware of all of them. The level of thinking order skill (LOT) at the recall or memory stage was revealed by Likho's understanding of the players (Tanujaya, Mumu and Margono, 2017). There was also a level of thinking ability whether it was at the LOT that could later benefit children's school success. This conversation with the players improved Likho's basic interpersonal communication skills which may later help him develop his school literacy. This finding supports Tanujaya, Benidiktus and Mumu, Jeinne and Margono, Gaguk's (2017) claim that students with strong critical thinking abilities are more likely to succeed. Furthermore, critical thinking abilities are required in the educational system.

4.4.2 Identification and recall of a radio news reader.

During my stay at Kholeka's house, I discovered a radio that was only turned on in the evenings during dinner time, when everyone was home and seated. Although the radio was not always on when Kuhle was with his mother during the day, I found that listening to it stimulated Kuhle's ability to recall information and engage in basic interpersonal communication skills. The example below shows Kuhle interacting with family at Lizeka's home.

- 1 Father: Lo mfo uzifunda kakuhle iindaba. *(This guy is reading the news very well).*
- 2 Kuhle: UThobile Madlakane. *(Kuhle just called the name of the journalist without being asked).*
Everyone in the house burst into laughter.
- 3 Kholeka: Yho! Lichithile waziwa nanguwe? *(Yho! This is luck that and you, know?)*

When Kuhle's father praised the man for reading the news, Kuhle revealed the man's name abruptly. It can be noted that Kuhle's perfect identification of the journalist's name showed his developed listening and recall skills. Kuhle's response confirms Adams (1990) and Neuman and Dickinson (2006) that listening is one of the important literacy skills that serve as a foundation for later achievement with reading and writing. Secondly, Kuhle's response indicated his excellent socialization of turn-taking as a basic interpersonal communication skill. Children who listen to the radio improve their speaking skills, which will benefit the school in the long run. Ong (2002) regards radio as one type of secondary orality for people who have exposure to technology.

Parents' low expectations point to a secondary contradiction between community members (parents) and the development of solid home literacy in Kuhle. If his father's comment was meant to criticize him, Kuhle's confidence and agency could be negatively silenced, resulting in him being reserved and unwilling to freely participate in conversations or voice his opinions, but because the comment was meant to compliment him, it boosted Likho's confidence.

4.4.3 Electric numbers from a cell phone

The current study's findings also revealed the use of a cell phone to punch electrical numbers. While there was an old cell phone at Lizeka's home, at Nosange's home, children had the opportunity to use a functional phone, but it was always in the possession of the mother; Nosange only gave the cell phone to her older child Nontlantla once during the time of my observation, when she asked her to punch electricity numbers when she arrived in the evening.

It was clear that parents in my study who were potential enablers of media literacy did not pay much attention to the important role of the cell phone as a literacy developer for their children. Parents cannot be blamed for this because they were always concerned about their children's education and, as a result, there were numerous literacy-related activities going on at all the participants' homes. Giving cell phones to their children was one constraint, as the types of cell phones they were using were not Smartphones, but rather less expensive phones that could only make calls and receive messages.

Even though the children in my study did not have access to digital devices such as cell phones, they were aware of how to access information, such as by simply retrieving phone numbers from the cell phone. This finding in my research backs up Buckingham's (2005) finding that

children develop media literacy even in the absence of explicit efforts to encourage and promote it. The social class and economic status of the children in my study was one of the established barriers that hindered them from accessing media literacy, confirming Buckingham, Banaji, Carr, Cranmer, and Willett's (2005) suggestion that several interrelated factors, including social class and economic status, are among the barriers to media literacy that limit children's access to the internet. According to Potter and Thai (2019), media literacy should be learned because no one is born with it, and everyone must try and seek professional advice to develop media knowledge. While Potter and Thai's suggestion may be correct, it may work well for children from middle-class families who have access to all digital resources; however, for children like those in my study, lack of access to digital resource tools may not be a barrier to their literacy development due to the richness of oral language from their context, which contributes significantly to these children's literacy. Because of their limited digital resources, they are unlikely to develop media literacy at home, and neither of their parents can afford professional advice. As a result, school is their only hope for acquiring digital/media literacy.

Overall, the television during a soccer match, the radio during a news broadcast, and punching of electric numbers demonstrate the various positive roles that media played as both physical and psychological tools in developing literacy in four Home Activity systems (Nosange, Lizeka, Nomhle, and Kholeka) in this study. This finding confirms Gowon's (2009) finding that both television and radio have a positive impact on students' speaking, listening, and cognitive abilities. According to Strickler and Farr (1979), children develop language within the context of meaningful usage. Early language learning in children occurs naturally and without the assistance of formal instruction because of the genuine need to learn to use the language in a variety of contexts (*ibid.*).

Given the absence of abundant media resources and digital devices that come with the privileges of middle-class families, children in these four homes drew on their transformative agency by creatively using available and limited resources in developing their literacy through pretend punching of electricity numbers from a cell phone, imitation of discussion of a TV soccer match and comment on the radio news, and thereby advancing their home literacy development.

4.5 Children's engagement and interest in home literacy activities

When the children gathered for play in the three HAS (Nosange, Lizeka, and Nomhle), I noticed that they engaged in literacy activities such as reading, writing, rhyming, and storytelling. Some of these were school-based literacy activities. Children participated in these activities with the help of their parents, neighbours, and older siblings, indicating that these children went to school with some assistance, which aided their literacy development, except for one participant, Kuhle, at Kholeka's home, who began school without these advantages.

4.5.1 Individual engagement with available reading materials at home

This research found that there were a limited number of books available at Nomhle's, Nosange, and Lizeka's homes. During playtime, children in the three HASs engaged in reading activities such as independent reading, pretend reading and guided reading with a parent or older siblings. Even though the current study was carried out in an isiXhosa environment, the children's books were written in both isiXhosa and English. The images below show how book availability differed from house to house, and at Nomhle's house, there were only old school textbooks, the ABET adult book, and one old magazine, with no adult books or magazines to read for pleasure.

Figure 4.1: A variety of books available at HAS 4 (2013/02/14)



Figure 4.2: Available books at Angel's HAS 1 (11/12/2012)



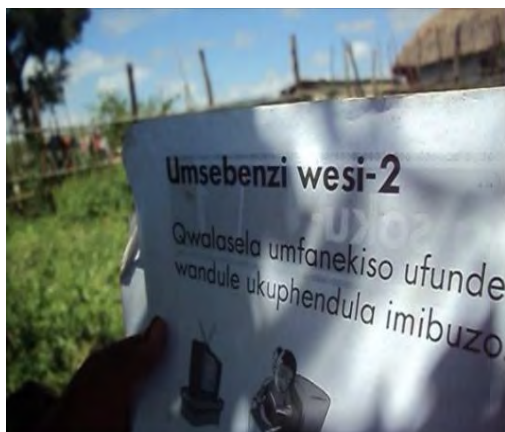
Even though print in the form of books was scarce in these homes, children had exposure to the limited books which enables them to improve their literacy. My findings on children's print exposure support Fern and Jiar's (2013) claim that early print exposure promotes children's literacy development. According to Fern and Jiar, early exposure to literacy through books, charts, and other toys exposed children to print awareness and literacy functions in a print-rich environment (2013). Although their findings refer to children from print-rich environments, my findings extend Fern and Jiar's findings and suggest that even children from poor backgrounds can be exposed to rich literacy because young children's literacy does not solely depend on the availability of abundant resources such as books, charts, and even toys, but also on the interaction between parents and siblings.

Furthermore, Bonci, Mottram, McCoy, and Cole (2011) found that there is a strong link between a child's early learning environment at home and the progress he or she makes in learning when he or she enters school. As a result, it is believed that the family and home literacy environments have a significant impact on children's early literacy development. This finding in my research adds to what other researchers (Bonci, Mottram, McCoy, and Cole, 2011; Fern and Jiar, 2013) have said about the advantages of a home learning environment for young children. Regardless of the few resources (tools) Likho, one of my participants who came from an impoverished home setting, was exposed to at home, I believe the exposure contributes to his literacy development while also preparing him for formal learning later in school. This finding further supports the finding of Boerma, Mol, and Jolles (2017), who discovered that, regardless of the scarcity of books in children's homes, the family environment influences children's familiarity with print and, more broadly, literacy activities later in school.

All the children who took part in this study engaged in reading, either alone or with the help of older siblings and, on occasion, parents, most often the mother, who mediated literacy activity.

One of the few isiXhosa books discovered at Lizeka's house was an example of Okuhle's independent reading when she was reading an old and torn book.

Figure 4.3: Okuhle reading and old and torn book (HAS 2 - 18/12/2012)



Okuhle read this page aloud to herself, without the assistance of her older siblings. Her use of speech during this activity contributed to literacy development, as suggested by Strickland and Riley (2006), who emphasize the importance of children using their speech, claiming that children can demonstrate their understanding of the meanings of words and

written materials by using their speech. Rodriguez, Tamis-Lemonda, Spellmann, Pan, Lugogil, and Luze (2009) found that early and consistent participation in routine literacy activities, such as book reading, provides children with a critical foundation for language growth and emergent literacy. Okuhle's reading demonstrates the significance of children's emergent reading between the ages of three and seven, which is important because it serves as a foundation for formal schooling, which agrees with Westerveld, Gillon, and Bysterveldt (2015) that children's literacy abilities, including reading, begin to emerge during preschool years, which underpins what will follow in formal education. Okuhle exemplifies the second stage of reading development, the novice reader, in which children learn the relationships between letters and sounds, as well as between written and spoken words, as defined by Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998). Also, a child's reading-related development is viewed as interwoven and continuous with development that will lead to expertise in other spheres of life (ibid.). Although, Cullinan (2000) defines independent reading as reading done by a student on her own, where she chooses the material to read, for Okuhle this was not the case. She had no other reading material to choose from, but that was the only reading paper she had. Okuhle's reading was done for pleasure, confirming Cullinan's (2000) observation that independent reading is done for both information and pleasure.

4.5.2 Likho's reading engagement with his mother.

The study also found that parents play an important role in modelling their children's literacy. Likho would occasionally read a Grade 1 workbook and an ABET book to Nomhle at her mother's home. This was notable because these were not the types of books that a child or adult

would normally read for pleasure; they were simply the books that were available. This activity, as shown in the example below, occurred after dinner.

- 1 **Nomhle:** Leliphi igama othi uyalazi apha? *Which word did you say you know here?* (Pointing to the book again)
- 2 **Likho:** Akho nelinye. *Not even one*
- 3 **Nomhle:** Nelinye? *Not even one?* Neli awulazi? *Even this one you don't know.*
- 4 **Likho:** Ngu 'lala'. *This is 'lala'*
- 5 **Nomhle:** Apha? *Here?* [Pointing to another line]
- 6 **Likho:** Andazi, 'ka' *I don't know. 'ka'*
- 7 **Nomhle:** Wenzani lo mntu? *What is this person doing?*
- 8 **Likho:** 'kama'. *'Comb'*
- 9 **Nomhle:** Lona? *This one?* Awumazi lona? *You don't know this one?*
- 10 **Likho:** [He looked and kept quiet]
- 11 **Nomhle:** Hayi, jonga eli gama. *No, look at this word.* Hayi, hayi, jonga kweli gama. *No, no, look at this word.*
- 12 **Likho:** Eliya ubulixelile. *The one you mention.*
- 13 **Nomhle:** Eliya ubulibhalile. *The one you wrote.*
- 14 **Likho:** 'mama'. *'Mother'.*
- 15 **Nomhle:** Yitya ichips zakho. *Eat your chips.*
- 16 **Likho:** Kutheni kungekho 'u' apha. *Why there is no 'u' here?*
- 17 **Nomhle:** Ayingo – umama lo kodwa ngu – 'mama'. *This is not 'umama' but 'mama'.*
- 18 **Likho:** Umama
- 19 **Nomhle:** Gila
- 20 **Likho:** Uphi? *Where is it?* Goba [bend]

The interaction between Likho and his mother in the above extract demonstrates that phonics development extends beyond the first year and is likely to continue into the early school years, as suggested by Snow et al (1998). This can be significant in the study of the alphabet, where letters correspond directly to phonemes, especially if the child's vocabulary does not grow sufficiently until the first years of school, as some speech researchers have suggested, to force a switch from whole-field to segment-based strategies. It also suggests an alternative explanation for the well-known relationship between vocabulary size and early learning ability (ibid.). Line 16 of the above extract depicts Likho's emergent word comprehension, which is consistent with Snow et al. suggestion. that the ability to distinguish between words (representation of sounds) may develop differently depending on word size rather than age or general developmental level. According to Snow et al. (1998), typical phonemic awareness tests include tasks that require a child to distinguish or separate one or more phonemes of a spoken word, as well as to combine or combine sequences such as separating phonemes from a word or using phonemes within a word (for example, adding, subtracting, or rearranging the phonemes of one word to create a new word). Some children's phonological encoding/representation systems may be immature during formal reading instruction,

preventing them from reaching the level of phonemic awareness in spoken words associated with fluent parsing of written words (Snow, et al., 1998).

The interaction that occurred between Likho and Nomhle as MKO throughout the reading process aided Likho in reaching the full level of reading independently, which is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of ZPD which emphasises the important role of the MKO as the mediator of learning. Because Likho's reading ability was not fully developed, the assistance that Nomhle gave Likho helped him to move beyond his ZPD. Both Nomhle and Likho were reading from an isiXhosa book for Grade 1. This supports CAPS' recommendation that isiXhosa be used as the HL, or language of instruction, for children in South Africa's Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3), as it was for Likho. Because he was in Grade 1 at the time, and in Grade 1 English was only used orally and CAPS (2011) recommends that the focus of FP in Grades R and 1 be on developing a strong oral foundation and studying English as a foreign language to lay the groundwork for learning to read and write in English.

Lines 1 and 2 reveal the level of scaffolding offered by Nomhle throughout the reading process pointing out important words from the text they were reading and assisting Likho to name them. See lines 1 and 2 for Nomhle's question to Likho and how Likho replied to her.

- 1 Nomhle: Leliphi igama othi uyalazi apha? *Which word did you say you know here?*
(Pointing to the book again)
- 2 Likho: Akho nelinye. *Not even one.*

Despite Likho's claim that he wasn't aware of any of the words in the text, Nomhle did not allow him to skip the word. Instead, that puts Nomhle in a better position to scaffold and mediate reading within Likho's ZPD to help him to enjoy reading. The interaction was both interactive and relaxed as Likho had his chips at hand and Nomhle allowed him to eat his chips. See line 15 in the extract above.

Nomhle: Yitya ichips zakho. *Eat your chips.*

This finding portrays Likho and his mother's reading moment as a social activity that allows both parties to engage in meaningful conversation, and it expands on Worthy's (2002) suggestion that when children are not drawn to reading, they lack the skill and determination to read and avoid reading activity. Again, line 16 contradicts Likho's earlier comment in which he pretended not to know the words that his mother inquired about and revealed that Likho was

able to recognize missing words in the text, but that he was probably not in the mood to read because he was tired from school. This is demonstrated by the way he asked about a missing vowel in a word during their interaction. See line 16:

Likho: Kutheni kungekho 'u' apha. *Why there is no 'u' here?*

According to Snow, et. al. (1998), the ability to derive meaning from print is highly dependent on the development of word recognition accuracy and reading fluency. According to Kalu and Edadi (2019), children's early reading, and writing are embedded in the developing oral communication system. Children require spoken language to learn and achieve reading and writing because literacy relationships are embedded in a larger communication network of speaking and listening (Kathleen, Roskos, Christie, and Richgels, 2003). Shiel, Cregan, McGough, and Archer (2012) extend Kathleen, et al.'s (2003) finding that spoken language is the foundation of future reading and writing success, as well as the backdrop for learning and practicing reading skills.

The second example demonstrates Likho's pretend reading of dialogue from the ABET where both Mamtolo and Boniwe were talking about adult education.

[In the following dialogue, Likho pretends to be reading an ABET book and put words to the images as he heard the story from his mother]

Mamtolo: Mholweni ekhaya. *Greetings at home*

Boniwe: Ewe. *You are welcome.* Mamtolo uvelaphi apha ebusuku? *Mamtolo where do you come from at night?*

Mamtolo: Ndivela esikolweni sabadala. *I come from adult school*

Boniwe: Awu! Umdala kangaka usafunda? *Ha! As old as you, are still schooling?*

Mamtolo: Ingathi kufunda nothatha uDlami...ni. *Even father Dlamini is still schooling*

Boniwe: Utata uDlamini emdala kangaka, nam ndiyayakhona ngomso ngoku ndiva mnandi ngalo nto.

Father Dlamini as old as he is, I am also going tomorrow, I feel good about that. Yhu! Mamtolo

sifunde kamnandi namhlanje qha ndikholwe ngutata uDlamini lo angaseziyo eskolweni kuba uyasala.

Yhu! Mamtolo we studied very well today, but I am worried about father Dlamini who does not come to school because he is being left behind

Mamtolo: Utheni? *What happened?*

Boniwe: Unesifuba bafana. *He has a chest infection*

Mamtolo: Kufuneka ndikhe ndiyomjonga kwagqirha. *I should go and check him at the doctor*

Boniwe: Tata Dlamini akakuthandi ukuya kwagqirha. *Father Dlamini does not like visiting the doctor*

[The interview interrupted Likho and asked the following the question]

Interviewer: Iphelile na ngoku? *Is it finished now?*

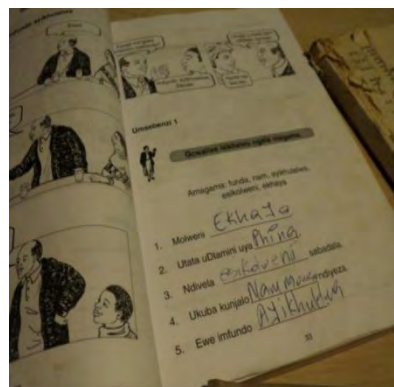
Likho: Hayi amany'amapheph'andiwazi. *No, some papers are missing*

Because the story had previously been read to him by his mother, Likho used images from the story to predict what the story was about. The book's orally rendered text and illustrations are the focal points of interaction during reading experiences such as Likho's reading of the adult education story. This type of text engagement is referred to by Teal (1986) as an informal

literacy experience in which children are unintentionally exposed to written language, such as when they listen to an adult read a storybook and building on informal literacy is said to provide the foundations upon which formal literacy instruction is based. Teal (1986) goes on to say that even if the literacy activity is only done orally, with no text or pictures from books, the richness of the information passed down from parents to children allows for their literacy development. Kula and Edadi (2019) support this finding by Teal and propose that communities maintain their group identity by orally transmitting the most important aspects of their culture from generation to generation.

The following is an example of follow-up questions I asked Likho's mother about the ABET book Likho read.

- 1 Interviewer: Walazi njani eli bali uLikho? *How did Likho learn about this story?*
- 2 Nomhle: "Ndamane ndimfundela eli bali kuqala yena emamele sibuka imifanekiso, emva koko wakwazi ukuzifundela ejonge kule mifanekiso. *I used to read this story to him before while he was listening and looking at the pictures together, after that he was able to read on his own while looking at the pictures.*
- 3 Interviewer: Uyakwazi ukuwafunda amagama akweli bali? *Can he read the words in this story?*
- 4 Nomhle: Hayi akawazi kuphela nje uyawaqikelela kuba ndandimane ndimfundela. *No, he cannot, only he is guessing because I used to read to him.*



Nomhle's act of reading to her child validates research findings (Callaway, 2012) that children's family homes are their first sociocultural context in which they create meaning through oral language. This interaction occurs naturally when families engage in literacy activities in their daily lives. Likho's mother's role paved the way for his literacy development and subsequent academic success, confirming Wade and Moore's (2000) argument that when children were given a solid start with books in their early years, they performed better in later education at school. Furthermore, Likho's mother read to him on a regular basis, allowing him to read more than the other study participants.

What parents did in some homes for their children's studies revealed that the homes were used as literacy rooms for the development of children's literacy (Wade and Moore, 2000). This finding about parents modelling literacy to their children supports the findings of Strickland et al. (2004), who found that children in a family environment can be better prepared for school when parents model literacy use and participate in activities that promote basic literacy

understandings. Kajee and Sibanda (2019) confirm that children's out-of-school activities can help them develop their literacy skills in school.

The study noted that the role of MKOs was fluid with parents and children occupying different roles. According to Vygotsky (1978), when a child is a co-constructor of meaning and an active performer in his or her own environment, the role of the MKO becomes critical. Shifting roles of MKO made a significant contribution to children's literacy development. Children's literacy behaviour at home was influenced by parents and others through their literacy practices whether this was happening consciously with parents being aware or unconsciously. In all the HASs, parents and siblings provided support to young children during literacy activities without realizing they were assisting their children's literacy development. This finding is consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which holds that children learn through their interactions with others and dialogue with a more knowledgeable person (Vygotsky, 1978).

Although some children are from print-rich cultures that create numerous experiences with print before they come to school (McCarthy, 1997), children in this study are from environments with limited print and yet they have numerous literacy experiences because literacy practices are embedded within the socio-cultural context of their families and communities. The kind of literacy that children experience at home may be referred to as what Taylor (1983) calls 'family literacy' which describes the rich literacy practices that encompass home and community.

4.5.3 Decorated cupboard in establishing a print-rich home environment.

The study also discovered a small cupboard at Lizeka's home that children used as a reading tool to help them develop their literacy skills. This small, decorated cupboard in the kitchen, as shown in the picture below, provided another reading opportunity for children.

Figure 4.4: The cupboard as a reading resource HAS 2 (18/12/2012)



Children used this cupboard to read for fun when the older siblings wanted to see if the younger children knew all the names of the pictures that were pasted on the cupboard. According to Rule (2017), reading is understood as an oral performance which he describes as oratorical reading. Because this reading activity occurred at home, it confirms Niklas, Cohrsen, and Tayler's (2016) assertion that reading is one of the literacy activities that begins at home before children begin formal schooling. They used the decorations and named each picture in the cupboard with the help of an older sibling, an important literacy skill that Spedding et al. (2007) recommend that literacy skills begin with children and their peers and family members reading or observing the world around them. Reading from pictures in the cupboard was a literacy activity that assisted them in improving their reading abilities, and these children in my study would use whatever they could get their hands on as long as it had a text they could read.

4.5.4 Children's writing opportunities at home

I also discovered that children were participating in school-based literacy activities such as writing. Writing occurred at all four HASs, as well as during playtime when children gathered with their siblings or individually as shown below.

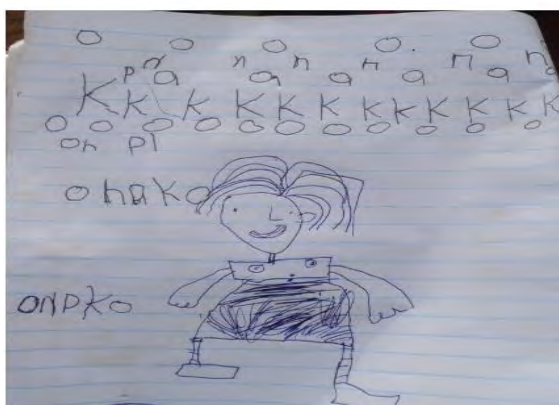


Figure 4.5: Angel's writing HAS 1(13/12/2012)

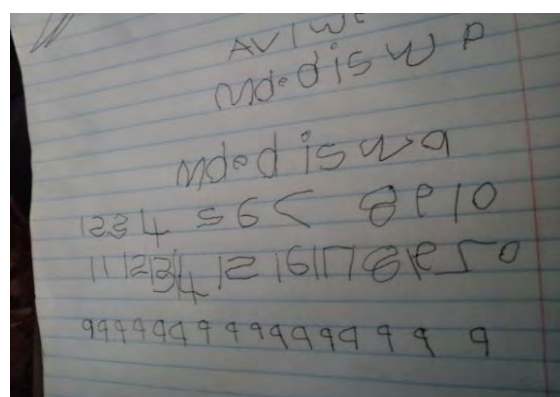


Figure 4.6: Likho's writing at HAS 4 (04/01/2012)



Figure 4.7a: Kuhle's writings at HAS 3 (27/12/2012)

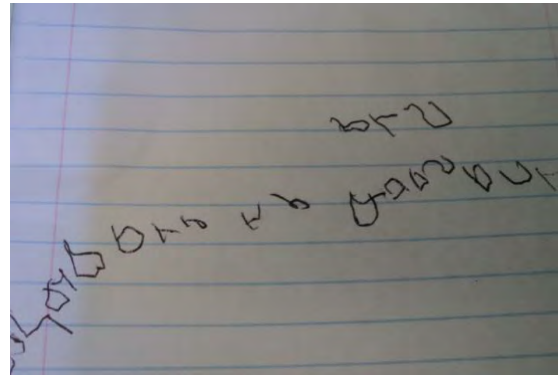


Figure 4.7b: Kuhle's writings at HAS 3 (27/12/2012)

Photo 4: Okuhle and her sister writing HAS 2 (19/12/2012)



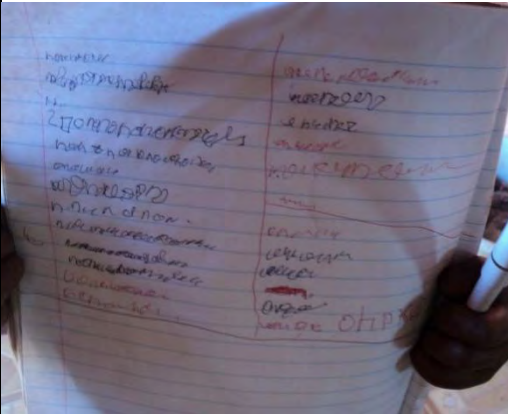
In the above example of writing activity, the two children are observing Alizwa, Okuhle's sister modelling writing, demonstrating that learning is reinforced when children learn to write by imitating and observing how the older sister holds a pen, an important skill in emergent writing. Alizwa was scaffolding her sister, Okuhle, by identifying letters as they were written. Various ways were used during this process, including the proper way of holding the pencil and hand-arm movement as she formed the letters, even though she was unaware that she was teaching these children to write. This writing activity between these children aided their literacy development and supports Neumann and Neumann's (2010) claim that writing activities between parents or older siblings and children prior to formal schooling can improve literacy skills in young children.

These writings demonstrate various types of writing, with Figure 4.7 demonstrating a combination of writing and drawing. As Hill suggests, they can be divided into several categories (2008). Figures 4.5 and 4.9 a and b show Okuhle and Kuhle's writing samples, which I classify as beginning writing according to Hill (2008) because they combine drawing and writing. Okuhle scribbled the date and drew the shapes in the first writing sample (Figure 4.5)

and in the second writing sample Okuhle's (Figure 4.6) and Kuhle's (Figure 4.9) writings resemble a message in a wavy line (Hill, 2008). Hill suggests that a child pretends to write with crayons, paint, and pencil in the early stages.

Looking at the three writing samples (Figures 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9), we can see that the children are in an emergent stage, with spaces between each word, indicating that they are just starting to understand words, which supports Hill's (2008) claim that children's growing understanding of words is reflected in their writing. Though the three participants have yet to develop an understanding and appreciation for punctuation, they are aware of its significance when writing. They recognized the text, which included their names and even numbers written in the form of a sentence. According to Hill (2008), children's writing during the emergent stage may include some vowels based on the sound they hear, which is reflected in their writing. Pretorius et al. (2016) build on Hill's (2008) work by arguing that emergent writing serves as a foundation for later writing and reading in school. Below I show an example of Angel's letter-writing from Nosange's home.

Extract 4.1: Example of Angel's writing using letter-like shapes (14/01/2013) at HAS 1

	Interviewer: Yintoni le uyibhalayo? <i>What are you writing?</i> Angel: Yileta. <i>It is a letter.</i> Interviewer: Ubhalela bani? <i>To whom are you writing?</i> Angel: Umzali. <i>A parent.</i> Interviewer: Umzali kabana? <i>Whose parent?</i> Angel: Walomntwana ubetha abanye phaya eskolweni. <i>Of the child who beats other children at school.</i> Interviewer: Uthi makathini ke ngoku? <i>What do you want her to do now?</i> Angel: Ndifuna umamakhe ayazi lonto. <i>I want his mother to know about this.</i> Interviewer: Ungandifundela le leta xa sele ugqibile ukubhala? <i>Can you read the letter for me after you have finished writing it?</i> Angel: Dear mzali. Umntwana wakho ubetha abanye uyababhulisha apha eskolweni. Nangoku umbethile omnye. Yena ucinga ukuba ukleva. <i>Dear parent. Your child beats other children here at school. He thought he was clever and could just beat other children.</i> Interviewer: Kha uze ndithathe ifoto yale leta. <i>Come let me take a photo of this letter.</i>
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Angel's murmuring while she was writing was incomprehensible to me until I asked her to interpret the meaning of her writing for me. The letters themselves were unclear and meaningless until I interviewed her to learn more about it, as shown in Extract 4.1. Angel was clearly in the early stages of her writing (Hill, 2008) when she wrote this piece. This stage of

writing is indicated by the child's writing containing scribbles and the ability to invent letters, as shown in Angel's piece of writing in Extract 4.1 above. Though Hill (2008) suggests that writing at the beginning stage may mean something different each time it is read, for Angel it meant the same thing each time she read it. She seemed to know exactly why she was writing the letter. The interview revealed what prompted her to write the letter.

Angel used letter-like shapes to express her feelings about the incident involving a child who beat others. According to Saracho (2017), these literacy experiences serve as precursors to children's later reading and writing development. In addition, according to Raban (1985), children must find their own voice in their writing. The examples of a letter-writing by Angel, support Raban's contention. Angel's writing was also very purposeful, even though she did not share it with her mother. She was in the Pre-reading, also known as the Pseudo-reading stage (Chall, 1983). At this stage, the child pretends to read, retells the story while looking at previously read book pages, names the letters of the alphabet, and plays with books, pencils, and paper. Furthermore, she was not writing, but rather acting as a novice reader, as Snow et al. suggested (1998). Angel exercises agency in the domestic field because she is playing the role of a novice writer.

Angel invented writing herself from what she thought could be a way to report the concerned matter to the bullying child's parent, even though the text had not been read to her before by anyone. She read the text and make meaning of it herself. During our interaction with Angel about the letter, she got the opportunity to interact with the text she wrote. The example of Angel's letter suggests a wide range of children's out-of-school literacy practices where children can express themselves through writing (Boerma, Mol, and Jolles, 2017). Noticeable in her writing was that she wrote inside the borders she drew and on the lines of the page meaning she was engaged in imaginative writing. Although imagination is an important part of children's learning, it is frequently undervalued in today's early childhood education curriculum (Hong, Karin, Moran, and Jennings, 2017). According to research (Hong et al. 2017), when children naturally engage in their learning process through imagination, integration opportunities emerge, as Angel did. This finding of Angel's letter-writing confirms Hong et al.'s (2017) finding of integration opportunities. Angel was able to combine her imaginative writing with a bullying incident at school that she reported.

Angel's interaction with the parent in the letter showed her understanding of their rights as children that they cannot be bullied at school and keep quiet. She used her literacy world (that of letter writing) to bring the issue to the attention of the parent whose child bullied other children at school. Her letter-writing demonstrates her understanding of how to express her views. The text in Extract 4.1 is intended to convey information to a parent about a situation that occurred at school. The bullying situation would have been resolved if Angel had shown the letter to a parent, but she did not. This was an example of how school literacy was brought home but did not have an impact on adults. Angel was able to explore the text she was reading while also following it with her eyes, which Jewitt (2005) defines as a literacy event in which the author directs the reader's eye in a specific direction related to the reading of a text.

When the parents refused to give children pens and pencils to use at home, children at Lizeka's home could write with anything. They would use charcoal instead of pencils and pens, as shown in the examples below. This happened when they got together during the day to play.



Figure 4.8: Pictures of Okuhle (1) and her younger sister (2) using charcoal for writing (21/12/2012) HAS 2

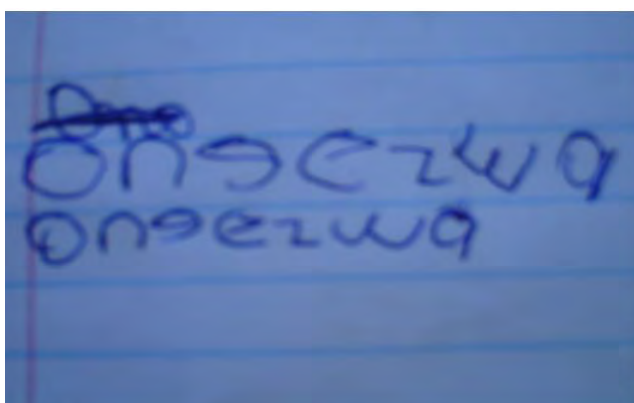


Figure 4.9: Okuhle's writing HAS 2 (21/12/2012)

These children in my study participated actively in literacy activities such as writing, which enabled their literacy development later in school, confirming Raban's (1985) suggestion that

children should be actively involved in their writing and given the freedom to choose when and how long they write. Writing, according to Clay (2000), is essential for learning to read in early literacy interventions. Writing activities at home allowed children to lay a foundation that was also shaped by the nature of their interactions with their peers. This finding supports Bloch's (2013) claim that while participating in writing, children learn and develop skills necessary for success in school and later in life.

Except for Kuhle's home (HAS 3), which had more limited literacy resources and practices than the other three homes, these children's limited access to writing tools at home increased their creativity and willingness to learn to write. While children from middle-class families have access to writing tools like crayons, paint, and pencils, children from low-income families, like those in my study, use charcoal as a writing tool instead of crayons and old papers because they do not have proper books to write or draw on. Despite their lack of access to modern material tools, they began writing in the same way as their counterparts. These children from my research did this voluntarily, demonstrating how they exercised their agency. They demonstrated agency by being creative and gaining access to new traditional ways of discovering tools for writing, such as charcoal. At home, children exercise their agency without relying on their parents for assistance which contradicts with school practice where they are dependent on their teachers' decisions and actions, according to Sirkko et al. (2019), which can enable or hinder their agency.

4.5.5 Under the big tree

The study also found that Likho and children from Nomhle's home neighbourhood (the larger community) used to gather in a common place known as "phantsi komth'omkhulu," which translates as 'under the big tree,' to engage in various forms of literacy practices such as school-related literacy activities as a school play, pretend-teaching where the older children took the role of a teacher, storytelling by different members of the community. Likho benefited the most from all of the literacy activities happened under the big tree because they were close to his home. The ages of the children ranged from those who were very young and had not yet begun pre-school to those who were in Grade 11 as shown in the example below.

Photo 5: Photos 1 and 2: The community - school and non-school-going children playing under the big tree (2013/02/13)



The older siblings, who also served as mediators, encouraged all the children to write or draw, demonstrating the value of the MKO. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes the importance of children learning by interacting with more knowledgeable learners. The cultural context of these children could not prevent them from participating in literacy activities. According to Navarro (2006), our habits are formed more through a social process than an individual process. This also implies that habitus emerges because of social rather than individual behaviours across contexts, but it also shifts over time and across contexts. Though social conditions such as poverty and the legacy of apartheid shaped these children's habits, as Navarro (2006) suggests, they are not permanent and can shift due to unforeseen circumstances.

Furthermore, there is a large body of research (Weinberger, 1996; The Orelana Hawks Puckett Institute, 2006; Strickland, 2009; McKend, 2010; Shanahan, Lonigan, 2013; Kathleen, Roskos, Christie, and Richgels, 2003) that suggests that children prepare for or are inducted into literacy long before they begin school, and my research confirms this finding as children were inducted at home by their parents and older siblings before they started school. Most of the literacy activities I observed were in the spoken domain; participation in reading books and writing materials was more limited and occurred in fewer homes. According to Scribner and Cole (1981), literacy can be learned outside of school. Although school is the primary formal setting in which students learn literacy skills, they frequently participate voluntarily in other literacy communities (Vygotsky, 1978).

4.6 Conclusion

In this analysis, my four participants transition from the field of their domestic home setting to the field of school, or education. In the domestic field, parents and siblings play an important

role in home literacy practices but play no role in school literacy practices. This is not surprising given that teachers dominate the education field. Kuhle's mother, of the four participants, did not go to school to ask how she could support her child, so she has no agency in the field of educational setting. Furthermore, in this analysis, children are active participants in literacy activities in varying degrees in almost all four homes. Literacy activities at Angel's and Okuhle's homes were primarily oral, taking the form of stories, singing, and playing games, as well as torn papers from books where Okuhle could read but books were scarce. Literacy activities were also scarce at Kuhle's home, and when they did occur, they were mostly oral. There was a variety of literacy activities from oral to books at Likho's home, though children's books were also limited. Likho's home used the limited books with the help of older siblings from neighbouring children and his mother. Although at Likho's home literacy activities are rich and occur often, they were in the domain of spoken only e. g. singing, rap and isixoxiso which also occurred at Angel's home. Book related literacy has greater capital than all domain of literacy activities.

Due to a lack of resources in their context, these children in my research were exposed to the same tools working in the same object, limiting the chances of the object moving to be a tool, as in the case of Likho reading the story of father Dlamini and Mamtolo. He was familiar with the story and could read it off the top of his head because she had been read to several times. Due to the challenge of limited exposure to resources, these children were unable to access unfamiliar information that would allow them to broaden their knowledge. These children, on the other hand, were able to take initiative, such as in the case of storytelling, being creative when telling stories, and letter writing about bullying, revealing that literacy at home is used as a type of developing children's agency for later use at school. The analysis also discovered that these children's homes are rich fields in which literacy activities occur and children are active participants, and that it is primarily oral for these children and that they do not enter the domain of books and writing at all during my observation period.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS: PHASE TWO

5.1 Introduction

In response to the second sub-research question: What are the literacy practices in Grade 1 classes? this chapter presents data derived from classroom observation and teacher interviews conducted during the classroom observation. The chapter discusses phase two data analysis that focuses on the literacy practices that the four participants (Angel, Okuhle, Kuhle and Likho) engaged in at school. The focus of my observation was specifically the home language isiXhosa literacy practices (See Table 5.2, p. 165) and sometimes teachers code-switched into English during isiXhosa lesson. The chapter describes the alignment of teachers' qualifications and the reality of teaching Grade 1, contradictions between high physical access and high quality in education, classroom ability grouping and the classroom as a space of literacy practices.

5.2 Alignment of teachers' qualifications and the reality of teaching Grade 1

In the analysis of data, I discovered that despite being assigned to teach Grade 1, two teachers' qualifications were matched for foundation phase teaching, but the other two teachers' pre-service qualifications did not prepare them to teach FP. Teacher Hlumisa and Zoleka, for example, had Senior Teacher's Diplomas (STD) that qualified them to teach in the Senior phase, while teacher Nathi had a Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma (JPTD) and teacher Faith had a Primary Teacher's Diploma (PTD) that qualified them to teach in the FP. The study found that this mismatch of the teacher's qualifications and their placement in the FP had an impact on the teacher's readiness to teach in the phase.

Both teachers, Hlumisa and Zoleka alluded to the reasons for them teaching Gr 1. See examples of interviews below, utterances 1 and 2 below of both interviews.

First example:

1. Interviewer: Kwakutheni ukuze uqale ukutitsha eFoundation Phase? *Why did you start teaching in the FP?*
2. Hlumisa: Andazi. Into eyenzekayo, i-allocation u desperate ufuna ipost kwaye abazijongi imajors zakho. Bavele bakuxelele ukuba siyashota ePF ezinye iPhases zigcwele. *I don't know it is because of the allocation. What happens Mrs Magxala, the allocation, you are desperate for the post, and they don't check your major subjects. They just tell you that the shortage we have is in the FP the other phases are full.* (Hlumisa – 19/08/2013)

Second example

1. Interviewer: Yeyiphi iphase ekwakufanele ukuba uyayititsha xa uqeqeshelwe iSTD? *Which phase were you supposing to teach when you trained for STD?*

2. Zoleka: Kwakumelwe ukuba ndititsha eSenior Phase kodwa ngenxa yokunqaba komsebenzi uthatha nayiphi na into oyifumanayo. *I am supposed to teach at the Senior Phase (SP) but because of the job scarcity, you take whatever job you get. (Zoleka – 19/08/2013)*

It was evident from their responses that the unemployment rate was a contributory factor which in most cases compelled teachers to teach in the phase/s in which they were not trained to teach. Sometimes when the school has large numbers of children and a shortage of teachers, for example, a teacher might be removed from a specific phase if there was an excess of teachers and placed in the phase where there are large numbers of children where he/she is needed most. This is what happened in the case of these two teachers. Because the school had big numbers in the FP, the school had to allocate them to the FP that needed teachers at that time. The teachers' comments in this study emphasized the importance of teacher training that changes the way teachers think for the system to develop a change agent. This practice of placing teachers in phases for which they have not been trained has some implications, as there have been significant changes to the curriculum in South Africa.

When CAPS was introduced, FP teachers across South Africa received CAPS training in 2011 to prepare them for implementation in 2012, which was led by DBE facilitators using a standardized facilitator's manual (Wiebesiek-Pienaar, et al., 2014). The time was insufficient for teachers who were already struggling with the implementation of previous curriculum that had recently been introduced to them, such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 (C2005), as well as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The significant challenges teachers faced were not addressed during their training because the training period was inadequate to address all the challenges that existed in the system, particularly in the department, which was already hampered by the legacy of apartheid. Nevertheless, both teachers had developed a love for the phase not by choice but because they had been teaching the FP for a long time. Even though they have developed a love for the phase, Zoleka indicated that if she could get a chance to go to SP, she could leave PF. See line 4 of the interviews below for Zoleka's response.

1. Interviewer: If it could happen during this rationalisation process that you are changed and taken back to SP, will you be comfortable?
2. Zoleka: Yes, I would be comfortable, I won't have any problem
3. Interviewer: Would you prefer to go to SP or remain here at the FP?
4. Zoleka: I would stay here but I would prefer to go to the SP. (Zoleka – 19/08/2013)

Zoleka, even though she was teaching FP, it was clear that she preferred to teach SP. Several factors, such as the condition and environment in which she was teaching, could have

influenced her attitude. As Herzberg (1966) suggests, positive feelings are related to job content (motivators), whereas negative feelings are related to job context. Zoleka had a negative attitude, which could affect her teaching in FP (hygiene factors). Furthermore, the environment in which these teachers in my study taught was not motivating due to the large number of children and overcrowded space, as Herzberg's (1959) two-wire theory suggests that once employees are motivated by their surroundings, they can be motivated to do their job.

Both teacher Hlumisa's and Zoleka's comments revealed a fundamental inconsistency in South Africa's provision of FP teachers, which had a negative impact on children's literacy development, revealing that qualification mismatch can result in a gap between what the qualification requires and what an individual teacher possesses. There is a contradiction between teacher needs (employment) and FP needs (teaching young children), because FP teaching is highly specialized and requires appropriately qualified teachers.

In line 2 of example 1, Hlumisa revealed the reasons as they relate to the unemployment rate, where people are desperate for work and take whatever is supplied by the school, regardless of specialization. Also, in line 2 of example 2, teacher Zoleka agrees with Hlumisa that due to the scarcity of work, one must take whatever comes her way. Both teachers were concerned about their FP placement and would like a rationalization that would allow them to return to the Senior Phase. This finding backs up Fatima et al.'s (2019) argument that schools, like teachers, should be rationalized to address physical barriers. Teachers are reallocated from schools with an excess of teachers to schools with a lack of teachers during rationalisation, according to the Public Affairs Research Institute (2019). The teachers' responses revealed that they believe rationalization will result in change and better teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Zoleka's dissatisfaction with teaching FP may have a negative impact on the way she taught Gr 1 children due to the environment she finds herself in, such as the overcrowded classroom and the fact that she was not trained to teach FP, which can influence her well-being, as Zakaria, Don, and Yaakob (2021) argue that a harmonious working environment with healthy relationships is essential for teachers to produce high-quality work. Job dissatisfaction, loss of happiness, stress, and a variety of other mental health issues can result from this unhappiness. Poor performance and job dissatisfaction in the workplace can lead to depression, anxiety, and a variety of other mental health issues (ibid.). Also, the attitude Zoleka has towards her teaching FP can affect her agency and creativity in her teaching practice. According to

Thumvichit (2021), teacher agency occurs when they demonstrate the ability to solve pedagogical and curriculum challenges, of which Zoleka's agentic actions were not identified as she even lost interest in creating an interactive environment by doing so, she appears to struggle to achieve her teaching goals in the classroom.

Faith, Nathi, and Hlumisa were positive about teaching FP, whereas Zoleka was not. Faith and Nathi both enjoyed teaching the FP because they had been trained for it and had the opportunity to do so since beginning their careers as teachers. Consider their responses from the interviews with Nathi and Faith, Faith, for example, has to say this about teaching FP (see utterance below).

Faith: No, teaching the FP is nice. I don't know maybe it is because I am used to it. I did not experience teaching in another phase, but it's enjoyable because to deal with young kids, they are genuine, they are themselves. So, it is easy to study them quickly if she has a certain challenge or a problem you can study them because they are young. Even the one who is not happy it is easy to see him. **(Faith - 21/08/2013)**

This is how teacher Nathi views how is it like to teach FP

Nathi: It is nice to teach FP because children are curious, they are eager to know although there are problems that are challenging. **(Nathi - 21/08/2013)**

Both of their responses showed that their habits predispose them to participate in the FP teaching game. This is in line with Bourdieu's (1977) theory that one must have a habit that compels one to enter the game without another. A sufficient level of knowledge, abilities, or talent is required to be acknowledged as an official athlete. Entering a game requires aiming to maximize the use of one's knowledge, skill, or talent (ibid.). Both teachers were able to apply their knowledge and skills in teaching young children since they had the necessary training and experience to teach this age group.

Although Nathi in the interviews revealed her enjoyment to teach FP, she also cited some challenges they encountered as Gr 1 teachers such as not having enough space and overcrowded classes which made it difficult for them to focus on an individual child. She pointed out that these activities were external (see the example of Nathi's utterances below).

1 Nathi: There are external things such as children's ID numbers

2 Interviewer: From the department?

- 3 Nathi: Yes, from the department and also the health department arrives at school. I must say our focus is not on teaching alone. (21/08/2013)

What teacher Nathi said demonstrated that the external activities were not part of the literacy curriculum and so were not beneficial to the development of children's literacy. This, according to teacher Nathi, revealed a fundamental inconsistency and demonstrated the seriousness of the problem, which affects every aspect of classroom interaction and learning opportunities. These exercises also didn't help with identifying children's problems. There was a contradiction that emerged between the participating teacher (*subject*), the literacy (*object*) and the children as members of the class (*community*) because teachers were using the time allocated for teaching literacy to do other external activities such as the school nutrition. According to what is stipulated in the CAPS document (DBE, 2014), a maximum of 8 hours and a minimum of 7 hours are allocated for literacy in Grade 1.

Even though it was part of the school program, nutrition time took up a lot of teaching time. During my observation session, it took roughly 30 to 45 minutes for Grade 1s to eat due to the long line to the food. It had been more than 15 minutes since the scheduled break. Due to formal training, this equates to a weekly loss of 75 minutes (15 minutes x 5 days). When the school lunch period interfered with the classroom schedule, it affected teachers' literacy goals as well as those specified by CAPS policy documents, such as completing a set amount of work in a set amount of time.

The participating teachers in my research received their professional education and became teachers when education was part of the apartheid era and was organized into lower racial and ethnic discrimination, (Department of Education (DoE), 2006). The effects of apartheid's inequalities are said to be found in education, such as inadequate teacher training or teachers teaching in phases for which they were not trained (*ibid.*). This statement supports the findings of this study regarding qualifications and whether teachers were trained to teach the FP. Teachers would not have had a better teaching experience if they had been trained to teach the FP because they were also educated under apartheid. The policy, the Employment of Educators Act of 1996, talks about the need for teachers' competences, which means that teachers Zoleka, Hlumisa, Faith, and Nathi must always be ready to teach FP. However, there is a problem because the policy on paper appears too ambitious because it wants qualified teachers while most of the teachers are unqualified. Based on this, how can we ensure that the Teacher Employment Act of 1996 can manage teachers' professional needs?

5.3 Contradiction between high physical access and quality

The analysis of data indicated a great contradiction between the achievement of high physical access to schools and the achievement of high-quality education.

5.3.1 Learner-teacher ratio and classroom allocation

My four *subjects*, Angel, Okuhle, Kuhle and Likho, were allocated as follows: three in CAS 1A (Angel, Okuhle and Likho) and one (Kuhle) was in CAS 1B and both teachers per class split (*Division of labour*) the teaching load between themselves. The primary division of labour was how each pair of teachers divided the curriculum subjects they taught and how the non-teaching teacher assisted in managing the overcrowded classroom space while the other taught. Also, the non-teaching teacher always assisted by keeping discipline during the lesson and/or marking the other task while the other teacher was teaching.

According to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga (Parliament, 2012), the recommendation for learner-teacher ratio (LTR) is 30:1, and the Minister indicated that some provinces have already achieved the LTR of 30:1, and the country is at 30.4:1 on average. The allocation of two teachers for the 64 children per class met the national standard, but the physical classroom space was problematic. This finding supports the findings of West and Meier (2020), who discovered that the South African education system is characterized by inadequate school infrastructure. An example of a table showing that the Eastern Cape Province had achieved 29.1:1 by 2012 is shown below (Gina, 2018).

Table 5.1: Learner-teacher ratio (LTR)

Province	LTR
Eastern Cape	34-36:1

Source: Basic Education, Gina (2018)

The Eastern Cape, according to the Minister of Basic Education, would benefit from a ratio less than 30:1, as recommended by the Department. While the recommended LTR is 30:1 (one teacher for every thirty children), the Eastern Cape Province is reported to have an average LTR of 34-36:1 (Gina, 2018). This was the case at the school where this study was carried out.

With an LTR of 64:2, the classrooms were both small⁷ and as a result, the classroom space did not allow for other classroom activities, as required by CAPS, resulting in a secondary contradiction between CAPS requirements and the classroom situation.

On the other hand, teachers Hlumisa and Zoleka were allocated Grade 1A whilst Teachers Nathi and Faith were allocated Grade 1B. Even though two teachers were allocated to one physical classroom, each one had her allocated children with a separate attendance register. As such, when learners wanted to go out or make a special request, they knew who to contact between the two teachers. Even during the marking of assessment tasks, children knew who to contact. However, when it came to teaching there was only one teacher who led the lesson whilst the other teacher assisted children from the middle of the classroom to the backside of the classroom which surfaced a secondary contradiction between what the policy requires versus the actual practice in the classroom (See Photo 2 below).



Photo 6: The second teacher assisting in an overcrowded CAS 1A (18/01/2013)

This practice of having two teachers in the classroom due to the large number of students may appear to be in response to the policy, but in practice, the policy is not met because it was one teacher teaching at a time and maintaining discipline as the second teacher did was not teaching despite being fully employed and paid the same salary as the one teaching. Once more, both teachers struggled to walk in between rows of desks and attend to the individual needs of learners who were seating in the margins of the classroom. Furthermore, these classrooms had desks only and children brought their own chairs from home which would remain at school

⁷ Class size is determined by the size of the school. School size refers to the minimum and maximum number of children that a school can accommodate and the minimum number of children in a secondary school, as determined by the National Norms and Standards, is 200 and a maximum of 1000 children (Department of Education, 2009).

until the end of the year when they take them back home. Most of these chairs were not appropriate for their age because they were either too big or too small.

5.3.2 Overcrowding

Another finding of my research was overcrowding which was because of shortage of classrooms that resulted to classes having big numbers of children. According to Amnesty International (2020), even though South African education, in policy, promised to provide a quality education to all students without discrimination, the process is still troubled by severe inequalities which are deeply rooted in apartheid and are not being addressed adequately by the current government. As a result, many schools' infrastructures have collapsed, resulting in overcrowded classrooms and poor educational outcomes. Given the conditions in these classrooms, it is a continuation of discrimination because when there are 64 children in one classroom, they cannot compete with their middle-class counterparts who have infrastructure with enough classrooms and one teacher.

Overcrowding in this school was caused by a lack of classrooms, and because the school was in town, parents were unable to exercise their agency and construct extra classrooms, as in the case of the rural school with mud classrooms, where parents, built mud classrooms. If the school was in an area with mud classrooms, parents could build an extra classroom. Perhaps the school should have built more classrooms in the form of prefabs, but the school's only prefabs were used for nutrition rather than teaching. The SGB and SMT also did not exercise their agency to build two or more additional classrooms to ensure educational quality. This situation in these classrooms hampered the development of children's literacy. Instead of providing infrastructure for the children to be separated so that they could benefit fully from education, the government provided an extra teacher. Again, the DBE has a mandate to annually monitor the standards of education provision, delivery, and performance, but the department is failing itself by failing to meet the requirements of the National Education Policy while also violating the Employment of Educators Act by employing teachers who are not specifically specialized for the grade, they teach thereby contradicts the Schools Act.

Classroom space⁸ has many implications and is critical for a conducive learning environment for learning and teaching to take place effectively, which supports Mushatq's, et al. (2019) claim that the classroom is the most important field in the school, with the goal of providing an uninterrupted learning environment. Earthman (2002) shows that when the capacity of a building is exceeded, extreme pressure (temperature, inadequate lighting, good roofs, adequate space) is exerted upon all the facilities and areas that teachers and children need to use for effective learning and teaching. Earthman (2002) also contends that many of the old school buildings and those in poor condition are in the poorest areas of each school district, whether in urban or rural areas. Failure to improve the environment which shows old age and shortcomings can send a message to low-income students if the school system values them less.

The classroom is another place where children can demonstrate their agency as role actors in the education field. Findings (West and Meier, 2020; Mushatq et al., 2019), such as the overcrowding discussed in Section 1.1 of Chapter 1, can hinder children's literacy development. Because children in the two CASs were unable to demonstrate their agency at school, their literacy progress was hindered. In this study, the children were active participants in their own homes, contributing well to social, cultural, and family well-being activities. The fact that they felt constrained in the classroom's limited space, where they even shared desks to work on, hindered their agency. This overcrowding in both classrooms supports Cazden's (2001) assertion that classrooms are the most congested of all human situations.

These children in my research are being educated in a historic apartheid structure with overcrowded small classrooms. Some rural schools are mud schools, and there has been a call for their abolition, with the Eastern Cape Education Department predicting that all mud schools in the province will be gone by 2022, (Macupe, 2018). These mud schools were because of the apartheid. The problem with mud schools was that they couldn't accommodate large classes because they weren't designed to produce quality citizens but rather to keep people in the system. It was better with the new government because, while the policy promised to eradicate mud schools, there is still much work to be done.

⁸ The classroom space is organised to reflect the kind of learning that takes place within it. The way desks or tables are arranged can invite children to communicate with each other or to learn in isolation (UNICEF, accessed 10/02/2019).

The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, promised in 2013 that all schools made of mud, wood, zinc, and asbestos would be demolished by November 2016. Regrettably, that never happened (Tshangana, 2013). In addition, the Bisho High Court in the Eastern Cape found parts of the government's norms and standards regulations to be unconstitutional in 2018, leading to the High Court ordering that, classrooms made of mud, asbestos, wood, or metal be replaced with buildings that meet the National Building Regulations (Damba-Hendrik, 2020). The persistence of mud schools is due, once again, to the apartheid legacy, with the democratic government failing to address the inequality legacy left behind after 1994. Even CAPS, in one of her principles focusing on redressing historical imbalances, speaks of social transformation, which entails ensuring that historical educational imbalances are corrected, and equal educational opportunities are provided for all segments of the population (DBE, 2021). Even though the current study was conducted in 2012, the situation remains unchanged even after 2020. This challenge has a negative impact on children's education.

In interviews with teachers in this research, they expressed their concerns about difficulty they encounter when teaching in such an overcrowded situation as indicated in an example below.

Kuba sibabini akunzimanga ukuphathisana kodwa kunzima kuba sinamanani amakhulu kwaye akukho space saneleyo apha eklasini. *Because we are two, the big number of learners is not difficult to handle but it is difficult in that we have big numbers and there is not enough space in the classroom* (**Hlumisa, 18/01/2013**).

Njengale ngxaki yokungabi na space, kugcwele. Baninzi kakhulu kangangokuba awukwazi ukwenza individual attention ngenxa yemanani abo. Siyazama nangona kungekho lula, kuba sibabini ke. *Like the problem of not having enough space, the overcrowding. They are too many in so much that you are unable to do individual attention because of their number. We are trying though it is not easy, but because we are two* (**Nathi, 18/01/2013**).

Though Hlumisa first maintained that working in such a situation was not difficult, she later admitted the difficulties they have because of the overcrowded classroom caused by the enormous number of children they have. Both teachers agreed that the overcrowding in the classroom hampered learning and made it difficult for them to provide individual attention to the students. Both stated that they were unable to properly interact with the children in a way that would allow them to exercise their agency. While this is true for the children in Sirkko et al.'s (2019) study (described in Section 2.6.1), it is not the case in the two CASs I visited. Children's agency was involved in the ongoing coordination of their rights and adult powers and authority at school, according to Sirkko et al.'s (2019) research. Due to classroom space

constraints, teachers were unable to pay attention to the children and completely involve them in classroom activities. In South African classrooms, where overcrowding is a crisis, this is nothing new.

Similarly, children had difficulty moving throughout the classroom, particularly when they had to present teachers their written work for marking. The situation in these classrooms hampered literacy development because children had no choice but to accomplish the task assigned by the teachers at a certain time and place. This finding supports Sirkko et al. (2019) findings that the school is a primary setting in which children are typically dependent on their teachers' decisions and actions, which can either enable or prevent children's agency. The teaching relationship between children and teachers takes on an adult stress in which children's agency is not allowed to be exercised since teachers are the most powerful and controlling adults in all classroom activities. On the other hand, Teacher Nathi agreed that overcrowding was a problem beyond their control and could not be solved at their level. She expressed concern about a lack of space in an overcrowded classroom as a hindrance to offering individual attention.

Teacher Nathi's comment on overcrowding above, indicates ill-preparation of/some South African teachers in managing a large number of classes, particularly in the Foundation Phase, and a lack the necessary skills to deal with such situations, forcing them to focus solely on curriculum teaching. When teachers give children individual attention, their performance improves, which was not the case at the school where I conducted my research. Teachers were unable to pay attention to individuals because movement was limited to the children seated in front. Okuhle, one of my CAS 1A participants, was seated in the middle row in the middle of the classroom and relied solely on coming forward to show his work to the teachers. Angel and Likho were extremely fortunate because, despite sitting in separate rows, they were in the front seat, which would have allowed them to communicate more closely with the teacher if the situation had been different.

5.4 Classroom ability grouping

The analysis also discovered that at the beginning of the school year, Grade 1 teachers allocated/assigned children to their classes based on ability grouping. Children in both CASs 1A and 1B were divided into four ability groups: Oranges, Grapes, Bananas, and Babies. The teachers labelled these children and classified them as follows: Oranges and Grapes were

regarded by the teachers as children who could read and write, while Bananas were a challenging group, and Babies were regarded by the teachers as children who would not progress to the next grade the following year. Grade 1 teachers in my research site used the allocation to assign children to both CASs as well as according to their ability.

Labelling may be linked to ability grouping, which may limit academic achievement of children in a particular group. The ability grouping of children in class implies that the ability grouping stems from the educational claim that placing children of similar academic ability in the same class allows them to be taught more effectively because the provision is more geared to their needs (Dupriez, 2010). This finding about ability grouping supports Dupriez's (2010) claim that all teachers must assign children to different classes at the start of the school year. Dupriez (2010) does not mean ability grouping, but rather the allocation of children into different classes and classrooms. Placing children based on their abilities is likely to result in the Pygmalion effect, as Fleisch (2008) describes.

5.4.1 The teacher's expectations of the children

Though it was at the beginning of the year, teachers had different expectations of the children in their classrooms. The expectations they had varied according to each group. The teacher's expectations support the Pygmalion effect in Brophy and Good's (1970) model, which suggests that teachers form expectations early in their interactions with children. According to the model, teachers interact differently with each child based on their expectations. These expectations may have a negative impact on how children perform in class because they become sensitive to how teachers treat them in class (Brophy and Good, 1970). Because they couldn't carry the children in such a crowded environment, these teachers' classroom conditions put them under a lot of stress. Even the way children were arranged in the class revealed the teacher's expectations of different children. Children with low expectations were seated in the back of the class and grouped together, and they receive less time and attention during interaction (Brophy and Good, 1973).

I also discovered in the interviews with the teachers that they had a very low expectations about the Babies group which was different from the expectations they had with all other ability groups. The examples of the interviews below showed how teachers, Hlumisa and Nathi, view the Babies group.

Interviewer: Kutheni le group kusithiwa zi Babies nje? *Why is this group called Babies?*

Hlumisa: Kungokuba bazizlow learners abazudlulela kwi class elandelayo kunyaka ozayo. Ndiye ndibanike umsebenzi olula lowa use tshatini. *It is because they are slow learners and will not proceed to the next class the following year. I usually give them an easy task, the one on the board (interviews with Hlumisa, 07/02/2013).*

Interviewer: Aba ziBabies. *Are these Babies?*

Nathi: Ewe. Aba ngaba bangenzi ezi zinto kwaye awukwazi ukubanika lo msebenzi kuba abazukwazi ukuwenza. *Yes, these are those that you cannot give them the same task because they will not be able to do it.*

Interviewer: So, into oye uyenze wenze arrangement yokubanika enye itask ke ngoku? *So, what you do is to arrange to give them a different task?*

Nathi: Ewe. Ndiye ndibanike itask ezoba lulana kunaleya because sebeshiyekile. *Yes, I give them another task which is easier than the one because they have already been left behind.*

Interviewer: But zikhona ichances zoku improve? *But are there chances for improvement?*

Nathi: Zibakhona ichances zoku improve although sebelapha bona ngoku bayasalela abanye ababesuka apha sebekwezi ngoku igroups. Abanye apha basuka apha [pointing to the other group] zi mediocres ezina ezinye zi improve kule group. Uyabona ngoku aba [referring to the Babies] ichances zabo zimbalwa kuba ngoku ngu ANA ngoku. Umbone lo ukuba akusafani noko ngoku kodwa ke awunakubasakwazi ukumonyula ngokupheleleyo. *There are chances for improvement although they are already here now, they are left behind, some who are there [pointing to the fruit groups], are from this group [Babies]. Some are from Babies, and they are now mediocre some improved from Babies group. You see now, there are few chances of improvement for these now that ANA is nearby. You see that things are not the same now but there is nothing you can do to rescue him completely (Nathi 07/02/2013).*

Though both teachers could explain how they established that children could not read or write and or that they are slow learners. It was evident in Hlumisa's response that the reason for placing the children in Babies group was that she viewed them as children who were slow learners. Teacher Nathi had a different perspective on the Babies' group than teacher Hlumisa. She stated in the interviews that the Babies group could not be assigned the same task as the other groups because they could not perform the same task. This demonstrated the teachers' low expectations for this group, which may have affected their performance. Teacher Nathi also indicated in the interviews that all the children in the Babies' group, including my participant, Kuhle, could improve and move to another group. This response from teacher Nathi revealed that there were opportunities for improvement, but when a child improves, he or she is not accepted into a fruit group, and the teacher regards her or him as mediocre.

Teacher Hlumisa's view of the children as slow learners is different from what Vasudevan's (2017) view that a slow learner is a child who is capable of learning like any other child and does not require special education but may need extra time and assistance in the regular classroom. Even though Vasudevan (2017) saw slow learner identification as something that

needed to be done early in the year to avoid the situation where the challenge would have been prolonged, teachers had not followed the procedure for identifying children who were slow learners. Vasudevan (2017) suggests that teachers can identify slow learners by observing children's classroom behaviour daily, as well as asking parents about their child's progress and difficulties in learning various subjects, doing homework, his language difficulties, emotional problems, illness, injuries, and physical defects and problems.

Teachers' perceptions of the Babies group as slow learners were influenced by the circumstances in which teachers and children in my study found themselves. These were socio-cultural factors, such as poverty conditions for both children and teachers. Furthermore, because of how they were labelled, these children perceived themselves as being incapable of attaining the same levels of achievement as other children in their CAS. This backs up Vasudevan's (2017) claim that cultural factors, poverty, inadequacy in the family, unfavourable school conditions, and school absences all contribute to slow learning. The issue of slow learners was also a concern and a pressing issue in the education sector which was raised by the meeting's committee during CAPS evaluation (DBE, 2017). The committee reported that efforts had been made to reduce the assessment content load, but the ease of teachers and students remained uncertain. Though I am not advocating for slow learners in this study, it is worth noting that teachers associate ability grouping with slow learning, and conceptualisation of the concept is critical and urgent for teachers to gain a better understanding of the concept. Labelling children as slow learners before taking the necessary steps to evaluate their status, in my view, is putting them in a deficit view.

Similarly, for both CASs, children were seated in groups based on their abilities, with the low-expectation Babies group facing the wall, at least in CAS 1A, rather than facing the board during most of the literacy activities, as shown in the photos in Photo 7 below. Because social agents can change the structure of the field (Bourdieu, 1997), these teachers in my study used their power as agents in the field of their classrooms to shape what happened during literacy activities.

The photos below show examples of how the Babies group was seated in the classroom.



Photo 7: Sitting arrangement for Babies ability group CAS 1A (06/02/13)

Each time when the teachers taught, their focus was on the three fruit ability groups (Oranges, Grapes, and Bananas) and the Babies' ability group was always taught at the end of each lesson separately and was always given the work teachers said was easy as it is shown in the photos above. This practice confirms what Brophy and Good (1970) suggest in their model (as discussed in Chapter 2) that children whom the teacher do not expect to succeed are called upon less often and are given less time to answer questions. This constrains children's literacy development, particularly those in the Babies' group because children become sensitive to how a teacher treats them and will eventually label themselves as unable, affecting their social and academic behaviour in class as well as their self-esteem (Brophy and Good, 1970).

Though both CASs followed the same rule in the way they grouped the children, the way they handled the Babies' ability groups was not the same. While in CAS 1A were made to face the wall and were taught after the other ability groups, in CAS 1B they were made to sleep until the teacher was done with teaching the other groups. See the example of the Babies group in CAS 1B below.



Photo 8: Sitting arrangement for Babies group CAS 1B (12/02/13)

This means that the teacher has identified these students as a slow learning group and will not be able to teach them all at once. It is common for children in FP to not be at the same pace, and teachers should assign them tasks to keep them busy while they are busy with other groups rather than forcing them to sleep. It was as if these children were given different curricula which hindered their development of literacy. After teacher Nathi had finished with other ability groups she then turned to the Babies' group and assisted them with writing their names and the date in their books whilst the Grapes, Oranges and Bananas were writing a list of words on the board. This process of assisting the Babies group took some time and for this reason they did not finish writing the list of words that was written by other children in the class as shown in the example below.



Photo 9: Babies group in CAS 1B with teacher, Nathi (12/02/2013)

Group division may be the best practice for teachers, particularly during reading lessons, because it aids teachers in dealing with large groups. The challenge for the teachers in this study was that they lacked experience in using the skill of ability grouping and how it can help in the classroom. They used grouping methods to quickly track children who are considered fast learners to avoid being delayed by those who are considered slow learners. Even though teacher Nathi assisted the Babies group, Kuhle did not come to the front, and the teacher did not notice that they had not all come for help. Kuhle, who was in the Babies' group in CAS 1B remained seated and did not show signs of coming to the teacher for assistance though he was unable to write his name. Although Kuhle was active at home, at school his passivity and lack of response to the teacher persisted even into my second observation. According to Heath (1983), literacy and language purposes and practices in classrooms are fundamentally different from those in any home, and all children entering school must adjust to the school culture if they are to be successful achievers in that environment. The teacher did not call him; perhaps she expected him to come because other children responded to her call. I didn't ask Kuhle why

he did not come to the teacher because I didn't want to disrupt the class activity. Kuhle would appear shy and act as if he was the youngest child in class, even though he was of the same age as his classmates. This confirms Hiebert's (1994) observation that children who are "dependent on schooling for literacy" or who have spent four or more years without rich literacy support will exhibit patterns more like younger children.

However, it was not the focus of the teachers in both CAS 1A and 1B to effectively teach the Babies ability groups so that they met their needs. This practice surfaced a primary contradiction and had a negative impact on the development of literacy for the children in the Babies' group. My observation was that teachers focused on teaching children whom they regarded as fast learners so that they could catch up and be ready for the writing of the Annual National Assessment (ANA). Though teacher Nathi expressed her view about teaching other fruits groups to catch up, however, she was not consistent in her practice with this view. As suggested by Berk and Winsler, the Babies group was denied the opportunity to transfer the skills and understandings they would have gained from dialogue with others to their literacy-related discourse (2002). The way the teacher handled the Babies group demonstrated that they considered the Babies group to be of lower quality than the other three fruit groups. Because the children in the Babies group did not receive as much attention as mentioned in the preceding sections, this practice may have an impact on the type of instruction that these children receive as well as their literacy development. Instead of teachers adapting their teaching methods to benefit the Babies group, the gap widens.

5.5 The classroom as a place of literacy practice

During this research, I discovered that there were literacy aspects that teachers and children engaged with in the classroom to develop children's literacy. In this analysis I discuss some of the activities that teachers and children did in the classroom to help children develop their literacy skills. Table below (Table 5.2) is a summary of a typical isiXhosa literacy lesson of the day for both CAS 1A and CAS 1B.

Table 5.2: A summary of a typical isiXhosa first literacy lesson of the day for both CASs

Participant 1: Teacher Hlumisa CAS 1A	
Duration	Activity
5 mins	Ice breaker (weather and days of the week)
20 mins	Phonics
10 mins	Issuing of books
15 mins	Writing of the activity
15 min	Returning of books for marking
Participant 2: Teacher Nathi CAS 1B	
Duration	Activity
5 min	Ice breaker (weather and days of the week)
20 minutes	Phonics reading (whole class chorusing)
10 mins	Issuing of books
20 mins	Writing
15 mins	Returning of books for marking

5.5.1 Classroom literacy practices

In this analysis I discovered that there were classroom literacy practices that children engaged with in developing their literacy. In each of the two Classroom Activity Systems (CASs), three sub-objects that help to achieve the objects within the literacy practices were observed: oral language, reading and writing. Each of these sub-objects is discussed in the sections below.

5.5.1.1 Oral language

Every day, teachers in both CASs started their lessons with an oral activity, whether it was a song or a rhyme, or by asking the date and weather. Both teachers gave their introductions in English, which was sometimes mixed with isiXhosa. They began by asking the date, then the days of the week, and sometimes they would go on to ask the children about their intended careers. Children only responded to what the teacher asked, and when they did, they responded in a chorusing form, except when asked about their careers, which they answered individually. See examples of how teachers began their days for both CASs below.

Teachers Zoleka, CAS 1A (13/02/2013)

- 1 Zoleka: Good morning class
- 2 Children: Good morning teacher
- 3 Zoleka: How are you today?
- 4 Children: We are very well, thank you, teacher, and how are you, teacher?
- 5 Zoleka: I am very well, thank you, sit down. What is the date today? [children were reluctant to answer but eventually, Okuhle answered]
- 6 Okuhle: The date today is 13 February 2013
- 7 Zoleka: How is the weather today?
- 8 Children: Today is sunny
- 9 Zoleka: How many days in a week? Zingaphi iintsuku zeveki?
- 10 Children: There are seven days of the week.

Teacher faith, CAS 1B (19/07/2013)

- 1 Faith: What day is it today?
- 2 Children: Today is Wednesday
- 3 Faith: What day will be tomorrow?
- 4 Children: Tomorrow will be Thursday
- 5 Faith: Thank you Grade 1
- 6 Children: Thank you, teacher
- 7 Faith: Umntu ngamye makandixelele ukuba ufundela ukuba yintoni? (*Each person must tell me what he/she is studying to become*).
- 8 Chil 1: Ukuba lipolisa mis (*being a police teacher*).
- 9 Faith: Mhhn good. Omnye! (*Mhhn good. Next*)
- 10 Chid 2: Ndifuna ukuba ngutitshala mna mis. (*I want to be a teacher*)
- 11 Faith: Very good. Omnye! (*Very good. Next*)
- 12 Child 3: Ndifuna ukuba lijoni mna mis (*I want to be a soldier, teacher*)
- 13 Faith: Very good. Masigqithe ke ngoku. (*Very good. Let us proceed now*).

This method of introducing the lesson prior to its start allowed the children to participate in speaking, promoting literacy development and language ability. Children's ability to read and write is heavily influenced by their oral language proficiency. The CAPS document requires that the school day begin with oral work in the form of discussing the day, the date, or the weather chart. However, neither of the classrooms had weather charts or weekday calendars on the walls. Teachers used to check the weather by looking out the window or through the door. Children were not allowed to go outside and observe the weather; only those who were closer to the door or windows were allowed to do so. The rest of the children in the class followed the chorus. Only Likho had the opportunity to look outside of all participants because he was seated at the front desk in the second row, close to the door. Angel and Okuhle in CAS 1A, my other participants (subjects), were also seated in the same row as Likho, but they were far from both the door and the window. Kuhle, my fourth participant (subject) in CAS 1B, sat next to the window, facing the front of the class, but the windows were too high for him to see outside.

This practice of beginning lessons with an oral activity enabled children's literacy development because they were all able to participate in the classroom activity. Oral education is essential in the early stages because it improves communication skills. Oral education, according to Corson (1988), is important for early language and literacy development, but it must be balanced with literacy practices. Language and oral traditions are inseparable, according to Kalu and Edadi (2019), because oral tradition is rendered in the language in which it is situated. According to Reeder and Baxa (2020), spoken language lays the groundwork for children's literacy skills as they enter and progress through school. They will use spoken language in all aspects of their education, including interactions with peers and teachers in the classroom, as well as throughout their lives as they grow older. A strong foundation in spoken language will

help children become effective learners and communicators, as well as boost their confidence and overall sense of well-being.

What was missing from both teachers' introductions of the day was time for children to share their ideas/points of view on any topic of interest, demonstrating the teacher's control of the rules. Due to the constraints that teachers faced from both CASs, as discussed in the previous sections (such as Sections 5.3 and 5.4) of this chapter, there were no opportunities for teachers to identify children with special needs or learning difficulties. The children's inability to share their ideas limits their ability to demonstrate prior knowledge, which would allow teachers to gain a better understanding of the children's understanding of the topic and prior knowledge. According to Barnes (1976), children must use what they already know to make the teacher's presentation meaningful. The way the introduction before the lesson was set up by the teachers did not allow for individual discussion because the questions were directed to the entire class.

5.5.1.2 Reading

In this analysis I also found that in both CASs reading from the board happened more frequently than other literacy-related activities. Teachers always started with reading lessons of the words they wrote on the board, usually the previous day's work, before they started with work for that day. An enormous amount of time, approximately 45 to 50 minutes per day, was spent on reading. According to CAPS (Grades 1-3) the topics listed for the FP are speaking and listening, reading and phonics, writing and handwriting. Time allocated to each topic are as follows: Listening and speaking – 15 min. per day for 3 days; reading and phonics - phonics: 15 minutes per day for 5 days; shared reading: 15 minutes per day for 3 days; group reading: 30 minutes per day (2 groups each for 15 minutes) for 5 days; writing - 15 minutes per day for 3 days and handwriting - 15 minutes per day for 4 days. In my observation, in both periods of observation, children were always engaged with whole class reading from the chalkboard and had no opportunity for shared reading and limited opportunity for individual reading.

Teachers, code switched during their lessons using both isiXhosa and English depending on the lesson taught at that time. It was interesting to note that all teachers in both classrooms were using the same approach to reading during my observation from the first to the third term. All teachers followed the phonics approach to teaching reading. For the teachers in my research, phonological awareness forms the basis for reading. Phonological awareness is essential for developing good reading skills, according to (Knoblauch and Ed, 2008). Children must be

able to distinguish separate sounds within the stream of language they hear when people talk to understand the different sounds made by symbols in the alphabetic world (Weinberger, 1998).

When the lesson was taught in isiXhosa, the children were able to read, and they were also attempting to read in English with the teacher's assistance during English reading lessons. According to Snow et al. (1987), teaching and testing children in English disadvantages those with limited English proficiency. If these children were taught and tested in the language in which they are proficient, they might not have any reading difficulties at all. As a result, the children in my study had little difficulty learning in their home language, which in my case was isiXhosa, because CAPS documents state that in South Africa, the language of instruction for learners in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1-3) is the Home Language (HL). The greater a child's oral language proficiency in the HL, the easier it will be for them to learn to read and write (Department of Basic Education, 2004). During the first term, teachers in both CASs began their literacy lessons by teaching vowels or sound drilling. In both classes, the Babies' group was always taught after the other groups had mastered the lesson.

During the first term, the teacher's primary focus was on teaching letter sounds and sight words. They used a phonics-based approach from the chalkboard/chart, with the children chanting responses in unison. It was critical for the teachers that the children first master letter identification before progressing to the next level meaning that, teachers first teach children to recognize and name letter sounds. This confirms Milankov, Golubovi'c, Krsti'c, and Golubovi'c (2021)'s suggestion that phonological skills have been found to be strongly related to early reading and writing development.

The conditions in these classrooms surfaced a primary contradiction because teachers were under pressure from a variety of factors discussed in this chapter such as overcrowding, poor infrastructure, and a lack of availability of resources in the form of material tools to use when teaching literacy such as books and even in good condition chalkboards. Due to the scarcity of resources in the classrooms, children did not have the opportunity to hold print material. This serious shortage of books as a key literacy tool surfaced a primary contradiction and hindered children's literacy development as children had to rely on the charts hung on the walls of the classrooms and the chalkboard as shown in the pictures below, while at home they were able to access old story books.

The pictures below (Figure 5.1), are some of the few examples of charts hung on walls that have been extracted from both CASs

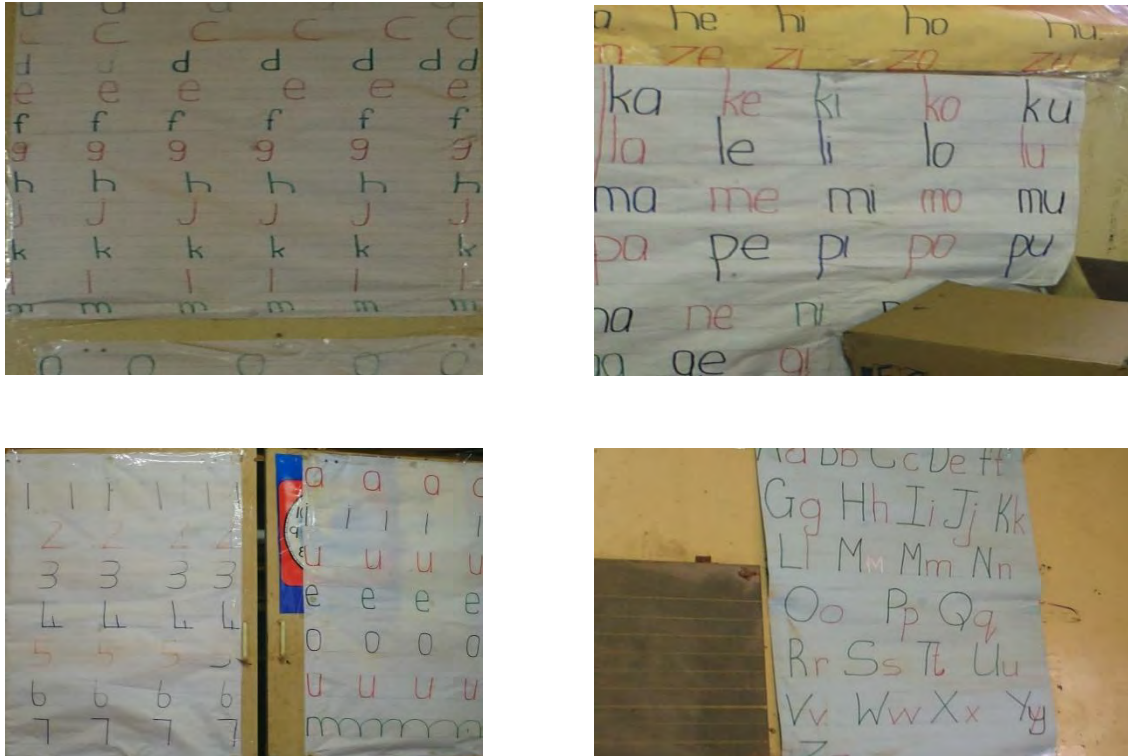


Figure 5.1: Pictures of charts from CAS 1A (04/02/2013) and 1B (20/08/2013)

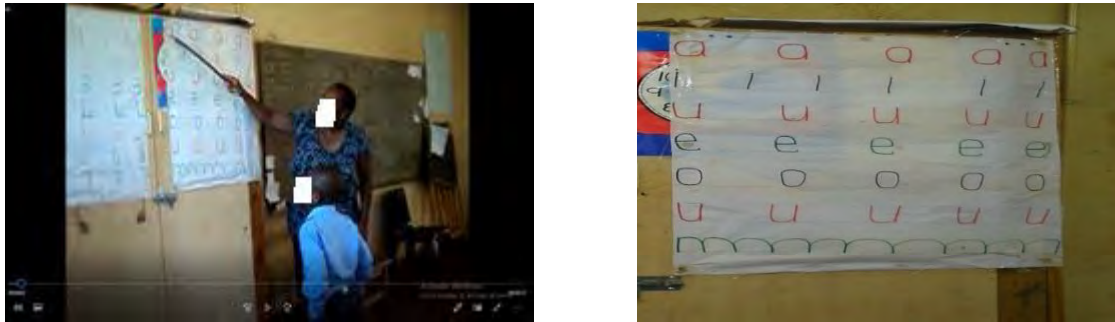
The following examples, 1 and 2 below, present the same lesson where the teacher drills the letters from a chart as well as from the chalkboard. The teacher drilled the letters from a chart. Both the chart and the chalkboard were used as mediating tools in the reading activity.

Example 1: A lesson on vowels from the chalkboard in CAS 1A (Hlumisa - 04/02/2013)

1. Teacher: Kukho ibhola nentonga, wazibiza ngokuba ngubani esisikhamiso? [Pointing at the chart looking at Likho, but all the learners in the class answer]. *There is a ball and a stick, what did he call this vowel?* [Pointing at the chart, looking at Likho, but all the learners answer]
2. Class: a
3. Teacher: a. Very good [touching Likho on the face]. Size kwesi isikhamiso sithe sanechaphaza [Showing with a stick] nguban'esis'khamiso Likho [Coming from this vowel with a dot, what do we call this vowel?]
4. Likho: i
5. Teacher: Phinda [again]
6. Likho: i
7. Teacher: Phinda [again]
8. Likho: i
9. Teacher: Phinda [again]
10. Likho: i
11. Teacher: Phinda [again]
12. Likho: i
13. Teacher: Phinda [again]
14. Likho: i

15. Teacher: Phinda [*again*]
16. Likho: i
17. Teacher: Good [*Touching him on the shoulder*] wafika kusi's'khamiso sivulekile sithi xa sithi [*opening her mouth wide and her head up*] wafika sivulekile Likho, sathi ngubani lona Likho? [*Good, we found this vowel open, what do we call it? We found it open Likho, what do we call it?*]

Photo 10: A lesson on vowels and patterns drill CAS 1A (Hlumisa - 04/02/2013)



The above example shows teacher Hlumisa teaching vowels to the class with Likho standing in front of the board. She used an individual approach to reading and focused on the formation of letter sounds. Her focus during this lesson was phonemic awareness. According to Milankov, Golubovi'c, Krsti'c, and Golubovi'c (2021), phonological awareness in children improves and accelerates learning to read, and phonological abilities are significant predictors of early reading and writing development. The emphasis in this lesson was on accuracy and the correct pronunciation of the vowels. Thus, the approach focused on developing literacy as a skill which according to Excell and Linington (2011), is classroom bound, focusing on drilling and rote learning. Teachers did not build upon informal literacy as a foundation upon which formal literacy instruction is based (ibid.). The nature of the questions that teacher Hlumisa asked did not allow for children's engagement with the text. She wanted children to chorus and she simply repeated the sounds like a song. The teacher repeated one word '*again*' and the children also repeated the sound (see lines 5 to 15 in example 1 above). Though on the other side chorusing and repetitive is a good practice, it limited children the opportunity to engage in much speaking as they were only required to say one letter sound.

In the example above, teacher Hlumisa made Likho repeat the '*i*' vowel seven times because she wanted him, together with the class, to master the sound because if the children know the letter-sound correspondence, it would be easy for them to remember their sounds which agrees with Freebody and Luke (1990) that knowledge of the alphabetic principle extends children's early reading and writing achievement and that they see drilling as a good practice. As good as it might be, Excell and Linington (2011), argue for the importance of building upon informal

literacy which children bring from their social context. The approach followed by teacher Hlumisa is what Rule (2017) referred to as the oratorical reading approach, where the focus is on correct pronunciation with little or no emphasis on reading comprehension and sense-making of the written words.

During her teaching from my first to the third observation, the emphasis was put on the mastering of letters and learning sight words by recognising their written shapes. This was the teachers' excellent pedagogical practice where they used the phonic approach as a basis to be teaching reading (Knoblauch and Ed, 2008; Weinberger, 1998). Perhaps, this was because teachers had been trained to see their task as one of simplifying and grading the complexities of print into manageable bits in a particular order according to Bloch (2000). This practice includes little that supports children for future success in literacy (Prinsloo, 2004) as there were no workbooks or storybooks to make the link from phonics to words, sentences and to stories to extend it towards a whole language approach.

According to Bloch (2000), primary schools emphasize phonics and visual recognition, such as memorizing words and identifying their written form. This finding about teacher's focus on pattern drill confirms what Bloch (2000) states. He points out that teachers have been trained to see their jobs as simpler and to break down the weight of the print into manageable chunks in a specific order. Reading approach (chorusing) used by teachers in my research surfaced a secondary contradiction because children were not asked any questions related to what they read whether on the board or in the chart.

There was a shift in the teachers' approach during the third term in both CASs, from drilling single words to word-building. My observation of the lessons showed an example of repetitive teaching which might promote boredom in children as indicated in the examples below.

CAS 1A - Lesson on vowels (04/02/2013)

1. Teacher 1: Uyasijonga isikhamiso, nasi isikhamiso funda Anitha. *You look at the vowel, here is the vowel read Anitha.*
2. Anitha: a
3. Teacher 1: Funda esi isikhamiso. *Read this vowel.*
4. Anitha: a
5. Teacher 1: Uth'uAhlume ngu 'a' lo. *Ahlume says this is 'a'*
6. Ahlume: u u u
7. Teacher 1: Uth'uAhlume ngu 'u' lo. *Ahlume says this is 'u'.* Ngubani lona Ahlume? *Who is this Ahlume?* [Class making noise]. Asithethi thina ngubani lona Ahlume? *We don't talk, who is this Ahlume?*

8. Ahlume: i
9. Teacher 1: khwaza ke Ahlume awuviwa phayana awuviwa ngabantu abaphaya. *Louder Ahlume you are not heard by the people at the back.*
10. Ahlume: i i i i i
11. Teacher 1: Uqal'ujonge. Awuthi a noba ayingo a. esi sinekepusi uyasibona ukuba ngubani. Ngubani lona. *You first look, you don't say 'a' even if 'it's not 'a', this one has a cap you see who is it? Who is this?*
12. Ahlume: o
13. Teacher 2: Ngubani lona Ahlume? *Who is this Ahlume?*
14. Ahlume: o
15. Teacher 1: U 'o' unekepusi. *Does 'o' have a cap?*
16. Class: No teacher ngu 'e'. *No teacher it is 'e'.*

CAS 1B - Lesson on vowels (05/02/2013)

1. Teacher: Masifundeni apha. *[let us read here]*
2. Class: a
3. Teacher: Bethunana niyandigezela ngoku (pointing to the chart). Ngubani lo utshate no l, apha? Ngubani eli gama? *[You are silly now. Who is married to l here? What is this word?]*
4. Class: i *[i- which is a vowel]*
5. Teacher: Hee? *[Again]*
6. Class: i
7. Teacher: Libengubani ke xa litshatile? *[What do we call it when it is married?]*
8. Class: i
9. Teacher: libengubani? *[What do we call it?]*
10. Class: i
11. Teacher: Masakhe ke eli gama, lithini? *[Let's build this word, what is it?]*
12. Class: leli *[Ladder]*
13. Teacher: kwakhona *[again]*
14. Class: Leli *[ladder]*

In both examples, teacher Hlumisa (CAS 1A) and teacher Nathi (CAS 1B) focused on phonics rather than the whole language approach. It is recommended that beginning readers must have a certain level of phonemic awareness to learn to read and that learning to read heightens the awareness of sounds and print knowledge (Freebody and Luke 1990). They further suggest that phonemic awareness has a strong relationship to future reading development (ibid.). Important as is for children to master phonemes, Dahl and Scharer (2000) stress the importance of whole language approach suggesting that children from whole word classrooms seem to develop a greater ability to use phonics knowledge effectively than children in more traditional classrooms where skills are practised in isolation. This may be viewed in terms of Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, which aligns well with Rogoff's (2003) notion of guided participation which is why schools and teachers need to draw on what children know as co-constructors of knowledge (Kajee, 2011).

Due to a lack of books in both classes, children were not engaged in reading for meaning or pleasure. Pretorius, et al. (2016) suggest that the ability to read for meaning and pleasure is found to be the most important skill that children learn in primary school. Both teachers used

the same approach to teach the vowels and building of words. The only difference between the two CASs was that in CAS 1B in her teaching was that, instead of teacher Nathi focusing focussing on one child like teacher Hlumisa did in CAS 1A, teacher Nathi asked individual children randomly from the three ability groups (Oranges, Grapes, and Bananas) to respond to her questions during the lesson.

My research confirms what Prinsloo and Stein (2008) and Excell and Linington (2011) found: that teachers' literacy teaching practices are predominantly based on the view of literacy as a cognitive skill since the focus is predominantly on drilling the basics of the alphabet and syllable coding and decoding, that is, sounding out of letters and words. Other research conducted by the Western Cape Education Department (2010) into Foundation Phase teachers' literacy teaching practices showed that teachers promote collectivised rather than individualised reading opportunities (in other words, children read in unison); provide limited opportunities for developing reading fluency, and do not teach children strategies for making sense of texts.

For the teachers in both CASs 1A and 1B, children needed to first master letter identification before moving to the next level which in their case was the formation of words, a typical approach of how these children were taught. This means that they were teaching children to be able to name and identify letter sounds first with very little or no opportunity for the children to make sense of the text. Although the method used by the teachers might support children's literacy development to some degree, the approach did not promote children's ability to read for meaning and pleasure which is found to be the most important (Rule, 2017). This finding also confirms what Prinsloo's research in Khayelitsha outside Cape Town (2004) reveals that teachers' practices include little that supports children's future success in literacy.

Teachers from my research seem to lack the method of teaching the whole language approach where children would focus on meaning-making rather than the building of isolated words. Patzelt (1995), suggests that whole language learners and teachers, concentrate on meaning and comprehension in language use. The teachers' approach surfaced a primary contradiction as the FP teachers in South Africa are required to follow and implement the curriculum when teaching reading. Teachers are expected to meet the requirements of CAPS together with the Teachers' Guide (DoE, 2008) which was not the case with teachers in my research. These teachers never used the Teacher's Guide during both periods of observation another primary

contradiction was at play as this is a requirement and Teacher's Guides are provided for by the Department.

A focus on phonics lasted for a couple of months. This approach is regarded as an important precursor for future reading and writing ability (Bowman and Treiman, 2004). Also, letter knowledge helps to develop children's understanding of the alphabetic principle (Freebody and Luke, 1990). In an interview with teacher Hlumisa, she emphasised that it was not easy to teach young children without starting with the vowels. Besides, drilling is a good practice where children in the process of drilling letters acquire emergent literacy skills such as sound knowledge and letter names. Teachers used the code-breaking resources or coding practice (Luke and Freebody, 1990) approach as a basis for reading instruction. They put more emphasis on decoding and encoding of written and spoken texts, helping children to recognise and use the alphabet and sound relationships. Spelling out of the sounds correctly was one of the teacher's concerns when teaching reading. This was more evident during the lessons in the above examples.

The finding also revealed a shift during the third term, from just naming of sounds/letters and the focus was on naming sounds to make up words as in the example below.



Figure 5.2: A picture of two-syllable words CAS 1A (29/07/2013)

The approach used by the teachers contradicted what Weinberger (1996) suggests about reading that the primary way to learn to read is by reading. While there are words on the board, not just vowel sounds, these are isolated words, decontextualised, not words in sentences or whole texts that can be read for meaning. Therefore, for a child to be able to read, he/she should be exposed to a variety of strategies that encourage reading.

5.5.1.3 Writing

Throughout the first term, writing emphasis was on pattern drill and letter writing. Patterns and letter writing was focused specifically on the Apples, Grapes, and Bananas groups while the Babies' group was taught separately, and the focus was on patterns only during the first term. Kuhle's writing is the only one that goes across the page, diagonally, disregarding the lines completely, whereas the other three all seem to understand the purpose of the lines and the direction of writing. Teachers' focuses on patterns was very useful as it helped many children including my participants. But this did not help Kuhle throughout my observation. Kuhle could not improve his writing at all regardless of the teachers' repetitive practice of phonics and vowel teaching.

In both CASSs, writing happened frequently after the teacher had completed the reading lesson. After each reading lesson, children were given the opportunity to write what was on the chalkboard or chart that was pasted on the wall. When teachers dealt with writing, their concentration was neat handwriting and correct spelling. They excluded self-expression, communication or meaning making. Likho enjoyed writing and was always amongst the children who were the first to complete their writing. Angel struggled to write letters during the first term while Okuhle wrote much better than her but all of them were placed in the same ability group. Kuhle in the Babies group did not enjoy writing and was always reluctant to show his work to the teachers. The Babies' ability group received less attention and always after the teacher had first attended to the other groups. A secondary contradiction surfaced in the way teachers grouped children in class if they were assigning them according to their abilities because my three subjects were placed in the same ability group while their performance was not the same during the first term. However, both Angel and Okuhle's performance improved during my observation in the third term.

When writing is considered, according to Raban (1985), it is often understood in terms of handwriting alone and has rarely to do with shaping and moulding the writing aspects such as symbols of letters in children from the beginning of their school experience. Thus, there is a need for children to be actively involved in their writing and be left free to choose when to write and for how long. Clay (2001:4) reported that "most theories in the field of reading acquisition ignore the fact that children are learning and practising writing at the same time".

Children in CAS 1A and B, including my four participants, were shown by the teachers how to write between lines in their notebooks during my first period of lesson observation. Two of my participants Okuhle and Likho, wrote correctly between lines in their exercise books as they were taught by the teacher. Teacher Hlumisa told Likho and Angel to stand in front of the class (*community*) and showed the class their writing (*object*). See Figure 5.11 and 5.12 below for both Likho and Angel showing their writing activity CAS 1A.

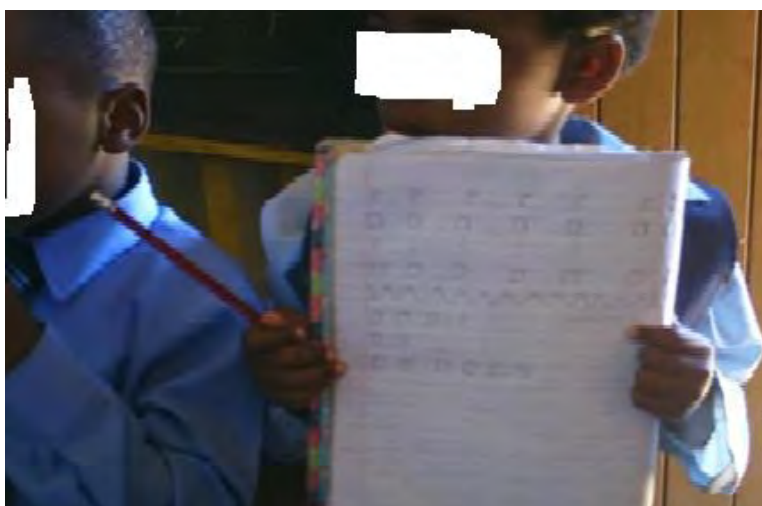


Photo 11: Angel's writing at school (14/02/13)



Figure 5.3: Likho's writing at school (14/02/2013)

The teachers showed them the lines were drawn on the chart and the chalkboard and the children were expected to copy them into their books. These books were kept at school and children were not allowed to take them home. Teachers feared that books would be torn at home. Children only relied on what the teacher required them to write at a given time. Clay (2001) views writing as of critical importance for learning to read in early literacy as it prevents learners from neglecting things they must know about print and reveals things about the learners' ways of working that their teachers need to know about. The CAPS 2011 document requires that children in Grade 1 should follow a pre-writing programme which happens before teachers teach formal handwriting. This stage is usually the stage where they are taught basic skills of writing such as how to handle the pencil correctly (National Curriculum Statement

(NCS), 2011). This helps with the development of visual discrimination, gross and fine motor (DBE, 2011). These are the mechanical aspects of handwriting in which teachers focused during my first phase of lesson observation during January and February 2013. Again, teachers assumed that children were unable to write between lines and did not draw on their home experience of writing.

5.6 Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter revealed that when children enter the education field in school, the nature of the engagement, the levels of participation of the four participants are very different, and the role of parents and siblings completely disappears; they are not part of this field, and not all classrooms of young children are like this. In other schools, children take homework books home for parents to read, and at least once a week the teacher writes about what the child has been doing and speaks directly to parents, and these home message books are a common feature of Grade 1 in many schools, and children also take books home to read, look at pictures, and talk to parents about school. This assists parents in becoming involved in the educational field. This does not happen at my research school because it is so crowded. Once again, not all of my four participants were in Grade R. Kuhle, one of the participants, did not attend Grade R (see Chapter 3), which has some negative consequences for a child who does not attend Grade R because the Grade R curriculum, from my experience as foundation phase teacher, is designed to take children to the first stage of literacy development, where they are emerging prereaders. A child who completes Grade R is classified as an emerging prereader according to Snow's five stages of reading development. If a child completed Grade R, it indicates that they have some experience; if they have no Grade R experience and come from a home where all literacy activities are done orally, they are unlikely to be an emerging reader when they enter Grade 1.

The analysis also revealed some characteristics of the South African education system, such as teacher qualification alignment, inadequate school infrastructure that resulted in overcrowding, and ability grouping. The infrastructure of many schools has failed, resulting in overcrowded classrooms and poor educational outcomes. Failure to improve the environment sends a message to low-income students that the school system does not value them. Due to a lack of resources, children did not have the opportunity to hold print material at school. Also, a classroom setting is a highly regulated setting with highly regulated rules in which children are

seated in specific groups and face in a specific direction. These children are oriented in the classroom; some face the wall, while others face the board and were grouped into different groups. The analysis revealed that the Babies' ability group received less attention and always after the teacher had attended to the other groups. A secondary contradiction emerged, in which teachers only provided what was required by the curriculum and did not use children's home literacy practices as a foundation for literacy development, despite research (Excell and Linington, 2011) indicating that children need to find their voices during reading and writing moments. Teachers did not appear to have any pedagogical strategies for connecting school literacy practices and activities to those at home. Their literacy instruction took a more formal pedagogical approach, emphasizing isolated skills rather than the development of critical and analytical skills. They did not teach children in such a way that they understood the purpose of texts and how they functioned, resulting in a secondary contradiction. This secondary contradiction also hampered the achievement of the desired outcome, a literate child, because teaching literacy should focus on the development of critical, analytic skills as well as understanding what texts are for and how they function, particularly in social contexts (Gennrich, 2015).

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

I start by reminding the reader about the over-arching research aim of the study which was to explore early home literacy practices and examine how these literacy practices are taken up at school in a rural environment. The main aim of this chapter is to establish the interplay between home and school literacy practices. I summarise how each research question has been answered by identifying the themes from the data presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The chapter also addresses the third research question: How are home literacy practices taken up at school and what are the implications for understanding schooled literacy practices? I discuss the findings of this study and make recommendations about children's home and school literacy practices and how these literacy practices are taken up at school in the Grade 1 classrooms. I analyse data collected using observation, interviews, videos, and field notes of four Grade 1 children aged six years and their families and four Grade 1 teachers from the same school. I also discuss the limitations of the study as well as the overall implications of the findings of this study and suggest recommendations for future research.

6.2 Discussion and Overview of the key research findings

In this section, I give a brief description of the findings of the study in response to each of the research questions.

6.2.1 First research question

The first research question is: *What home literacy practices do children engage in before entering formal school?* Several conclusions were drawn from data gathered through observation, interviews, video and audio recordings, and field notes. The findings indicated that the participants' literacy habitus is influenced by the fields in which they grew up. I use a variety of literacy theories to analyse children's home literacy activities, including Street (2003, 1995), Barton and Hamilton (1998), Heath (1983), and Gee (1990). The following literacy activities were discovered because of the data collected during phase 1 of home literacy practices:

- Storytelling
- Story acting
- Play/game (role-play, skipping rope, riddles, school play)
- Reading and writing

A detailed examination of these home literacy practices reveals that there were both affordances and constraints. As illustrated in Table 6.1, affordances were enabling circumstances that favoured home literacy development, whereas constraints were those that hindered literacy development. These literacy practices discovered in the homes reveal that, despite the limits imposed by the material conditions, the participants engaged in a variety of literacy practices at home. Participants were observed to be enjoying themselves while engaging in these activities. Also, issues of improvisation, such as writing with charcoals, and sharing what was available, such as using one pen, aided them in utilizing their abilities in a certain field. Even though the participants improvised and engaged in a range of literacy practices, the field's physical conditions imposed some limitations. Reading is always perceived as a disadvantage in impoverished situations, referring to people who have access to print and consider literacy as a means of overcoming obstacles.

During the data analysis phase, CHAT was used to investigate elements of this activity and to bring to the surface contradictions. Table 6.1 summarizes the findings and depicts the Activity System's (AS) affordances and constraints. The components of the activity system, mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1 were used to break down the data for this inquiry. Tools, subject, rules, community, object, and the division of labour are all components of an activity system. The summary and themes drawn from data acquired during the phase of home observation, as well as affordances and restrictions, are presented in the table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Summary of the key research findings			
Component of the Activity System	Findings	Affordances	Constraints
Homes and family members	Homes where literacy practices for children were built and supported. This finding supports the contention of Parlakian and Sa'nchez (2006) that children learn to communicate within the context of their home culture.	All family members, with their limited resources, constructed and supported children's literacy development. All children had access to literacy resources in the form of their parents, older siblings.	Poverty status for families who were unable to meet their children's expectations of listening to stories from the parents and parents having no resources to create new ones.
<i>Community</i>	Parents	Parents were engaged in the literacy practices of children. The family told stories and played games with their children They also read books with them, especially HAS 4	Poverty conditions caused by the legacy of apartheid (discussed in Chapter 4 section 4.2.4) limited parents to fully engage with their children in literacy activities.

	Children	All of the children's games, even those played at home, were literacy related. Children's literacy development was enhanced using unconventional materials.	Because there were no children to play with in Kuhle's HAS 3, so, he was unable to participate in the range of games that other children did.
	Older siblings	There were various games that siblings organised to play with younger children.	The older siblings in HAS 3 had no time to engage in literacy activities due to their school activities
	The big tree	Where children gain social cohesion through gathering	Only one participant, Likho, benefited from this community's gathering because the big tree was close to his home
<i>Subjects</i>	The four participants and other participating children	All children, regardless of age, participated in all literacy games and play. Parents acted as models for literacy activities.	Not all parents participated in literacy activities.
<i>Division of labour</i>	Home	Children always took the initiative during literacy activities and in decision making. Parents and older siblings acted as literacy models.	Literacy modelling is inadequate at HAS 3.
<i>Rules</i>	Home rules	Rules were guided by a particular activity being acted upon by the subject (children or older siblings).	Except for storytelling activity, there were no explicit restrictions during the literacy activities. When the children felt like it, they switched roles amongst themselves.
<i>Tools</i>	Limited access to print/books	Children were engaged in a variety of literacy activities informally. Oral literacy was the most prevalent at home because their environment has a rich oral tradition culture	Very little exposure to books, that children embody, and which forms their literacy habitus
<i>Object</i>	Children Parents Older siblings	All parents from the three HASs including children participated in and contributed to the literacy activities.	At HAS 2, there was a low level of literacy engagement.

According to the findings presented in Table 6.1, children have rich literacy practices in all four HASs, even when they come from low socioeconomic environments. Print-poor home environments do not imply that children have no literacy practices; however, schools should begin to recognize the benefits that children bring from their surroundings. Children's literacy practices were built and supported at home. This finding supports Kajee's (2011) contention that, while children may not exhibit schooled literacy (typically English) in family and

community settings, they do exhibit complex language and literacy patterns and behaviour through literacy activities. They made meaningful connections with others by using their native language and culturally appropriate communication styles, and adults acted as mediators (Parlakian and Sa'nchez, 2006). Complex languages were required for games like skipping rope, and they played the game in English. See Extract 4.7 in Chapter 4.

Though it is commonly assumed that low socioeconomic families do not provide suitable environments for literacy (Harper 2014), participants in this study discovered ways to engage with literacy. This demonstrates the significance of the cultural environment in children's development. Culture shapes our expectations of what children can and should know and do at various ages. They were not discouraged by limited resources in their homes, but were able to improvise, as discussed in Chapter 4.3.3, by participating in a variety of literacy activities with the assistance of their parents and, in some cases, older siblings; thus, the role of the more knowledgeable other (MKO) becomes important.

Their engagement in these literacy activities helped them to be able to construct meaning. Hence Vygotsky (1978) sees a child as a co-constructor of meaning and an active player in his or her world. Cultural norms and practices played a key role in the development of literacy of the participants. For example, oral storytelling played an important role in the lives of the participants and influenced their literate habitus. The importance of cultural context becomes important in supporting children's learning as it helps children to be highly motivated (Allen, 2015). This statement is also supported by Excell and Linington (2011) stating that the importance of the kind of literacy practices children encounter from their context has a positive impact later at school.

6.2.2 Second research question

The second research question is: What are the literacy practices in Grade 1 classes? The second research question was answered in the second phase of data collection and is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Teachers' attitudes toward literacy and how they practice literacy in their classrooms reflected their literate habitus. The findings revealed that the participants' (teachers') methods of teaching literacy were based on letter sounds and sight words, a phonic-based approach, focusing on vowels, or sound drilling. Reading consumed a significant amount of time,

averaging 45 to 50 minutes per day. This finding requires CRT, which is a pedagogy that recognizes and embraces children's cultures. There was no time for shared reading because the children were always engaged in group reading. Classroom conditions such as those discussed in Chapter 5, limited teachers' ability to teach literacy and limited them to focusing on engaging children in group reading because group reading did not necessarily require extra space for children to read. Children were sitting at their desks, reading. Even if they were called to the front of the board, there would not be enough space for them to stand and read without being obstructed. There was no attempt to follow what CAPS required, that is, teachers did not engage children in all types of reading, even though reading is viewed as critical to achieving success in society and is highly valued and essential for social and economic advancement. The conditions in these classrooms revealed a primary contradiction because teachers were under pressure due to a lack of resources in the form of material tools to use when teaching literacy, such as books and even in good condition chalkboards.

6.2.3 Third research question

The third research question is: How are home and school literacy practices correlated in the Foundation Phase class?

Table 6.2: A summary of the key findings of the interplay between home and school literacy practices	
<i>The interplay between home and school</i>	The findings revealed that children engage in literacy practices at home before entering formal schooling. Children's homes are rich literacy spaces and a good environment for children's literacy development, demonstrating the importance of culture in children's development. However, these home literacy practices are not regarded as a foundation for developing formal school literacy. According to Pucheco and Gutierrez (2009), to understand a student's literacy practices, a great deal about the student's history of involvement in literacy practices across all contexts of his or her daily life is required. There were, however, various factors that constrained teacher's teaching of literacy in Grade 1 classes such as classroom space, overcrowding, as well as furniture (discussed in detail in Chapter 5). Grade 1 teachers initiate and dictate how, what and when children engage with formal literacy practices in the classroom, a normal situation that govern the formal setting such as school. They are unaware that they are engaging in literacy practices, and a secondary contradiction emerges because at home in the evening, stories were told by both children and parents while children were waiting for the evening meal.

	In contrast to what happens at school, children were self-motivated at home because they participated in all literacy activities of their own will. Children have a freedom of speech and are not restrained in any way; they are free to move around and do things on their own time. There were rules to follow at school, such as children must be seated, a formal teacher must be present, and a routine must be followed. Teachers punished students for talking in class because it was perceived as making noise and being disrespectful to the students. These rules were accompanied by consequences if a child did not follow them. Teachers did not build upon informal literacy as a foundation upon which formal literacy instruction is based.
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Teaching literacy at school was very specific and focused on children on how to read and write with no focus on developing children's critical and analytical skills. At school, teachers dominated lessons and children were not afforded the opportunity to speak except when answering the question while at home children were the initiators of all the literacy activities which allowed them to communicate and express their views. Participation of children in literacy activities involving oral language at home increased their confidence. This finding supports CAPS's suggestion that during the FP period in Grades R and 1, the emphasis should be on developing a solid oral foundation in L1 (CAPS, 2011). There were no opportunities to tell stories at school while children were engaged in a variety of stories which helped to promote their narrative skills. Although teachers agreed that they were aware that children learn literacy from home, they did not build on these literacies when they teach; instead, teachers initiated and dictated how what and when children engage with formal literacy practices in the classrooms.

Heath (2010) suggests that children need to have the mainstream or school habits presented in familiar activities with explanations related to their habits of taking meaning from the environment. This implies that teachers need to be familiar with the home literacy practices of all the children in their classes to plan suitable literacy activities in the school and bridge the gap between what the children bring to school regarding their literacy competencies and that which the curriculum requires and expects.

While at school children were not given the opportunity to freely participate in the literacy activities, while at home they always took the initiative during literacy activities and in decision making and parents and older siblings acted as literacy models.

6.2.4 Fourth research question

This section responds to the fourth research question: *What are the pedagogical implications for understanding the interplay between home and school literacy practices?* Brophy and Good's (1973) model as well as the notion of a pedagogy of play (Excell and Linington 2015) were used to understand teachers' and children's literacy practices. Brophy and Good's (1973) model proposes four phases of the way teachers' expectations operate in the classroom. First, that the teacher forms expectations about each child in terms of his or her classroom academic work performance and other behaviours. Second, because of these expectations, the teacher interacts differently with each child. Those whom she expects to succeed are praised and given several opportunities for success while those she does not expect to succeed are called upon less often and are given less time to answer questions. Third, these children become sensitive to the different ways the teacher behaves towards them in the class. Consequently, they notice the teacher's passing over their raised hand(s) to answer questions, or irritation at their mistakes, and they begin to label themselves as under-performing, which eventually affects their social and academic behaviour in the class, as well as their self-esteem. Fourth, over time, these children's performance comes to conform to the teacher's expectations (Brophy and Good 1973).

The pedagogy of play (Excell and Linington 2015) adds emphasis to these four phases by highlighting the value of teachers' subject-matter expertise and the need for them to ideally work closely together. Both are crucial, as is clear from the way teachers interact with children and the things they say, such as the way they explain ideas and pose questions.

6.3 Contradictions between HAS and SAS

Some contradictions surfaced regarding the HAS and SAS as I discuss below.

6.3.1 Reading in the school context versus home context

The study found that children in both CASs spent 45-50 minutes daily on reading, with no opportunities for shared or individual reading, as per CAPS. Teachers switched between isiXhosa and English during lessons, which disadvantages those with limited proficiency. As CAPS documents state that the Home Language (HL) is the language of instruction for learners

in the Foundation Phase, no stories were observed being read in class. There was a lack of reading resources from both activity systems. Although at home children were free to use the limited available resources and were even free to be creative, at school, the resources were limited to only the chalkboard, teachers' books and children's writing exercise books which contributed to the way children used reading materials. Teachers, in the data gathered through interviews, cited that there was a lack of resources at school. The lack of access to reading materials led to a lack of reading opportunities for children at both home and school which could have been used as the opportunity for children to appreciate and love reading (Nkomo, 2017). Nkomo also contends that literacy experiences in school and at home can affect children's attitudes towards reading (Nkomo, 2017). Also, children as young as Grade 1 need to be exposed to a variety of oral languages, including speaking in class, to develop their literacy skills. Children in my study, on the other hand, were exposed to rich oral literacy practices at home, which supported their literacy development. As a result, they carried a literate habitus from home to school, even though teachers were unaware of the nature of literacy these children had. According to a study conducted by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) in South Africa, children who do not acquire basic reading skills in the Foundation Phase of primary school are effectively silently excluded from learning and struggle to engage with the curriculum in later grades.

6.3.2 Teacher's expectations of their children: the Pygmalion effect

At school children were divided into ability groups which showed that teachers had some expectation of these children. This finding confirms what Fleisch (2008) reports about South African studies. In my study, even the children who were placed in the best ability groups were active as opposed to those who were in the Babies' ability group which highlighted contradictions between home and school practices. When teachers had child performance expectations, they frequently treat children differently based on these expectations. A shift in teacher expectations can result in a shift in student achievement for Pygmalion in the classroom. These expectations have some implications that when teachers expect students to succeed, students succeed; when teachers expect students to fail, students fail.

The Babies' group was one that the teachers viewed as children who will not make it to the next grade the following year. That means the teachers had very low expectations of these children which might affect the children's performance in class. The teachers' expectations are what Fleisch referred to as the Pygmalion effect which describes how learners in a classroom perform better because they are expected to do so. Fleisch reports that South African studies

suggest that teacher expectations influence achievement differently. Teachers had low academic expectations, especially for the children in the Babies' ability group, while at home parents had high expectations and children were not grouped during literacy events. The teacher's misperception about the Babies ability group was that they were slow learners, and unfortunately for Kuhle, who was placed in the Babies ability group, teachers did not take much care of him, so the teacher did not even notice if Kuhle did not respond to her call for the group. Even though Kuhle's home had very limited literacy resources, even in terms of human resources such as parents and older siblings assisting him, he was exposed to oral literacy practices at home. According to Connell (2006), children enter school with varying literacy skills that have a strong predictive relationship with later reading abilities. Placing him in the Babies' group had a negative impact on him because he did not have enough opportunities for literacy development.

6.3.3 Storytelling at home, a frequent practice

Storytelling was found in all homes except that of Kuhle. Compton-Lily (2004) and Kinloch (2009) argue that in homes where storytelling is a frequent practice, they serve as a model for family members to share experiences and stories across generations. Various family members told stories, often parents or older siblings but also younger siblings, as was observed when Zimi, Angel's younger five-year-old sister, told a story (see Section 4.2.3, p. 114). Zimi's story combined traditional genre elements such as 'once upon a time', which confirms much research (e.g., Gooden and Kearns, 2013, Parlakian and Sa'nchez, 2006) that young children learn about narrative form through storytelling. Then there are elements that depart from the traditional story genre such as 'false news is nice', a local community element that signals that the story is fictitious. The shopping, cakes, and yoghurts incorporated into this story are evidence of Zimi inserting her own everyday reality as typical traditional stories that tend to include animals. The research (Mui and Anderson, 2008) supports that older children learn different ways to present information to younger children to teach them important literacy knowledge while also enhancing and reinforcing their literacy. Another story by Lunga, a neighbourhood boy (see Section 4.2.3, p. 114) gave children the opportunity to use a variety of information. Since narrative is a fundamental type of discourse underpinning all other forms of communication (Ergul, 2012), telling their own stories facilitated not only children's literacy development, but also their intellectual, social, and emotional development.

Miller and Pennycuff (2008) see storytelling or retelling of stories as a successful way to increase pragmatic oral skills which is the ability to use language in a specific context for the purposes that leads to greater ability to write. Further, Miller and Pennycuff saw that engaging in the activities of storytelling motivate even the hesitant children (2008). During story time, children would gather during the day, which had some advantages for the children because they were able to maintain collaborative relationships and the gathering created social cohesion for the children. However, these stories are not always included in the work that children do in school, resulting in a disconnect between what is expected at school and the literacy activities that children engage in at home (Kinloch, 2009), as was the case in the SAS where this research was conducted. For example, at home, all stories were made up and had no educational value; they were all about animals. Also, Heath's research (1984) revealed that mainstream communities (Trackton and Roadville) in her study value imagination and storytelling and were used to decontextualising language and relate to communication and knowledge outside of their own experiences. Miller and Pennycuff (2008) confirm this suggesting that storytelling improves language development.

6.3.4 The discontinuity between home and school literacy practices

There was no linkage between home and school literacy practices though teachers in the interviews agreed to be aware of what children bring to school. Teachers tend to side-line play-based approach and focus on the more formal pedagogical approach while children's learning is best supported through a play-based, informal approach towards teaching and learning (Excell and Linington, 2011). A secondary contradiction that was surfaced was that teachers could not link the home literacy practices of the children to the literacy practices in the school. This implies that teachers need to be familiar with the home literacy practices of the children in their classes to plan suitable literacy activities in the school and bridge the gap between what the children bring to school regarding their literacy competencies and that which the curriculum requires and expects. This suggests that teachers should value literacy and follow a quality play-based approach that embraces a pedagogy of play and foreground how children learn through play (Excell and Linington, 2011).

Teachers in this study focused on assisting children in learning to read and write, so that they demonstrate their skills and knowledge when answering questions from teachers. This finding supports Heath's (1982) study, which found that the school disregards children's traditional oral and literate habits and insists on individual literacy, separating it from its social and oral

roots. Nonetheless, these traditional habits are best adapted to the demands and needs of employers than those of the classroom. Teachers agreed in their interviews that children come to school with literacy practices, but there was a primary contradiction in practice because they did something different than what they claimed to know.

6.4 Limitations of the study

The current study was restricted to four families, four teachers, and one school in the Libode district. The crime rate during my stay with the children's families presented some difficulties for me as a researcher because it was difficult for me to move freely within the community, especially during the day when parents were away, and I was the only elderly person staying with the children. Because of the nature of my research, I had to move around the community, following children as they played or went about their daily lives. This was not possible due to the previously mentioned challenge, the crime rate.

The families were very uncomfortable having me around with all the data collection tools I used, such as video recorders, cameras, and the Smart Pen, which I used for both taking notes and recording. I was also not permitted to drive my car because the parents were concerned that it would attract criminals into their homes. During my first visit, one family even refused to let me sleep in their home, so I had to observe during the day and sleep with the SGB member who offered me accommodation. Due to this obstacle, I was unable to conduct the planned interviews with community members to gain insight into literacy practices within the community.

Though the situation was very frightening, the headman assured me of my safety in the community as I had to report to the headman each time I was visiting a particular family and each time I moved to another family.

Another limitation was that I could not observe children on their way to school because three of my children took public transportation to school, which I also did, and the children from one family walked. I couldn't accompany them on their walk, but I could meet with the child in class at school. I couldn't afford to pay for the child's transportation because there was no space for her on the vehicle. The vehicle was full.

Because the study used a case study method, it is difficult to generalize to other situations. Case studies are known for their lack of generalisation because they focus on specific cases and cannot be applied to other situations or contexts. Furthermore, because everyone perceives a phenomenon differently, generalizability to other contexts may be difficult.

6.5 Implications

The current research has some practical implications. Implications from this study can benefit both families as well as teachers. At home, young children can be exposed to two distinct types of literacy activities such as the meaning-related and non-meaning-related. Non-meaning-related activities are those activities where print is present but is not the focus of the parent–child interaction. First, parents should be encouraged to engage their children in literacy activities at home such as reading. This involvement appears to be especially important for the early literacy development of young children. Reading should be prioritized in schools as well. Teachers in high poverty schools should implement evidence-based reading practices and create print-rich classrooms in the early years to prevent reading difficulties and put children on successful reading trajectories. Second, a play-based approach which children’s holistic development should also be encouraged at school. Through social interaction, play allows children to communicate ideas and understand others, paving the way for deeper understanding and more powerful relationships. Children play to make sense of their surroundings and to find meaning in their experiences by connecting them to something they already know. Third, schools and communities should be involved in children’s literacy development. Teachers and other practitioners could use this opportunity to advise parents on the best ways to engage their struggling children in home literacy activities. Fourth, the current study’s findings were based on families and school in terms of literacy practices at home and at school. Results could be generalizable to families in other countries with relatively similar environments and cultures.

6.6 Recommendations for future research

This study recommends that if teachers could build on what children brought from home that would influence the way they acted at school because they carried with them the family literacy habitus which underpins literacy habitus at school. I also recommend that teachers incorporate children’s home literacy practices into their instructional methods, considering children’s cultural experiences and active involvement in literacy activities, to improve their understanding of literacy. This could also help teachers to understand children’s cultural

experiences in everyday life and how they actively participate in literacy events. Teachers' understanding of literacy in this study is found to be one of the contributory factors of teachers' approach to teaching literacy. There was a contrast between the phonics approach and the whole language approach to teaching literacy in Grade 1. Hence it is necessary to address the issue of how FP teachers teach reading and develop children's language skills. Reading for pleasure has important emotional and knowledge gains, and it should be encouraged at school as it is at home. If all children are exposed to effective early reading programs, they can learn to read successfully.

As far as the scarcity of resources in the classroom is concerned, I would also recommend that teachers should use the limited available resources such as the few books they have and give every child the opportunity to hold books during reading time. By so doing, the teacher will have an opportunity for individual attention. The study also recommends the issue of improvisation where teachers improvise using the limited resources available in their classrooms. Teachers must also adjust their expectations and teaching methods to create a learner-centred learning culture for all children to learn at a higher level.

The assumption this study makes is that irrespective of social and cultural contexts, children engage in a variety of literacy practises at home that has relevance and implications for school literacy practices. I argue in the thesis that taking account of home literacy practices can potentially assist the language education community, policy developers, and classroom teachers to bridge the gap between the literacy competencies that children bring to school and curriculum demands.

6.7 Summary and conclusion

The study draws on theories of literacy to understand children's home and school literacy practices to establish the interplay between the two activity systems (AS). It explored the extent to which children's home literacy practices are taken up at school in Grade 1 classrooms from a rural and disadvantaged school in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The study explored an understanding of how home and school literacy practices intersect using CHAT concepts such as subject, object, tools, rules, division of labour and community. The findings and analysis presented provide an insight that will benefit teachers in the Foundation Phase classrooms. The study contributed to understanding teachers, children, and parent literate habitus. It revealed that there was no linkage between home and school literacy practices which

indicated that teachers do not link the home literacy practices of the children to the literacy practices in the school. There was discontinuity between home and the school literacy practices which is one of the reasons that give rise to the low levels of literacy.

The data generating instruments used were home and classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that teachers focused on helping children to learn to read and write as individuals and displayed their skills and knowledge when answering teachers' questions. The study emphasizes the need for teachers to be familiar with the home literacy practices of all the children in their classes to plan suitable literacy activities in the school and bridge the gap between what the children bring to school regarding their literacy competencies and that which the curriculum requires and expects. Another finding was that the school ignores the traditional oral and literate habitus of children and insists on individual literacy separating it from its social and oral roots.

Children in my study were engaged in the cultural practices of their community. Oral literacy was dominant and rooted in the culture of these families, people could be impoverished but still be a useful literacy resource. Literacy practices are inextricably linked to cultural practices because, it is difficult to disentangle literacy practices from cultural practices. Because these communities have a rich and strong oral tradition, children come to school with a strong home literacy foundation. The *object* of this study is literate children, an *outcome* that literacy practices aim to achieve. These children's environment was very resourceful because there were resources such as TV that Likho could interact with during the soccer game. There were also games that children played, such as isixoxiso, and siblings and parents were regarded as resources that contribute to children's literacy development because they provided literacy activities to these children. Despite a lack of books at home, children engaged in a variety of literacy activities informally, which teachers could have built on at school if they knew what these children brought from home to school. According to research (McCarthy, 1997), some children come from homes where print in the form of books is readily available, resulting in numerous experiences with print before entering school. Furthermore, children from middle-income families had more chances to learn informal literacy than children from low-income families (Snow, et al., 1998).

According to McCarthy (1997) and Snow et al. (1998), textbooks, screens, gadgets, and uninstalled Wi-Fi provide middle-class children with home-based literacy skills. In the case of the children from my research, despite having had very little exposure to books, their environment has a rich oral tradition culture that children embody, and which forms their literacy habitus. As a result, I agree with McCarthy and Snow, et al. that the home environment for children in their research creates numerous experiences that form children's habitus, preparing them before they enter school, but in this case of the children in my research, it is not just books that can do that, but also their oral tradition. Despite this, children from limited literary environments, such as these in my study, have more literacy experience because literacy practices are embedded in their families' social and cultural contexts. They rely on their parents' and community's depth of knowledge and rich oral tradition instead of books.

If teachers had known, the stories told, and games played at home would have been especially useful for teachers to build on what children brought from home. This finding demonstrates how much fun children have when they engage in storytelling and play. While children from middle-class homes enjoy books, most of the time there is no social cohesion where children can meet, such as when children gather under the big tree or in a neighbouring home for play. They gain social cohesion in that gathering because they stick together and form a community. There is a social culture that is developed when children meet for these practices, whereas children who used books develop an individual or family social cohesion that is primarily the mother and father and possibly no grandparents. What is important is that children get connected to literacy practices as part of the home culture, which prepares them for school entry. Children's habitus are formed because of this process.

Poor children, like my participants, and indeed most South African children, attend school as the primary institution in a society where they must not only encounter but also become acquainted with books and other literacy resources. Children from middle-class families are exposed to books at home long before they enter school, whereas children from poor homes are not, because school is not only about telling stories and playing for children to develop literacy. At school, children must read, write, and speak, and children from low-income families arrive knowing how to speak and listen to a certain level, whereas children from middle-class families arrive knowing how to listen, speak, read, and write, making it difficult

for them to begin at the same level. As a result, when the teacher meets with children from low-income families, they begin with reading and writing, whereas children from middle-class families begin somewhere else because they are already aware of the advantages of their homes.

One of the distinguishing features of poor and middle-class schools in the FP is that middle-class children take a book home to read every day, whereas poor children in under-resourced schools, such as the one I observed, do not take a book home at all, not a writing or reading book. While these children did not take books home, they did receive stories every day. This limits not only the ability of poor children to become comfortable with books, but also the role that their parents can play as members of the larger community. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds rely on their parents for detailed information that is not based on books but on oral tradition.

Because the home was set up in an informal manner, the children had freedom of movement at home. They are free to speak and are not restrained in any way; they are free to move around and do things on their own time. They are unaware that they are engaging in literacy practices, and a secondary contradiction emerges because at school, children must be seated, a formal teacher is present, and a routine must be followed. When children are waiting for food at home, they are entertained with a story, but at school, it is something that must be learned and there is a pass. So, how do teachers bridge the home-school divide?

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance letter (2011Q4-4) for the Cape Consortium Foundation

Phase Research Programme



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee, Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
Tel: +27 46 603 7366 • Fax: +27 46 603 8574 • email: M.Gobel@ru.ac.za

24 Nov 2011

Dear Prof Baxen,

Ethics Clearance: 2011Q4-4
Principal Investigator: Prof Jean Baxen

This letter confirms that a research proposal with tracking number 2011Q4-4 and title: The Cape Consortium Foundation Phase Research Programme: Quality Teaching and Teacher Education Practices, was given ethics clearance by the Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee at its meeting of 10 November 2011 pending clarification of the following points:

- 1) The Informed Consent form seems to be only for teachers, not the other individuals (heads of schools, Department of Education Officials, children and parents) and organisations mentioned in the proposal.
- 2) Most participants are envisaged to be IsiXhosa speakers. The proposal does not say how translation of the interviews, questionnaires, consent form and other information will be managed, and by whom. Will this be done by researchers themselves? Are the materials to be investigated in IsiXhosa or English?
- 3) Identifying features of children, i.e. faces, should be obscured in the camera recordings.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether or not the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.

Yours sincerely

Professor M. Göbel: Chairperson RUESC.

Note:

1. This clearance is valid from the date on this letter to the time of completion of data collection.
2. The ethics committee cannot grant retrospective ethics clearance.
3. Progress reports should be submitted annually unless otherwise specified in the clearance letter.

Appendix 2: Letter of permission to conduct research in the school



Education Department, Room 14
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
• Tel: 046-603 8698 • Fax: 046-6228028
E-mail: M.Baxen@ru.ac.za

CANDIDATE: XOLISWA PATIENCE MAGXALA

STUDENT NUMBER: 11M7326

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Sir/Madam

This letter is to confirm that Xoliswa Patience Magxala is a registered student in the Education Faculty at Rhodes University. She has been registered for a PhD in Education.

Xoliswa is a PhD student in a large research programme funded by the European Union in conjunction with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Its overall goal is to examine the nexus between quality teaching and quality education programmes, and by so doing, improve the quality of teacher education programmes on the one hand, and teaching practices on the other hand. The overall research programme has obtained ethical clearance from Rhodes University as well as from the Provincial Department of Education.

Xoliswa will be required to conduct research for her thesis. This letter serves to request permission for her to conduct research in your school/community for this purpose.

The proposal complied with the ethical clearance requirements of the Faculty of Education.

Yours Sincerely

Professor Jean Baxen

Principal investigator: Foundation Phase Research Programme

Appendix 3: Letter of permission to conduct research with Grade 1 teachers



Education Department, Room 14
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
• Tel: 046-603 8698 • Fax: 046-6228028
E-mail: M.Baxen@ru.ac.za

CANDIDATE: XOLISWA PATIENCE MAGXALA

STUDENT NUMBER: 11M7326

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Teacher (Grade 1)

This letter is to confirm that Xoliswa Patience Magxala is a registered student in the Education Faculty at Rhodes University. She has been registered for a PhD in Education.

Xoliswa is a PhD student in a large research programme funded by the European Union in conjunction with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Its overall goal is to examine the nexus between quality teaching and quality education programmes, and by so doing, improve the quality of teacher education programmes on the one hand, and teaching practices on the other hand. The overall research programme has obtained ethical clearance from Rhodes University as well as from the Provincial Department of Education.

Xoliswa will be doing her research at Libode Village Junior Secondary School with four Grade 1 children at the school and their teacher. She will be starting with the observation in their home in the community before the schools re-open in January 2013 and shall continue with her research with children when they begin school next year.

Your cooperation will be well appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Professor Jean Baxen

Principal investigator: Foundation Phase Research Programme

Appendix 4: Letter of permission to research with the parents



Education Department, Room 14
PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
• Tel: 046-603 8698 • Fax: 046-6228028
E-mail: M.Baxen@ru.ac.za

CANDIDATE: XOLISWA PATIENCE MAGXALA

STUDENT NUMBER: 11M7326

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Parent

This letter is to confirm that Xoliswa Patience Magxala is a registered student in the Education Faculty at Rhodes University. She has been registered for a PhD in Education.

Xoliswa is a PhD student in a large research programme funded by the European Union in conjunction with the Department of Higher Education and Training. Its overall goal is to examine the nexus between quality teaching and quality education programmes, and by so doing, improve the quality of teacher education programmes on the one hand, and teaching practices on the other hand. The overall research programme has obtained ethical clearance from Rhodes University as well as from the Provincial Department of Education.

Xoliswa will be doing her research at Libode Village Junior Secondary School with four Grade 1 children at the school and their teacher. She will be starting with the observation in their home in the community before the schools re-open in January 2013 and shall continue with her research with children when they begin school next year.

Your cooperation will be well appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Professor Jean Baxen

Principal investigator: Foundation Phase Research Programme

Appendix 5: Translation of the letter of permission to conduct research with the parents

CANDIDATE: XOLISWA PATIENCE MAGXALA

STUDENT NUMBER: 11M7326

ISICELO SEMVUME YOKWENZA UPHANDO

Mzali Obekekileyo

Le mbalelwano yazisa ngoXoliswa Patience Magxala ongumfundi wezobugqirha-lwazi (PhD) kwicandelo lezemfundo kwiYunivesithi yaseRhodes.

Lo mfundi (Xoliswa) wenza iPhD yakhe eyinxalenye yenkqubo exhaswa ngezimali liqumrhu laseYurophu (European Union) isebenzisana neSebe lezeMfundo ePhakamileyo noQeqesho. Injongo yayo ephambili kukuhlola unxibelelwano phakathi kwendlela yokufundisa esemgangathweni kunye nenkqubo elandelwayo yezemfundo esemgangathweni. Oku kukwenzela ukuphucula izinga lenkqubo yezemfundo, kwelinye icala, kunye nendlela yokufundisa kootitshala. Yonke le nkqubo sele iyifumene imvume eRhodes University nakwiSebe lezemfundo lePhodo.

UXoliswa uza kwenza uphando lwakhe kwisikolo saseLibode Village Junior Secondary School. Uza kube esebenza nabantwana abane abafunda iBanga lokuQala (Grade 1) esikolweni kunye notitshala wabo kwisikolo esi. Uza kuqalisa ngalo msebenzi emakhaya abantwana ekuhlaleni phambi kokuba zivulwe izikolo aze aqhube nawo naxa sele zivuliwe izikolo ngoJanyuwari 2013.

Sovuyiswa yintsebenziswano yakho kulo mba.

Ozithobileyo

Appendix 6: IsiXhosa letter of permission to the headman to conduct research in the community

CANDIDATE: XOLISWA PATIENCE MAGXALA

STUDENT NUMBER: 11M7326

ISICELO SEMVUME YOKWENZA UPHANDO

Mhlekaazi Obekekileyo

Le mbalelwano yazisa ngoXoliswa Patience Magxala ongumfundi wezobugqirha-lwazi (PhD) kwicandelo lezemfundo kwiYunivesithi yaseRhodes.

Lo mfundi (Xoliswa) wenza iPhD yakhe eyinxalenye yenkqubo exhaswa ngezimali liqumrhu laseYurophu (European Union) isebenzisana neSebe lezeMfundo ePhakamileyo noQeqesho. Injongo yayo ephambili kukuhlola unxibelelwano phakathi kwendlela yokufundisa esemgangathweni kunye nenkqubo elandelwayo yezemfundo esemgangathweni. Oku kukwenzela ukuphucula izinga lenkqubo yezemfundo, kwelinye icala, kunye nendlela yokufundisa kootitshala. Yonke le nkqubo sele iyifumene imvume eRhodes University nakwiSebe lezemfundo lePhodo.

UXoliswa uza kwenza uphando lwakhe kwisikolo saseLibode Village Junior Secondary School. Uza kube esebenza nabantwana abane abafunda iBanga lokuQala (Grade 1) esikolweni kunye notitshala wabo kwisikolo esi. Uza kuqalisa ngalo msebenzi emakhaya abantwana ekuhlaleni phambi kokuba zivulwe izikolo aze aqhube nawo naxa sele zivuliwe izikolo ngoJanyuwari 2013.

Sovuyiswa yintsebenziswano yakho kulo mba.

Ozithobileyo

Appendix 7: FOR ALL THE HOME OBSERVATION

A video transcript of a role play known as isixoxiso played at HAS 4 by Likho and his friend Wakhanya (03/01/2013)

1. Siwaphiwe: Vula incwadi (*Open the book and poke with the pencil on these people*)
2. Likho: Nkqo, nkqo, nkqo, nkqo [*Knock, knock, knock, knock*]
3. Lukhanyo: Ngena (*Come in*)
4. Likho: Uzivile ezandaba ekuthiwa kwaban-ban kwenzeke ingxak'ethile funeka sikhe siye pha aba bantu abaya kuthiwa abaya bantu babulele kodwa zababo aba zabeBILE kodwa babo bathi bona kwebe lo kodwa babo aba zebeBILE mas'khe siye pha siqonde (*Have you heard the news that there's been some trouble at so and so's place. We should go there to those people because it is being said that those people have killed but it's them... but it's them that they stole there. They said they've been robbed but it's them who stole. Let's go there and find out?*)
5. Lukhanyo: Bazothini bona aba bantu. (*What are they going to say those people?*)
6. Likho: Nkqo, nkqo, nkqo, nkqo (*Knock, knock, knock, knock*)
7. Lukhanyo: Ngena (*Come in*)
8. Likho: Ye wena uzivil'ezandaba kuthiwa aba bantu [suxoxisa wena, emnqanda ngesandla], uzivil'ezandaba kuthiwa aba bantu bona kuthiwa babo aba beBILE. Ndafika ekhapha kugcwele kuthe qhu, ndaqond'uba ngamehlo am na. Hayi ke nyani lo mntu lo maskhe siyobambisa yena inoba azovuma amapolisa akanongavumi amapolisa. Nkqo, mkqo, nkqo emapolisene. Niphilile mapolisa (*Have you heard the news that... don't poke on the book yet... Have you heard the news that those people... it is said that they are the ones who stole. When I arrived here it was full and I thought to myself, is it my eyes or what? That's it, let's go to this person right here... Let's go and call the police. I hope the police will allow us. Knock, knock, knock at the police station. How are you police?*)
9. Nomhle: Anifowuni na? (*Are you not phoning?*)
10. Likho: Siyowabiza ngemilomo le yethu kuba uba siyafouna akazufika kwalapha. Yizani nizobamba lo mama. [ebonisa ngepen] naku kwakhe. Sizokubamba wena. [etshintsha ilizwi lifane nelika mama] Nindibambelani bantabam? Hayi siyava ukuba kuthiwa umoshile. Uzogwety'ubomi bakho bonke. Ulixoki nje uzogwety'ubomi bakho bonke kude kuyodilik'ijele. Uyaziva ke ezondaba. Mfondini kha uthethe ndikunika ithuba [bhekisa ku Wakhanya] ukhwaze ke uyeva (*We are going to call them verbally because if we phone they won't come. Come and arrest this woman. Here's her house [pointing from one of the drawings from the paper] We have come to arrest you, you woman! Why are you having me arrested my children? No! We have been informed that you have done wrong. You will be sentenced to life in prison. For being a liar you are, you are going to be sentenced to life in prison until the jail collapses. Do you hear these news? This ma'am says. Speak my friend I'm giving you a turn. You must speak aloud okay?*)
11. Lukhanyo: Nizivil'ezondaba ukuba kuthiwa pha ndibone izikuta ezibini zikhwelise abantu, kodwa ezi ziyahamba (*Have you heard the news that it is being said that...I saw two motorbikes ridden by people, but these ones were moving... Have you heard the news? Let me go and call and call the police*)
12. Likho: Sesiwabizile kwakudala (*We have called them a long time ago*)
13. Lukhanyo: Siwabize nini? (*When did we call them?*)
14. Likho: Kusemapoliseni nje lapho uthetha khona (*This is the police station where you are speaking. You should be speaking in this house.*)
15. Lukhanyo: Okay... qha kwenzeke into (*Okay... But... something has happened*)

16. Likho: Yintoni le eyenzekileyo (*What has happened*)
17. Likhanyo: Kaloku umntu ubesathi usadutyulwa waphepha umntu (*A person was shot and ducked*)
18. Likho: Uphephe njani? , Oh! Uphephile yena wabeth'omny'mnt'ongusisi. (*How did he dive?*)
19. Wakhanya: Ewe, qha yena wamwisa phantsi wathath'is'paji sakhe. (*Yes, only that he made him fell and took his purse*).
20. Likho: Kwadutyulwa ba ke ngoku? (*Who was short then?*)
21. Wakhanya: la tsotsi. (*That tsotsi*).
22. Likho: Kwadutyulwa la tsotsi ubefun'udubula la bhuti, la bhuti waphepha kwadutyulwa la sisi. (*That tsotsi was shot because he wanted to shoot that brother, that brother dive and that sister was shot*).
23. Wakhanya: Ewe. (*Yes*).
24. Likho: oh! Ndiyayiqonda ke ngoku ke ngoku. (*Oh! Now I understand*).
25. Wakhanya: Hayi udubule la tsotsi ebefun'udubula la bhuti. (*No, he shot that tsotsi, he wanted to shoot that brother*).
26. Likho: Ubemhlophe noba ubemnyama aph'ebusweni? (*Was he white or black in the face?*)
27. Wakhanya: Hayi ubemnyama thsu kodwa. (*No, he was black but*).
28. Likho: oh! Inwele zinjani? Zimnyama noba zi brown. (*Oh! How were his hair? Black or brown*).
29. Wakhanya: Zimnyama. (*Were black*).
30. Likho: Indlebe zona azikho nde? (*The ears, were not long?*)
31. Wakhanya: Hayi. (*No*).
32. Likho: Azikho nde? Zifana nezi zakho. (*Are they not long like yours?*)
33. Wakhanya: Ezakho? (*Yours?*)
34. Likho: Oh! Ndiyakubona nguwe lo webileyo [embamba] wathi indlebe azikho nde nje kula mntu nguwe. Masiyokhupha la mama ejele. Sizokukhupha nanku lo mntu webileyo. Ndicela simvaleleni. Khame ndiyoxelela la mem. Ewe ke mem uthi zithini ke ezondaba. Oh! Uxolo ndingene emzini owrongo. Ewe ke mem uzivile ezondaba. Ye mem masiyeni ecaweni. [ecula] Egameni loyise nelonyana nelo moya oyingcwele. Wena awuzanga ecaweni, nansti icawe. Egameni lo yise nelonyana nelomoya oyingcwele, egameni [esebeza] kungena la mama ubesuka ejele. Masimbulaleni. Wafik'umfundisi wagquma bonke wathi bobabini. Babalek'enkonzweni, babaleka babaleka. Umfundisi usoyikisile wajika wangu popayi apha. Waskhaba waskhaba wajika wangupopayi apha. Makhe siyomkroba. Xa befika, mfundisi. Beth'ipheyile pha. Betha ipheyile pha bethela umfundisi betha esphakathini. Xa beyibetha, nindibethelani. Bayibeka esphakathini bayithandazela, masithandazeleni ipheyile. Wavela wajika wangupopayi, wajika wangumfundisi, babaleka. (*Oh! I see it is you who stole [grabbing him] you said the ears are not long in that person, it is you. Let us go and release that woman from jail. We have come to release you, here is the person who stole. Let us jail him. Wait, let me go and tell that madam. Yes madam, what are the news? Oh! I'm sorry I entered at the wrong house. Yes madam have you heard those news? Madam, let us go to church. [Singing] in the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. In the name [whispering] that woman enters jail tonight. Let us kill her. The pastor came and cover all of them. They all ran out of church. The pastor scared us and turned into a cartoon here. Let's go and check on him. When they arrived, pastor, beat the bucket here. Beat the bucket there, beat it for the pastor, and beat it in the middle. When they beat it, why are you*

beating me? They put it in the middle and pray for it. Let us pray for the bucket. He turned to be the cartoon and turned to be the pastor and they ran).

35. Wakhanya: Batsibela ngapha. *(They jumped there).*
36. Likho: Bafika bayothandaza kula mzi. Egameni loyise nelonyana nelomoya oyingcwele siyathandaza Thix'onobubele ngami kulomntu umoya omdaka mawumnke lapha. Wafika umfundisi. Mholweni [etshintsha ilizwi lifane nelomfundisi]. Ewe. Ndizonithandazela, egameni loyise nelendodana amen. Wabathandazela nabo bajika bangoopopayi, bajika bazi pheyle, bajika bayimigqomo. Umfundisi yena wajika wayi lento, wajika wayilento, wajika wasiskhaftina. Sahamba sahamba safika komnye umzi. Nkqo, nkqo, nkqo. Wakhuph'isandl'umfundisi. Nkqo, nkqo. Kwangen'iskhaftina sodwa sitakataka. Xa bebona bona bacinga ukuba yintloko. Whaaa! Babaleka. Yemamgo uzivile ezandaba. Kuthiwa pha ababantu aba bebile, he, uzivile mamgo ezandaba kuthiwa aba bantu bebile. Ok, ndikunika ithuba ngoku [enikela kuWakhanya ukuba athethe] ndikunika ithuba kha ungene. *(They arrived to go and pray in that home. In the name of the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. We are praying my loving God, the evil spirit must go away from this person. The pastor arrived. Greetings! [Changing his voice to be like that of the opastor]. Hello. I have come to pray for you, in the name of the Father and the Son Amen. He prayed for them and they also turned to be cartoons, and became buckets. The pastor turned to be the lunch box. We went to another home. Knock, knock, knock. The pastor showed his hand. Knock, knock. Only the lunch box got inside. When they saw it, they thought it was a head. Whaa! They ran away. Have you heard those news? They said those people have stolen, he! Have you heard? They said that, these people have stolen. Ok! I am giving you chance now [Giving chance Wakhanya to talk] I am giving you chance, it's your turn.*
37. Wakhanya: [ethethela phantsi] [whispering].
38. Likho: Kwaza [emshawuta]. *Speak alu* [shouting at him]
39. Wakhanya: Uzivile ezandaba zithi umntu, andimazi nob'utheni. *(Have you heard that news that a person say? I don't know what he said.)*
40. Likho: Mamdivul'indlebe zam [etsala indlebe zakhe] *(Let me open my ears)* [Pulling his ears]
41. Wakhanya: Nobudutyuliwe nob'utheni. Ke ngoku ndifun'umaz'uba udutyuliwe. *(No matter he is shot or what, now I just want to know if he is shot).*
42. Likho: Mama ungaphinde uthi umntu makathethe into yakhe, uyeva. *(Mother, never say a person must speak again)*
43. Nomhle: Oh *(Ok)*
44. Wakhanya: Kodwa ke noba udutyuliwe ndizakumazi ukuba ndimbizele amapolisa. *(But then, even if he is shot I will know so that I call the police).*
45. Likho: Oho! Sesiwabizile yeka bhuti. *(No, we have already called them).*
46. Wakhanya: Kodwa omnye usisi. *(But the other sister).*
47. Likho: Yesela ndini bhekela ecaleni kwam ungandosuleli ngobusela. Thetha kaloku ndikunike ithuba. *(Hey! You thief, move away from me don't corrupt me with your ways. Say something I'm giving you chance).*
48. Wakhanya: Kodwa abantu bayahlupha. *(But people are problematic)*
49. Likho: Ungandosuleli ngobusela. *(Don't infect me)*
50. Nomhle: Sesiphelile isixoxiso. *(The role-play is over).*
51. Likho: Heyi thetha mfondini ndikunike ithuba apha. *(Speak, I have given you a chance)*
52. Wakhanya: Andimazi umntu odutyuliweyo ukuba ngubani. *(I don't know the person who has been shot).*

53. Likho: Bekungatshiwo na ukuba ngutsotsi, wathi awumazi awumazi umntu ebedubule la mntu? (*Did't we say it was tsotsi? Why you say you do not know?*)
54. Wakhanya: Uba? (*Who?*)
55. Likho: Bekungatshiwo na ukuba ngutsotsi wabuza ebantwini? (*Did we not say it's the tsotsi, why you ask people?*)
56. Wakhanya: Wena khangela utsho? (*You did not say*)
57. Likho: Heyi awungeni ndawo suka [emsusa]. Ayikho le nto ithethwa ngulona mamgo, icebo wena mamgo masivele sibulale yena lona simbambise, siyombambasa ke sise lo adutyuliweyo esbhedlele. Yeheke, ngamehlo am? Ingathi lo mntu uphilile nje? Ngathi uphilile nje lo mntu, masihambeni. [Ecula] Phela phela liphelile. Ndibhayibhayisa ngengoma. [ingoma] Ndingaliyeka ithambo lizpina-pin'emoyeni, ndingaliyeka ithambo liz'pina-pin'emoyeni. (*You enter nowhere to go [moving him away] (What you are saying is not true. The plan we must kill him and get him arrested and take the one who has been shot to the hospital. He! Is it my eyes? This person looks like she is well, I think he is well, let us go. [singing] that's the end.*)

A popular music called rap by three children at HAS4 (16/02/2013)

1. Lunga: Safa, safa, safa yilendlala asisakwazi nokuzal otat'abasebenzi ichithekil'imizi ndihleli andezinzi kubhitya nezithunzi. (*We are dying, dying, dying because of this hunger. We are unable to give birth, fathers are not working homes are collapsing. I am just even the shadows become to learn.*)
2. Lunga, friend 1 and 2: Yeh, safa, safa yil'endlala sebenz'amnt'omnyama abantwana balambile ngob'indlal'ibambalile [the first child joined and they chorus together] ndicela nid'mamele inyani ndin'ixelele amahlwemp'azale gqitha amany'ayathakatha isizw'asinohlutha intombi ziyamitha ndithe andiz'ufhla umhlakulo ngumhlakulo andin'ankomo elidolo ndingenasisu singumqolo kodw'is'Xhosa sinamaqhalo nanko umzekelo (*Yha! We are dying, dying, dying of hunger. Work Black person children are hungry because they are caught by hunger. Please listen to me the truth Im telling you. Poor people have birth excessively others are witchcraft. The nation will not be full, girls are getting pregnant. I said I will not hide a spade is a spade. I cannot say a cow is a knee nor stomach is the back but Xhosa has idioms that is an example.*)
3. Lunga: [Took over the lead again but L2 joined him] safa, safa safa yilendlala ngok'waskwazi nokuzala ngob'ootat'abasebenzi ichithekil'imizi ndihleli andezinzi kubhitya nezithunzi. (*We are dying, dying, dying of hunger. Now we cannot give birth because fathers are not working, Households are destroyed. I'm sitting still even the shadows get lean*)
4. Friend 3: Mandela thumel'imali sifunukwakh'aph'eMegacom. (*Mandela send the money, we want to build Megacom*).
5. Lunga: Yha! [tongue click] Omnye, safa, safa, safa yil'endlala [L 1 and L2 together in a singing form this time] asikwazi nokuzala ngob'ootat'abasebenzi ichithekil'imizi ndihleli andezinzi kubhitya nezithunzi. (*Ya! The next one, we are dying, dying, dying of this hunger we are unable to give birth because fathers are not working Households are destroyed. I'm sitting still even the shadows get lean*).
6. Friend 2: Yha! Safa safa, safa yilendlala sebenz'amnt'omnyam'abantwana balambile ngob'indlal'ibabambile ndicela nindimamele inyani ndinixelele amahlwemp'azale gqitha amany'ayathakatha isizw'asinohlutha intombi zimithi ndithe andizufihla umhlakulo ngumhlakulo andinankomo ilidolo ndingen'asisu singumqolo kodw'is'Xhosa s'namaqhalo nanko umzekelo [chorus singing and rap] Hu hu! Safa safa yilendlala as'kwazi nokuzala ngob'ootat'abasebenzi ichithekil'imizi ndihleli

andizinzi kubhitya nezithunzi, Yha! Safa safafayilendlala sebenza mnt'omnyama abantwana balambile ngob'indlal'ibabambile. *(Ya! we are dying, dying, dying because of this hunger. Work Black person children are hungry because they are caught by hunger. Please listen to me the truth I'm telling you. Poor people have birth excessively others are witchcraft. The nation will not be full, girls are getting pregnant. I said I will not hide a spade is a spade. I cannot say a cow is a knee nor the stomach is the back but Xhosa has idioms that are an example.*

7. Lunga: Ndicela nind'mamele inyani ndin'xelele amahlwemp'azale gqitha amany'ayathakatha isizw'asinohlutha intombi ziyamitha ndithe andizufihla umhlakulo ngumhlakulo andinankomo ilidolo ndingan sisu singumqolo isXhosa sinamaqhalo nanko umzekelo. Safa safafayilendlala ootat'abasebenzi. *(Please listen to me the truth I'm telling you. Poor people have birth excessively others are witchcraft. The nation will not be full, girls are getting pregnant. I said I will not hide a spade is a spade. I cannot say a cow is a knee nor the stomach is the back but Xhosa has idioms that are an example.*
8. Friend 2: Mhlekaizinzi qha, kwangen'amanz'endlini awuboni kuyaneth'endlini xa sizodlal'angenambari sizobaqaba nge rama kuzakuniwa kulesama kuzobamnand'eKapa yenina sanuzophapha bhasopha nats'I 021 from zero siya number 1 eKapa s'pheth'amatshama uvuk'eksen'unentlama khulula sani sibone ungakanani sibone udume ngani uhambe kangakanani. *(Sir, the water enter the house can't you see it's raining in the house when we are going to play with the number. We'll start them with Rama and then this summer it will be nice in Cape Town. We cook charmer and wake up in the morning with dough. Strip sonny let's see ... and see what makes you famous, how far have you gone.*
9. Lunga: That's the end of the song

Extract 4.13: Transcription and translation of isiXhosa riddles (05/01/2013)

1. Likho: Rayi-rayi ndinanto yam... ndinanto yam ndiyijula iphind'ibuye [bephakamisa izandla ukuze abakhombe] *Rai-rai I have something that I throw and it comes back again [Children lift their hands]*
2. Siwaphiwe: Ngamehlo [Eyes]
3. Likho: ndinanto yam, ndinabafazi bam bapheka bedunuselene. *I have my thing; I have my wives when they cook they cook back to back.*
4. Hlehle: Zinzipho. *These are nails*
5. Likho: Ndinanto yam, ndina... ndinahatshi lam aliphali lingenamsila [baphakamisa izandla kwakhona, akhombe umhlobo] *I have my thing; I have my horse cannot ride without a tail [they all lift their hands and she points to her friend]]*
6. Hlehle: Yinaliti *[it's a needle]*
7. Siwaphiwe: Hayi wena miss awundikhombi. *No Miss you you don't point on me.*
8. Likho: Xa itheni? *[What about it?]*
9. Hlehle: Xa ingafakwanga naliti... xa ingafakwanga rhali ayithungi *[When there is no needle... when there is no cotton put in it]*
10. Likho: Ndinanto yam idla ithi ngxexi *[I have my thing when eating it says excuse]*
11. Siwaphiwe: Sisitshetshe esi sivalwayo *[It's a knife that bends]*
12. Likho: Kaloku andizukubona uhleli aph'ecakwam uthe nca kum *[I will not see you because you are seated very close next to me]*
13. Likho: Ndinabafazi bam ba... ndinabantu bam bahlala ndawonye kodwa soze babonane [ekhomba umhlobo] *[I have my wife ... I have my people who stay together but will never see each other (pointing to her friend)]*

14. Siwaphiwe: Me, me teacher
15. Likho: Yima pha ngomlenze omnye [*Stand here with one leg*]
16. Nomhle: [the mother] uHlehle akayazanga? [*Hlehle did not know*]
17. Likho: No, yima apha ngomlenze omnye [*No, stand here with one leg*]
18. Siwaphiwe: [ephakamisa isandla], me, me teacher, ngamehlo [*Lifting her hand, me, me, teacher, its eyes*]
19. Likho: Ke ngoku wena awuwazi amehlo [ebuza umhlobo ngelixa ame ngomlenze omnye]. Ndina... ndinanto yam idla ileli ngecala [*Now, you don't know eyes? (asking her friend while she is standing on one leg). I have, I have my thing that sleeps while eating*]
20. Siwaphiwe: Sisirhele [*sickle*]
21. Likho: Ndinanto yam ziyahamba kodwa soze zishiyane [*I have my things that are walking but will never leave each other*]
22. Siwaphiwe: Andivanga Likho [*I didn't hear Likho*]
23. Likho: Ndinanto yam ziyahamba kodwa soze zishiyane [*I have my things walking but never leave each other*]
24. Siwaphiwe: Me, ngumntu nesithunzi [*It's a person and his shadow*]
25. Likho: Heyi [ekhomba umhlobo], yima ngomlenze omnye phaya wena. Bala u 200 [*Hey you, (pointing to a friend) stand there on one leg*]
26. Sinethemba: [the father] uSiwaphiwe ngathi akayazi nje naye [*Siwaphiwe looks like she doesn't know*]
27. Siwaphiwe: Hayi ndiyichazile [*No, I have explained*]
28. Likho: Mbalele, [esebeza uSiwaphiwe], sukhawulezisa mfondini. Ndinanto yam... ndiba...doda wam, ndinamadoda wam ayakwazi ukuzakhela indlu kodwa akanasixhobo [*Count for her. (Whispering to Siwaphiwe), don't be quick. I have my thing... my man, I have my men that can build themselves a house but do not have tools*]
29. Siwaphiwe: Ziintubi [
30. Likho: Ndinanto yam
31. Sinethemba: UHlehle lo ame ngemilenze emibini
32. Siwaphiwe: Hayi
33. Likho: Ndinanto yam
34. Nomhle: Hundred
35. Likho: Mhm! [trying to remember something from the book]
36. Sinethemba: Ulibele
37. Siwaphiwe: Titsha miss
38. Likho: Ndinanto [whispering and grabbing his head, then turned the book] mandiqale kulena. Ndinaba... oh! Ndinabafazi bam banintsi bangena emfazweni benxibe ezi brown, bathwala i... benxibe ezimhlophe bathwala iiqhiya ezi brown
39. Siwaphiwe: Ngumcinga womatshisi umqhwita aphume sentlibe intw'emnyama and white
40. Likho: Ndinanto yam xa zihamba ziyaphikisana ithi enye ndim phambili nenye ithi ndim phambili, hlehle [pointing to Hlehle]
41. Sinethemba: Uthi yintoni?
42. Likho: Ndinanto yam xa zihamba ziyaphikisana eny'ithi ndim phambili eny'ithi ndim phambili
43. Hlehle: Ziinyawo
44. Likho: Ndinanto yam iyahamba kodwa ayishukumi
45. Nomhle: Ha! Hayi kodwa uyasiqhatha kwezinye
46. Siwaphiwe: Me, me [pointing to her], yindlela

47. Hlehle: Kodwa fan'uba uyampanisha lo
48. Likho: [to Siwaphiwe], hamb'oma ngoml'enz'omnye wena. Nithetha ngexesh'elinye kaloku nina. Heyi wena undisithile eTVn
49. Nomhle: Ubukele ne TV na
50. Likho: heyi hamb'oma pha wena
51. Sinethemba: Ubukele ne TV kodwa uyatitsha.
52. Likho: Mama phinda ubale u 100
53. Hlehle: Sorry teacher lo uthe kanje [showing the way she was standing]
54. Nomhle: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
55. Likho: Umlenze makame kanje, athi [showing with his own leg]
56. Sinethemba: Khawuleza iyaphel'iperiod
57. Siwaphiwe: Iyaphel'iperiod
58. Likho: Heyi mfondini utitshala esikolweni akabinanto yokuba kube kusithiwa iyaph'el'iperiod, futhi mna andingo titshala ndingumntwana. Rai-rai ndinanto yam ithi ndiyibeke phantsi ithi ndibambe ndiyoyela
59. Siwaphiwe: me, me, me
60. Hlehle: Sorry teacher andivanga
61. Likho: Ndinanto yam ithi ndibambe ndiyawa
62. Hlehle: Yingalo
63. Siwaphiwe: Unyanisile
64. Likho: ndinanto yam ithi ndaphuma ndangena
65. Hlehle: Yi.
66. Siwaphiwe: Yho! Hayi hayi, hayi
67. Likho: nawe uhleli aph'ecaleni kwam ubufanel'uba uhleli kula sofa ndizakubona njani mfondini, futhi wena uzokopa

Children acting about a woman who came back from Johannesburg sick

1. Girl 1: Masidlaleni ukugobhoza. Sithi uZizo watshipha (*Let us play gossip and say Zizo did not come back from work*)
2. Siwaphiwe: Wabuya, wabuya seyephelile (*When she came back she was finished*)
3. Girl 1: Washiya umntwana wakhe elusana uyabo (*She left her child while she was very young, you see*)
4. Siwaphiwe: Hayi, hayi, hayi (*No, no, no*)
5. Girl 1: Ok! Watshipha wabuya, wabuya se esislender engathi yingalo, uyabo (*Ok! She stayed and when she came back she was so slim like an arm, you see?*)
6. Siwaphiwe: Ewe (*Yes*)
7. Girl 1: Ye mamgo (*Mamgo*) [meaning gossip]
8. Siwaphiwe: Nkqo-nkqo (*Knock, knock*)
9. Girl 1: Ngena mamgo (*Come in Mamgo*)
10. Siwaphiwe: Mholweni (*Hallow*)
11. Girl 1: Ewe (*Yes!*)
12. Siwaphiwe: Ubuvile uba la mfazi kuthiwa ubuye egoli ephelile (eqhwaba izandla) engaka (elinganisa ngomnwe) (*Have you heard that that woman came back from Gauteng very sick? [Clapping hands] like this, [showing her finger]*)
13. Girl 1: Hee! (eqhwaba izandla) xa wayeyofunani egoli kuqala (*He!* [Clapping hands] *I wonder why she went to Gauteng in the first place*)
14. Siwaphiwe: Qho yonkímihla ndiphuma ndiya kwakhe ndiyomjonga uphelile. Abantwana bakhe ingqala bayamoyika. (*Every day I go out to her place to check on her, she is finished. Even her children are scared of her*)

15. Girl 1: Heyi mamfazi xa wayetshiphelani yena kuqala. (*Hey woman! Why did she not come back in the first place?*)
16. Siwaphiwe: Izinga zam njengoba zimthanda kangaka nje zasoloko zimzunguleza andazi noba akufuneki ndiye kwa gqirha ndiyozitshekishisa ukuba azina AIDS na oku kwazo. (*I wonder if I should not take my dogs to the doctor because they like her, they are always around her*)
17. Girl 1: Hayi inokuba zine AIDS maskhozi. (*I think they've got AIDS*)
18. Siwaphiwe: Kufuneka ndiye kwa gqirha ngoba eza zinja zizula naye ngoba lamntu bezimthanda. Maske siye phaya kwakhe siyomjong'ub'unjani. (*I should go to the doctor because those dogs are moving around with her because they like that person. Let us go to and check how she is doing*)
19. Girl 1: Maskhe siye maskhozi. (*Let us go, my friend*)
20. Siwaphiwe and Girl 1: Knock, knock
21. Girl 2: Come in
22. Girl 1: Yhoo! Yemaskhozi wakhe wambon'umfaz'onje. (*Yho! My friend, have you seen a woman like this?*)
23. Siwaphiwe: Yho! Akaphelanga. (*Yho! She is so thin*)
24. Girl 1: Ingathi yingca. (*Like a grass*)

Book discussion HAS 4

Nomhle: Whose lid is this Likho?
 Likho: It is mine, it is mine. I have stolen from Aphelele (In a singing form)
 Nomhle: Hey! I don't trust you
 Likho: Even that whistle, Nodoza was asking about it
 Nomhle: I don't trust you
 Siwaphiwe: Likho! Lkiho
 Likho: He!
 Siwaphiwe: Come here
 I: Where was Likho when I arrived?
 Nomhle: He was there [pointing to the neighbour]
 Likho: Look mummy, here is this lid, I put it here (in the chest) and push something behind the door and said, iyuyu! It is lost
 Nomhle: Can I open for you [referring to the packet of chips]
 Likho: Wait I am going to the room, I'll be back
 Nomhle: I must open for you (Packet of chips)
 Likho: No, I don't need you to open
 Nomhle: Don't throw them here if you say you don't want me to open
 Nomhle: Mamntolo (opening a book), what is this name Likho? (Pointing to the book)
 Likho: Which one?
 Nomhle: No, I want to start from the beginning (paging the book) where does it start?
 Likho: There
 I: Who wrote here?
 Nomhle: In this place? (Pointing to the lines in the book)
 I: Mh!
 Nomhle: No it comes like this
 I: Oh!
 Nomhle: (Likho is coughing) Oh! You are coughing shame
 Likho: I make the fever myself (singing). (Siwaphiwe joins them and is trying to seat in between Likho and his mother.
 Likho: Cries and removes her)

Sinethemba: Move Siwaphiwe one must come to this side
 Nomhle: Which word did you say you know (pointing to the book again)
 Likho: Not a single one
 Nomhle: Not a single one? Even this, you don't know?
 Likho: It is lala
 Nomhle: Here? Pointing to another line
 Likho: I don't know, *ka*
 Nomhle: What is this person doing?
 Likho: *Kama* (meaning comb)
 Nomhle: This one? You don't know this one?
 Likho: (Looking and keeping quiet)
 Nomhle: No look at this word. (pointing to the word in the book)
 Likho: "*funqula*" meaning lifting up
 Nomhle: No look at this word, no no, look at this word
 Likho: The one you mention
 Nomhle: The one you wrote
 Likho: '*mama*' (meaning mother)
 Nomhle: Eat your chips
 Lihle: Why there is no 'u' here
 Nomhle: This is not '*umama*' but '*mama*' *mama*
 Likho: Umama
 Nomhle: Gila
 Likho: Where is it? '*goba*' (bend)
 Siwaphiwe: This is not bend
 Likho: No, where is this place which says 'drink'
 I: will check but you must find it
 Siwaphiwe: (while Namhla is paging the book the children are reading some of the words)
 Collect
 Likho: Father (tata)
 Nomhle: Where is 'drink'
 Likho: Drink?
 Nomhle: Yes
 Likho: (pointing to the word *sela*) 'drink'
 Nomhle: This one, you also don't know?
 Likho: Open '*vula*'. Here it says rinse
 Nomhle: Laughing! Why lying?
 Siwaphiwe: knead
 Likho: Knead *maan*
 Nomhle: What is father ... doing?
 Likho: Leave it
 Siwaphiwe: What is this one? (pointing to another word in the book, asking Likho)
 Likho: I don't know this. (also pointing to the word)
 Nomhle: Don't you think of what he is doing here?
 Likho: Cook
 Nomhle: Whou!
 Likho: Stir
 Nomhle: Ja! This is a stir. Yes here are the numbers Likho, here are your numbers Likho. Look 2, 4, 6 they are counting candles. 2, 4, 6 wait first, 1, 2, 5, how many apples? This is what they make you do at school.
 Likho: Look mother, 1 the tree

Nomhle: Ja!
 Likho: Two eyes
 Nomhle: No, these are mugs. Are these eyes? These?
 Likho: Two mugs, three pots, four apples, five flowers, six leaves, se...ven houses, eight fish, nine cars, ten the the the star
 Nomhle: The stars (turning to another page). Can you still write that date you wrote at school?
 Likho: Mother
 Nomhle: Mh!
 Likho: You see, at school, if Mapule can ask me chips, I will just ...(folding the packet of chips)
 Nomhle: You are wrong Likho. Here is your Mamtolo (looking at the picture). On this page, you did not read Likho
 Likho: I know it
 Nomhle: But why did not say something
 Likho: This is the one I said, she must go and see him at the hospital because he does not like to meet with the doctor
 Nomhle: Oh!
 I: Who doesn't want to see the doctor? Is father Dlamini?
 Nomhle: Who doesn't want the doctor?
 Likho: Is father Dlamini
 Nomhle: What does he have?
 Likho: He has a chest
 I: Oh! But he does not want to go to the doctor
 Nomhle: Mhm! Who is greeting then? Who says, greetings at home?
 Likho: Is ... is... is... Mamtolo
 Nomhle: I am going to pretend to be Mamtolo, or you be Mamtolo
 Likho: No I want to... to... I am Mamtolo
 Nomhle: Are you Mamtolo? You are Mamtolo
 Likho: Greetings at home
 Nomhle: Ewe! (Meaning greetings)
 Likho: Mamtolo where do you come from at night?
 Nomhle: I am from adult school
 Likho: Awu! No...no..I am Mamtolo

APPENDIX 8: FOR ALL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Parents helping their children with schoolwork at HAS 4 (02/12/13)

1. Sinethemba: Uyakwazi ukubhal'oo la? [*Do you know how to write 'la'?*]
2. Likho: la, le, li, lo, lu [*La, le, li, lo, lu*]
3. Sinethemba: Yha, bhal'oo la, la, le, li... [*Yes, write 'la', la, le, li...*]
4. Likho: Ingxaki andikabafundiswa [*The problem we have not taught them*]
5. Sinethemba: Oo 'la', oo 'la'? Ubhal'umgca ubhal'u 'a' [*'la', 'la'? you write a line and 'a'*]

Vowels- Angel, Okuhle and Likho CAS 1A HPIM0018

1. T: Xa siyibiza sithi yi-apile sithe yintoni? [*This we call an apple what do we call it?*]
2. L: apile! [*Apple*]

3. T: Sathi xa siqalayo ukuyibiza siqala ngobani? [*When we begin to call out this word what do we begin with?*]
4. L: aaaaa! x3 [*aaaaa x3*]
5. T: Kanenene ngegama elingubani? [*What's the word again?*]
6. L: aaaaa! x3 [*aaaaa x3*]
7. T: Sithi xa siyibiza lento yintoni? [*When we call out this item what is it?*]
8. L: apile! [*Apple*]
9. T: Andiniva [*I cannot hear you!?*]
10. L: apile! [*Apple*]
11. T: Xa siqala ukuyibiza Onethemba siqala ngegama elingubani [*(She asks Onethemba) When we begin to pronounce the word what letter do we begin with?*]
12. L: aaaaa! [*(The class responds) aaaaa*]
13. T: Ekhomba sithe iqala ngegama elingubani [*(Speaking to an individual student she points and says) Speak!*]
14. L: aaaaa! [*(The learner responds) aaaaa*]
15. T: apile! [*Apple*]
16. L: apile! [*Apple*]
17. T: sithini andiva? [*What do we say?*]
18. L: apile! [*Apple*]
19. T: amanye amagama aqala, sathi u (a) kanene yinto enjani? [*Some other words begin, what did we say A looked like?*]
20. L: yibhola enomgca [*A ball with a line!*]

Teaching of vowels CAS 1A Okuhle, HP10019

1. T: Andiniva [*I cannot hear you*]
2. L: eeeee! [*eeeeee*]
3. T: Intloko yakho ayikho nkulu ironwnd le kepusi [*Listen now, your head is not big you are going to write this "e" and make this cap, this cap is round, do you see this cap? It is round. What do we call this?*]
4. L: eeeee! [*eeeeee*]
5. T: What!? [*What!?*]
6. L: eeeee! [*eeeeee*]
7. T: Anifuni ukuthetha [*Do you not want to speak?*]
8. L: eeeee! [*Eeee*]
9. T: Nasi isikamisi u-eeee, uzokuzbhala njengam zingasondelani; silandelwe sisikhamiso esingobani [*Here's the vowel eeee you going to write them just like me, not close to each other. Followed by which vowel that has a stick, dearest children? (begging them)*]
10. L: aaaaa! [*aaaaa*]

11. T: Ndatshintsha nda skipa iline, ndayayskipa mna itine xo bendibale komye umca
[Then I changed and skipped al line, then I skip this line when I write on another
line than what did I write?]
12. L: aaaaa! [aaaaa]
13. T: Umihlali akathethi [Mihlali is not speaking, what did I write!? Iiiii]
14. T: Asizobhala o-a sonke abanye abakakwaiz, ngubani ngoku esi sikhamiso
ndisibhaalayo ngubani esi sikhamiso asinantonga [We not all going to write the
vowel 'a' others are still unable to write. Now what is the vowel that I'm writing
now]
15. L: ooooo! [ooooo]
16. T: Hayini bethuna sanikundigezela [Don't be silly, what is this vowel]
17. L: ooooo! [ooooo]
18. T: Xa sawuyqibile wenza le, akophambani u tishela u Nina xa ungayenzi le, senza
ipatheni, yintoni lena? [When you are done you do this...teacher Nina becomes
upset when you do not do this...you make this pattern, what is this?!]
19. L: Yipatheni [It's a pattern]
20. T: ifik'emgceni yokutsho emgceni, phezulu, down, phezulu phantsi, phezulu
phantsi Phezulu. Ndizo kubaxelela abantu abazokwenza lomsebenzi,ndi zobaxelela,
ndiya vakala [It reaches the line from the top to the bottom, top to the bottom, up,
down, up-down, up, you see. I will tell you who will do this work I will tell those to
write a ball who cannot can you hear me? Am I clear?]
21. L: Yes teacher!
22. T: uyongani, usipho, unako bazokubhala lamsebenzi. Umgca uzokuqala,
uzungamameli ngubani lona esisikhamiso? [Yongani, Sipho, Onako, will do that
work. The first line, you dare not listen to me(threat) what is this, what is the vowel
]
23. L: eeeee! [eeeeee]
24. T: Benza lomsebenzi babhale baskipe i-line. Uqala ngasemgceni obomvu, yenzani
umsebenzi wenu. Ubalunga akakakwazi ukhubhala ubola [They must do this work,
write it and skip a line. You must begin by the margin (the red line) do your work.
Balunga cannot write a ball yet.]

Teaching of vowels CAS 1A MOV01753 (1)

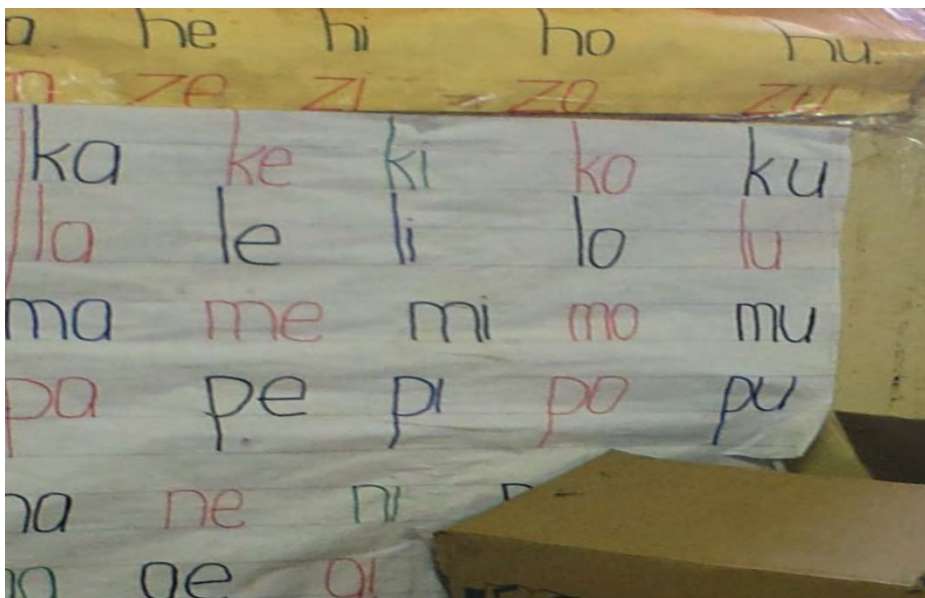
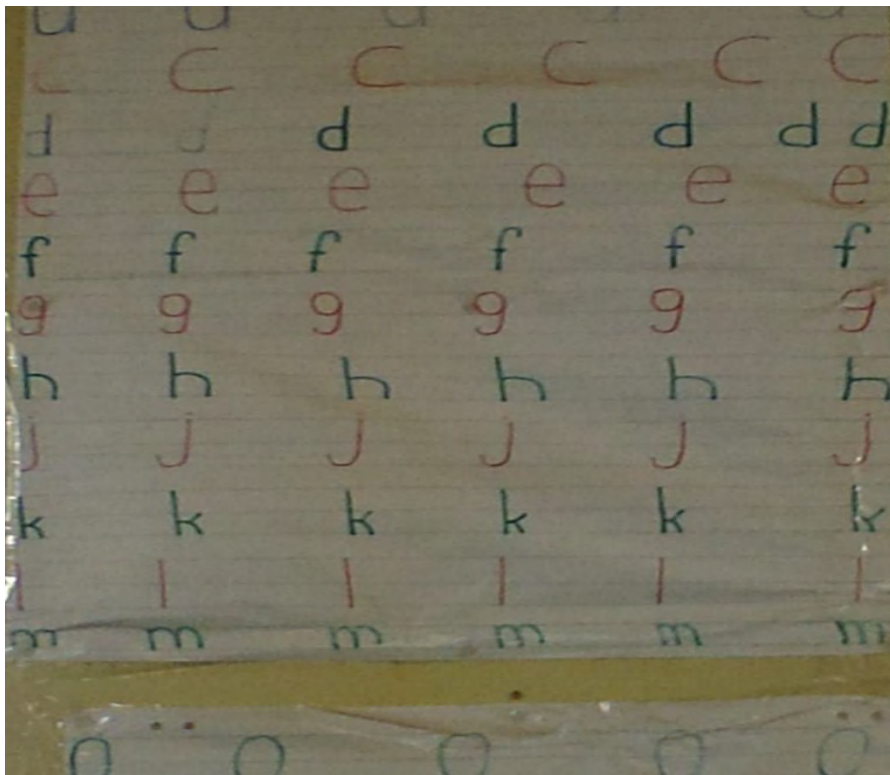
1. T: Kubha khukho ibhola nentonga sibizwa ngokubha yintoni esi sikhamiso? [*Now that there is a ball with a stick, what do we call this vowel?*]
2. L: aaaaa! [*aaaaa*]
3. T: size kwesinye isikhamiso sithe sine chaphaza [*Then the next vowel is straight with a dot*]
4. L: ii! [*ii*]
5. T: Again
6. L: ii! [*ii*]
7. T: Wafika kwesi isikhamiso sivulekile mthetiswa (walingalisa umlomo ewujongise phezulu) [*Then the next vowel is open, what is this vowel mthetiswa (she opens her mouth while facing upwards)*]
8. L: uuuuu! [*uuuuu*]
9. T: Heee sefike kwesi sithe sine kepusi satu ngubani mthetiswa (esolathu ebunzi) [*Then we have the vowel that has a cap, what did we say it is Mthetiswa (pointing at her forehead)*]
10. L: eeeee! [*eeeeee*]
11. T: Again
12. L: eeeee! [*eeeeee*]
13. T: Sathu kuhko esi rowundi asinantonga sathu ngubani Mthetiswa [*Then we get to the one that's round, it has no stick, its round what did we say it is Mthetiswa?*]
14. L: ooooo! [*ooooo*]
15. T: Very good uthitsha akazuku betha, kodwa mamela, sit done. (starts singing)
1,2,3,4,5. Come achume
16. [**Background**]
17. T2: uAnita yena akazokwazi ulifunda, emve ko Achume, kuza u Anita [*Anita will not be able to read it, Anita over there, after Achume call Anita*]
18. -
19. T: Ujonge isikhamiso, isikhamiso ngubani? Uthi U Achuma...asithethi thina phaya esitsho kulaba fundi. Kwaza ke, akuviwa phayo ngabantwana abasemva [*Look at this vowel, what is this vowel? Achuma says this is a, listen Achume we won't speak, say it louder, the children at the back cannot hear you.*]
20. L: iiiii! [*iiiiii*]

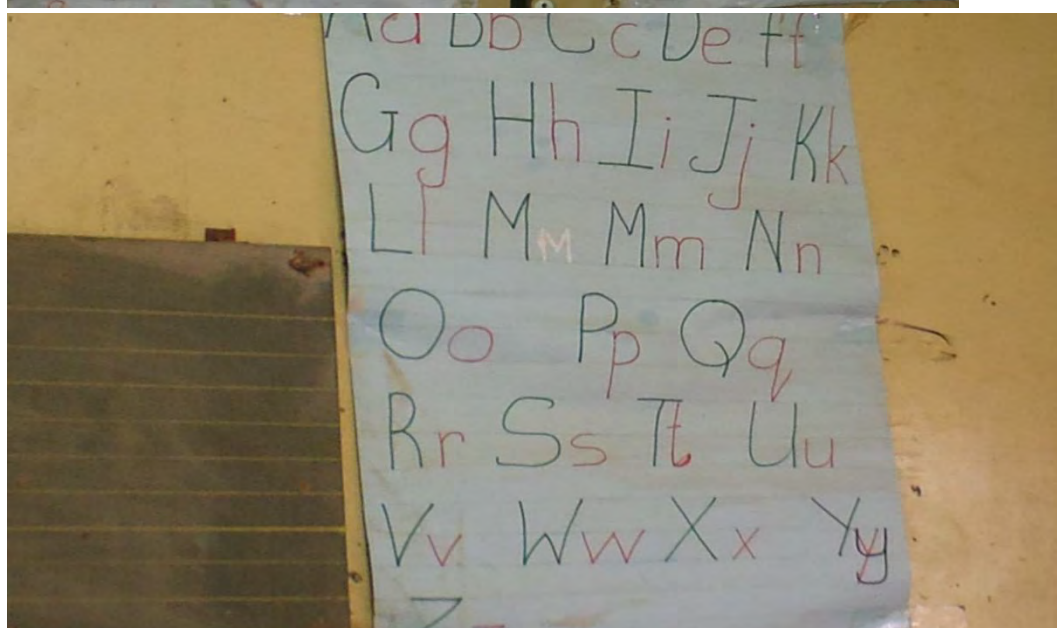
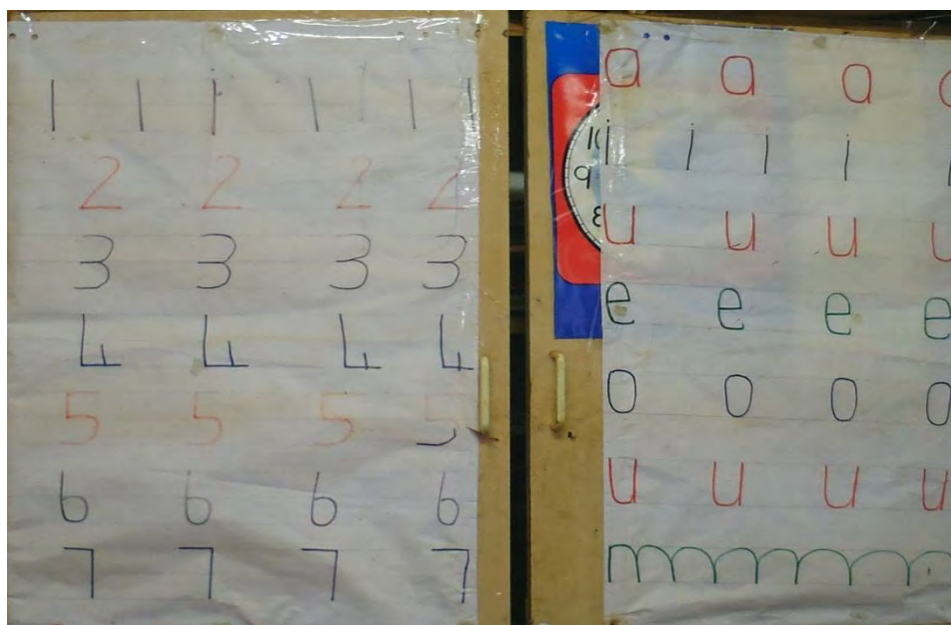
21. T: Uqala ujonge, uqale ujonge ungathi a ingengo a. Eli line kepusi kuthiwa ngubani lo? [*You must first look, you must first look don't just say its 'a' when it's not 'a', the one that has a cap...you can see what it is, what is it?*]
22. L: aaaaa! [aaaaa]
23. T: Uqale ujonge ngubani lo Achume? [*You must first look what is this Achume?*]

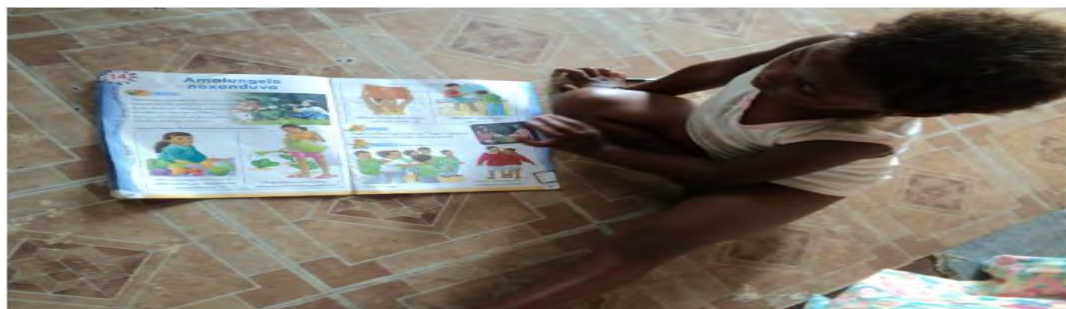
Angel with teacher issue books MOV01677

1. Teacher: Uyanadibona ukhuba ndibhala kanjani? Uyabona umnwe uyangasekhohlwa? Uzakhe uyenze ngolwakho uhlobo uzakudibana nam (threat) [*Do you see how I've placed it? Whenever you write you should always start from the left your finger should always start on the left. This is how It's supposed to be done...if not we'll deal with you accordingly (threat).*]
2. Angel: Yes teacher [*Yes teacher*]
3. Teacher: Uyandibone ukuba ndibhale kanjani? Uyabona ukuba umnwe uya ngasekhohlwa? Uzakhe uye ngolwakho uhlobo uzakudibona (threat). Uyawubona umngca? Kufuneka ubhale emgceni. Hey ngubani lowo ukhalisa unkciyo? Sapha lonto uyikhalisayo! [*Do you see the line, I wrote inbetween the line, do you see? Who's blowing a whistle, bring that thing that's making that whistle. Who's making that sound*]
4. Angel: Natsi [*Here it is*]
5. Teacher: ndizakumbetha lomtu ukhalisa into endlini [*I'm going to beat the person who's whistling in class/house.*]. Onethemba asithethi ngalonto apha [*Onethemba! We are not talking about that here.*] Uyanadibona ukhuba ndibhala kanjani? Uyabona umnwe uyangasekhohlwa? Uzakhe uyenze ngolwakho uhlobo uzakudibana nam (threat). [*Do you see how I've placed it? Whenever you write you should always start from the left your finger should always start on the left. This is how It's supposed to be done...if not we'll deal with you accordingly (threat).*]
6. Onethemba: Yes teacher [*Yes teacher*]
7. Teacher: Uyandibone ukuba ndibhale kanjani? Uyabona ukuba umnwe uya ngasekhohlwa? Uzakhe uye ngolwakho uhlobo uzakudibona (threat). Uyawubona umngca? Kufuneka ubhale emgceni. Hey ngubani lowo ukhalisa unkciyo? Sapha lonto uyikhalisayo! [*Do you see the line, I wrote inbetween the line, do you see? Who's blowing a whistle, bring that thing that's making that whistle. Who's making that sound*]
8. Learner: Natsi [*Here it is*]
9. Teacher: ndizakumbetha lomtu ukhalisa into endlini [*I'm going to beat the person who's whistling in class/house.*] Onethemba asithethi ngalonto apha [*Onethemba! We are not talking about that here*]

**APPENDIX 9: PICTURES FROM BOTH HOME AND CLASSROOM
OBSERVATION**



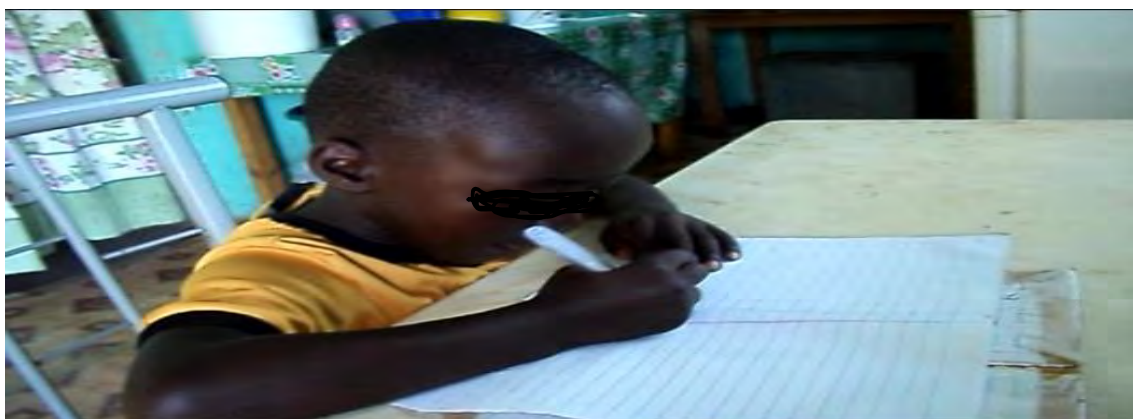




Available books at Angel's HAS 1 (11/12/2012)



Available books and reading resources at Okuhle's HAS 2 (18/12/2012) – the decoration on the cupboard was also used for reading.



Available books at Kuhle's HAS 3 (27/12/2012)

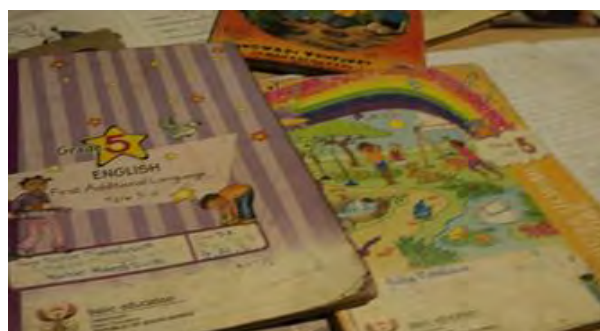
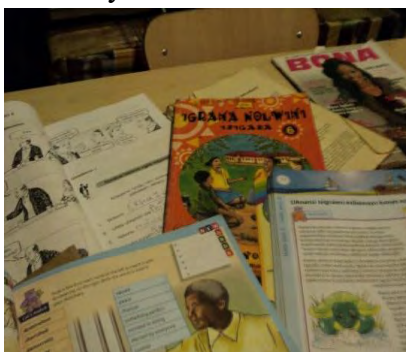


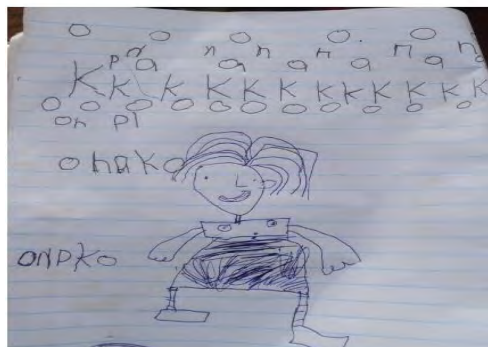
Available books at Likho's HAS (14/02/2013)

Photos 1 and 2: The community - school and non-school-going children playing under the big tree (2013/02/13)

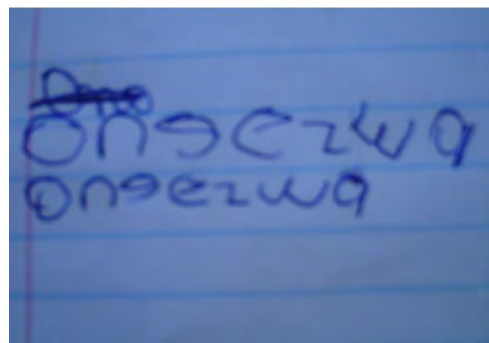


A variety of books available at HAS 4 (2013/02/14)

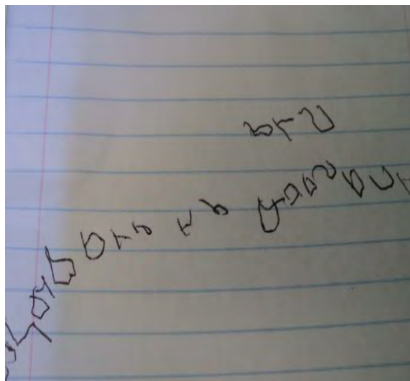




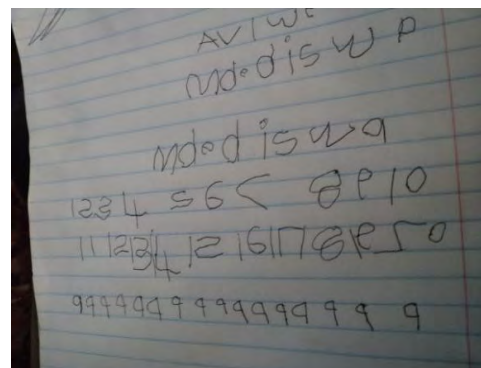
Angel's writing HAS 1(13/12/2013)



Okuhle's writing HAS 2 (21/12/2012)



Kuhle's writing HAS 3 (27/12/2013)



Likho's writing at HAS 4 (04/01/2013)



Pictures of Okuhle (1) and her younger sister (2) using charcoal for writing (22/12/2012)

Okuhle and her sister and a friend writing



CAS 1A (18/01/2013)



CAS 1B (18/01/2013)



Reading lesson with Babies ability group - CAS 1A (06/02/13)



Oranges, Grapes and Bananas writing activity - CAS 1A (06/02/13)



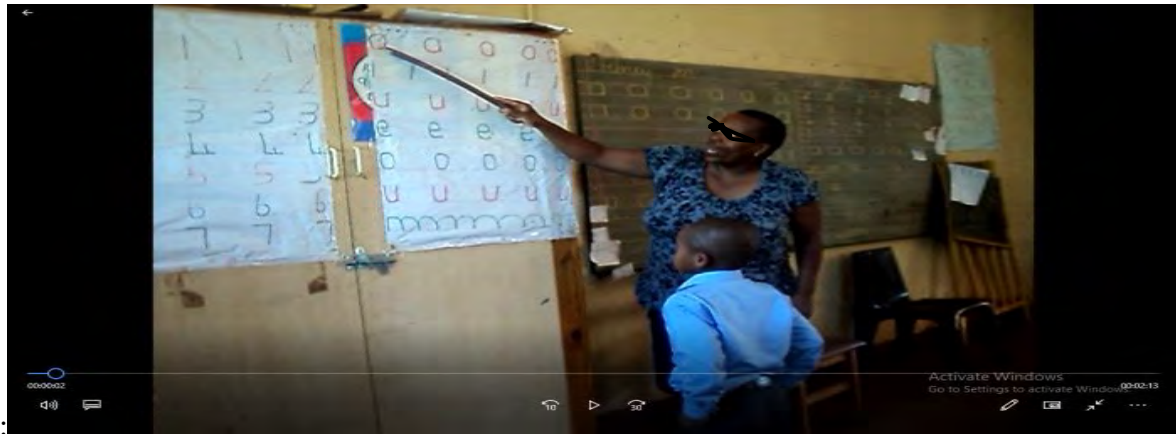
Grapes, Oranges & Banana group writing activity – CAS 1B (12/02.2013)



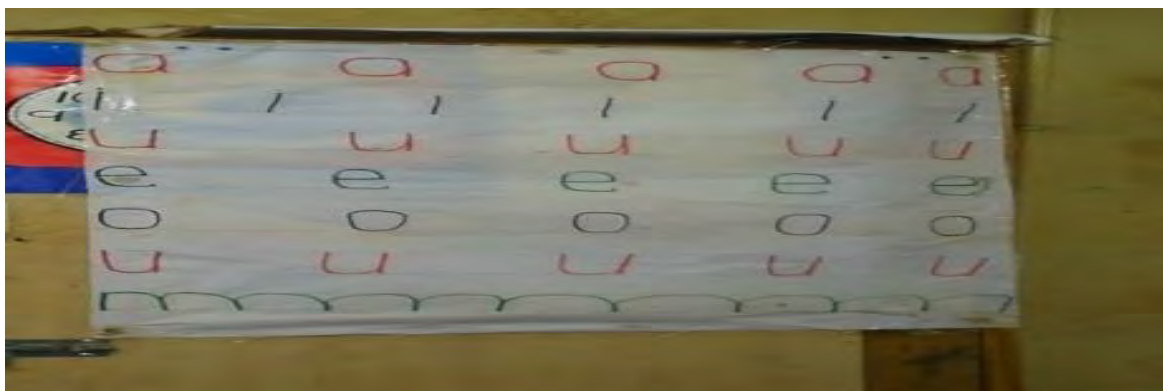
Babies ability group sleeping during writing activity – CAS 1B (12/02/2013)



Babies CAS 1B assisted by a teacher, Nathi (12/02/2013)



Hlumisa teaching vowels in isiXhosa CAS 1A (04/02/2013)

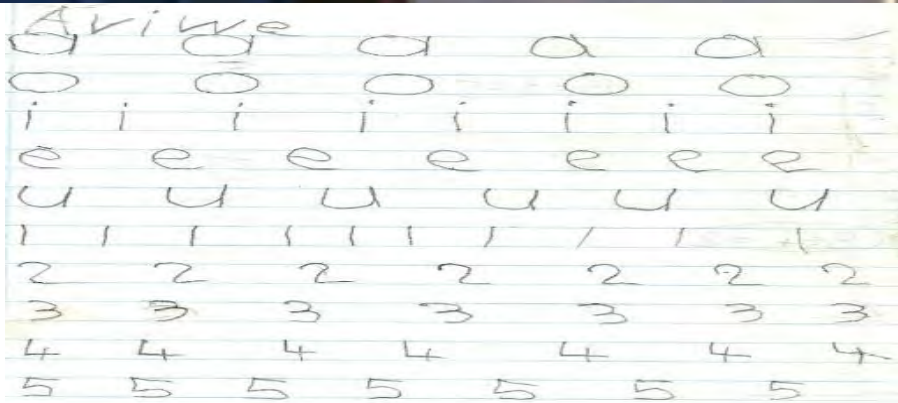
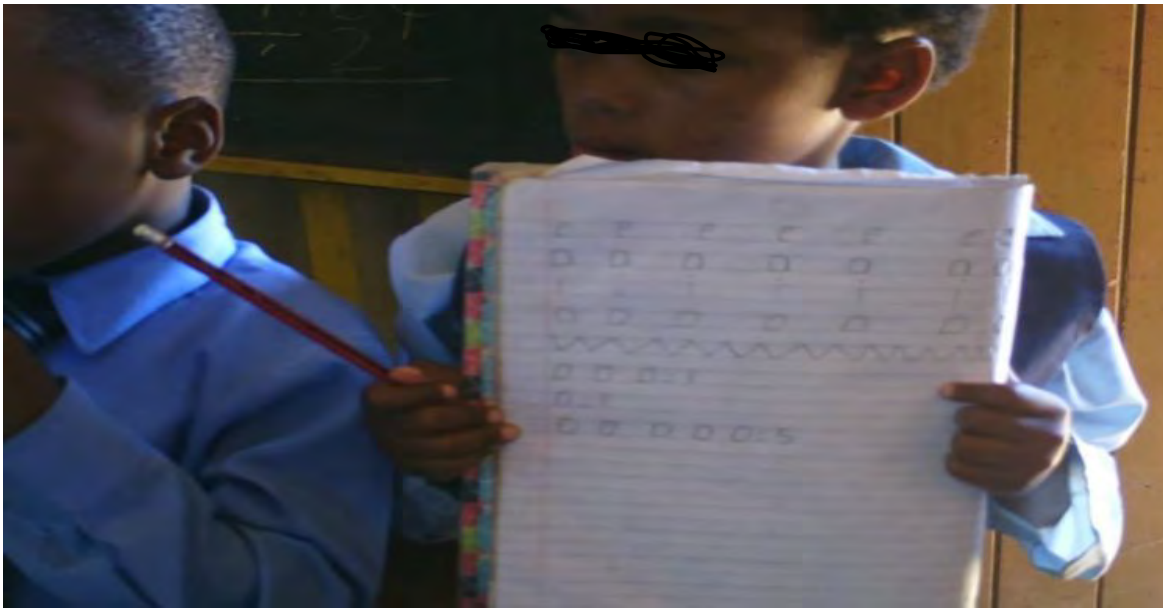


Wall chart with vowels and patterns in CAS 1A (04/02/2013)

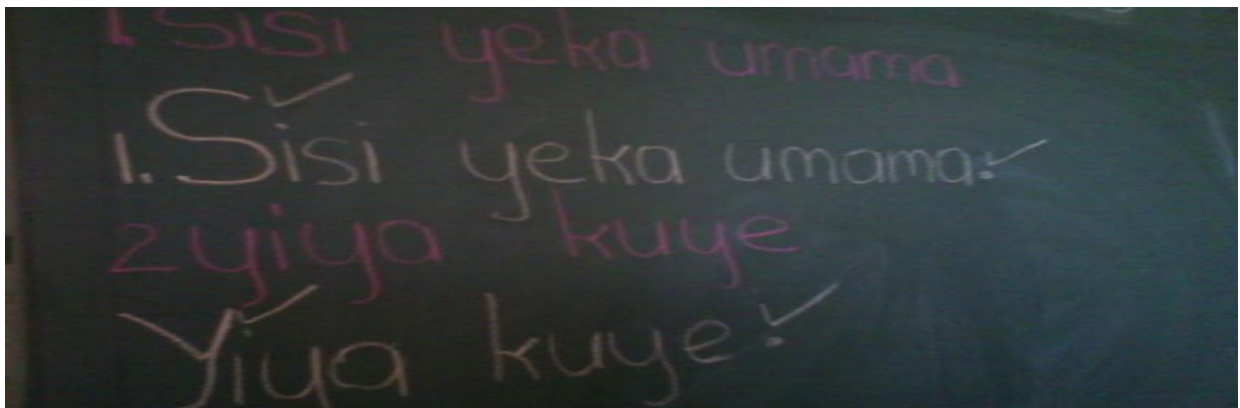


A picture of two syllable words CAS 1A (29/07/2013)

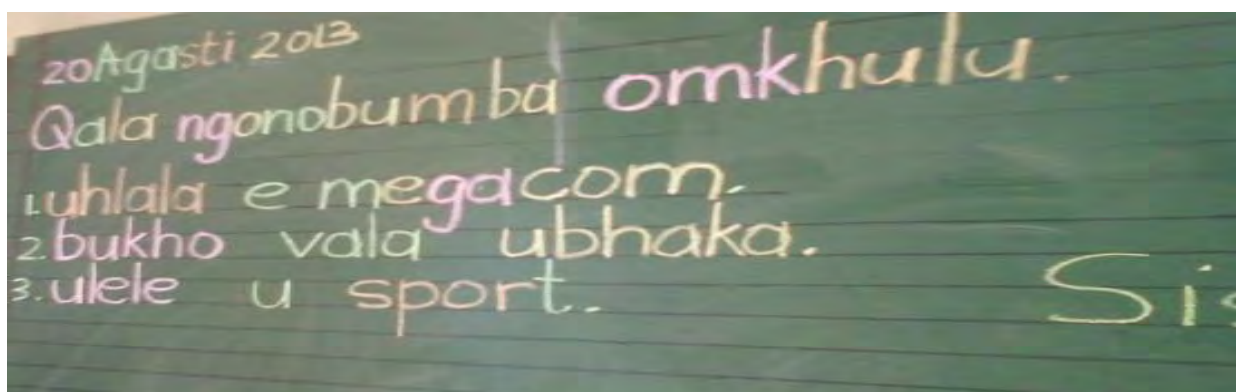
Angel's writing (14/02/2013)



Likho's writing (14/02/2013)



IsiXhosa literacy lesson on capital letters CAS 1A (20/08/13)



IsiXhosa literacy lesson on capital letters CAS 1B (22/08/13)

APPENDIX 10: TEACHER'S INTERVIEWS

Interview with teacher Hlumisa about her literacy habitus and understanding of literacy (13/11/2014)

1. I: I want to understand about yourself and your teaching experience and career. Were you trained to teach in the Foundation Phase (FP)?
2. Hlumisa: No sisi (sister)
3. I: Which phase were you trained for?
4. Hlumisa: STD
5. I: STD?
6. Hlumisa: Yes
7. I: So you were trained to teach in the Senior Phase?
8. Hlumisa: Yes
9. I: Where did you start teaching?
10. Hlumisa: I started teaching in the FP at Lukhuni JSS in 1994 up to now.
11. I: From the beginning, straight from the college?
12. Hlumisa: Yes from the college
13. I: And when did you start teaching at the present school?
14. Hlumisa: In 2005
15. I: Why did you start teaching in the FP?
16. Hlumisa: I don't know it is because of the allocation. What happens Mrs Magxala, the allocation, you are desperate for the post and they don't check your major subjects. They just tell you that, the shortage we have is in the FP the other phase is full
17. I: Oh! And by that you find yourself forced to teach the phase
18. Hlumisa: Yes, you had no choice because you want the job. So, I've been teaching the FP since I started
19. I: Though you were not trained for the phase you started teaching at the FP
20. Hlumisa: Yes from 1994 up to now
21. I: How do you find to teach in the FP?
22. Hlumisa: I like it very much, as a result, if they can take me to another phase I would be stressed. I said even yesterday, now that there are these things of rationalisation. You find out that we are going to move. They are going to look at

our qualifications. I was saying that I would feel so stressed if they can say I must move from the FP.

23. I: Is it a new thing?

24. Hlumisa: Yes it is the new thing that Grade (Gr) 8 and Gr 9 are going to move and we are going to be left with Gr 7.

25. I: Oh! They are moving to High School

26. Hlumisa: Yes, and what is going to happen now they are going to look for the qualifications.

27. I: So that you move

28. Hlumisa: Yes. Maybe for example they are going to say a person who has done JPD must go to the junior. But what I am saying, we had a meeting yesterday. We could do this, for example, take Hlumisa to Senior Phase, there I will take time for three years and the standard of the school will be deteriorating and even the one who will be taken there to FP will be stressed, she won't immediately cope due to this new syllabus as I say. So it could happen but it is not going to be easy

29. I: When did they say is going to start?

30. Hlumisa: It's already happening but not finalised and you find that even your experience in Gr 1 you know what you want, how is your style, and you find out that when they arrived in January, you know that they are in a new environment so you know what to do about them. So, there you will be studying that these children are the adults, what I should do with them. So, it is not easy. I would not be comfortable at all Mrs Magxala, otherwise, it was not going to be a problem if I was close to my retirement and live all this. Because it is going to stress me, I can feel that. This is going to cause challenges because the one who be saying I have JPTD others say B. Ed what what

31. I: When you think here at school are there any people who have JPTD but teaching SP?

32. Hlumisa: Yes, they are at the SP

33. I: Do you think it would be easy for them to come and teach FP?

34. Hlumisa: No, it won't be easy because we used to be in meetings and you find out that there is no one volunteering to come to Gr1

35. I: Meaning you stand a chance then that you may not be affected

36. Hlumisa: It will depend, it is pending. I don't want to tell myself that I will not go. I must be positive in whatever change that is going to happen, that's what I'm thinking

37. I: How is it affecting your teaching the fact that you are ...

38. Hlumisa: It's going to affect it because according to CAPS I am used to working with children according to a certain way. Now I have to go and study CAPS for the SP all that stuff and the syllabus and I have to adjust myself it is not going to be easy. I will be hash with those children whereas here in Gr1 I know that I shout but it's just passing after that I play with them. That is why I say for three years, it will take time and is going to deteriorate children's education if it happened

39. I: If I can check with your background, how did you grow as a child? For example, were you living with your parents and how was it to grow in your home?

40. Hlumisa: You want to find out how did I grow as a child?

41. I: Yes

42. Hlumisa: I grew up under my parents. A housewife my parent who was educated was my father.

43. I: What qualifications he had?

44. Hlumisa: Oh! That olden times qualification I don't remember it. Like royal reading

45. I: Was he teaching?

46. Hlumisa: Yes he was teaching
47. I: So your father was teaching?
48. Hlumisa: Yes he was a teacher and my mother was a domestic worker and also my mother was a stepmother. As she was a stepmother it was a pain but I did not take that seriously when I was growing I realised it when I was doing Gr 12. I saw that many people were staying at this home. What happened, we were not saying father but all of us were saying grandfather to my father even the grandchildren. Even to my mother, everyone was calling her mother. So, I discovered it when I was doing Gr 12 and I realised that there were some problems such as conflicts because my mother was a stepmother. Some claimed the place saying you don't belong here.
49. I: Who claimed the place?
50. Hlumisa: The heir, the grandchild claiming that we did not belong there but I managed to go to get an education. My father died in 1983 then my mother supported me after that
51. I: Were you still studying then?
52. Hlumisa: Yes, my mother supported me. She was working as a domestic worker in Cape Town. After she came back from working in Cape Town, she stayed in the village. Then she got the grant. No other person was working. My half-sister was teaching.
53. I: So she worked as a domestic worker and when she came back she got the grant.
54. Hlumisa: Yes. Then my father was already passed on
55. I: How many were you at home?
56. Hlumisa: We were three from, my mother. Then you would find out that there were some conflicts, the grandchild claimed that that was his home. But I got the school, I passed Gr 12 and I got training school. After I got training school, you would see that the situation was bad. My mother used to go and leave their home because of the grandchild who wanted the site.
57. I: Was this grandchild older than you?
58. Hlumisa: He was older because he was born in 1967 but not that old because we are in the same age group I was born in 69. Then I left Clackbury from studying through those difficult conditions. It was not easy it was a pain. My sister was a dropout from Cicira
59. I: Was she at the college?
60. Hlumisa: Yes at the college. My brother was in Gauteng
61. I: What made your sister drop out?
62. Hlumisa: She could not cope with the Maths stream. She was not coping with Maths. Then, things became better after I..., oh! Fortunately, there was a person who supported me who was staying at Cumberland. She said no Hlumisa I will find you a school from Clarkbury. Then I got to the school and they continued supporting us then. Then I got the school and things became better and I looked for the site for my mother and built it then life went on
63. I: What was your brother doing in Gauteng?
64. Hlumisa: He was just working from the contractors.
65. I: He did not go to school?
66. Hlumisa: No he stopped at Std 7. He never got Gr 10.
67. I: How did your mother encourage you about school? What encouraged you to continue with your education?
68. Hlumisa: Yhooo! My mother encouraged me because she used to say education is important. It was not easy because she uses to have some jobs to support us. It was not easy, she used to say, the only thing that will help us out of the situation is to get

an education. She did some jobs and liked to plough and sell some fish breads to all that staff.

69. I: Where is your home?

70. Hlumisa: At Tsomo at Mtshabe

71. I: So you grew up from there

72. Hlumisa: Yes, and I did not grow up easy but things were not as bad because my father was working.

73. I: Oh! Otherwise, your mother struggled after your father passed on. Were there any pensions that your mother received from your father's since he was working for the government then?

74. Hlumisa: No, only my father got it monthly but it did not pass on to my mother and I don't know the reason. So then, I finished and I became the one who supports my home.

75. I: Supporting your siblings?

76. Hlumisa: Yes, but at home, there were funny things after my father's death because they wanted their site, she was a stepmother can you see those things.

77. I: Otherwise how do you relate now with that grandchild

78. Hlumisa: Very good, the home is very warm now and that grandchild when he was sick I buried him.

79. I: Was this grandchild educated?

80. Hlumisa: He had some education, he did a teacher's course and had a supplementary but did not complete it

81. I: He did not start teaching?

82. Hlumisa: He used to get a temporal post and never got a permanent post and he got sick

83. I: So this is what made you be determined and continue with your studies

84. Hlumisa: Yes I thank God that through it all I managed to complete my studies and I am the only one at home who is a breadwinner

85. I: You said your mother supported you financially and through encouragement, so let's go back to a stage when you were young and at primary level, were there any books at home or were you reading or something like that?

86. Hlumisa: There were no books they were very scarce because we were using slates to write on. So, if you go back home there were no books to read at home, unlike these children because a person takes a book to read at home. But we were motivated to wake up early and go to school. The only book we had when we were in Std 7 noted,

87. I: At home was there anyone who read books for you

88. Hlumisa: They were reading the Bible for us. Our parents read the Bible for us. They also told us stories and fairy tales

89. I: Do you still remember what types of stories they told you? Such as stories with teaching or just stories for fun

90. Hlumisa: They were the stories with teaching because my father used to tell us the stories and said, he was teaching in Ngqamakhwe where he used to walk a distance riding on horseback. He used to say when you see this big home it was because I persevere and you would see how far is Ngqamakhwe for one to ride on a horse can you see such a thing. He would say, but I persisted. My father had a teaching Miss Magxala, you would see that the yard was full of fruit trees and everything. You could not go outside the yard at a certain time. If you went out you knew that you went to fetch water when you come back. That was a well-respected home. And you found out that even the parent when she was cooking she wanted you to learn. She

would say, let's go and fetch wood, let's go and make fire, this is how to make tea, we are going to go and milk the sheep and cows all that

91. I: So she was teaching you home chores

92. Hlumisa: Home chores, so I don't want to lie they taught us and I don't regret now that I am where I am.

93. I: Is there any story that you can tell me that you remember?

94. Hlumisa: The story that he told us was that of his mother. His mother grew up under difficult living conditions. He said his mother use to fetch wood, if in any home there was going to be an occasion, they already know that they are going to call her to fetch wood for them. If there was any house that was falling she was the one who would go and plaster the house with mud. So, he would explain that life is not easy. If in that home there was an occasion they would ask her to go and clean. In turn, they would give her a stamp, maize meal and everything. Do you see that it was a pain? So, he was showing us that it is important to get an education. And he told us that one day his mother nearly drowned in the river while she was going to fetch the wood. What helped her was to hold on to the branch and two men who were passing by saw her, and only to find it was his mother she was trying to cross the river to the forest to fetch some wood. So she was saved by those two men.

95. I: Meaning your father was not doing stories for fun only

96. Hlumisa: No, what he told us had a direction and were real

97. I: Are there any stories told by your mother?

98. Hlumisa: No, but hers were just stories. But what she used to encourage was something to do with education. Another thing that she was encouraging was to go to church, oh! She encouraged us about the church.

99. I: I am interested to know about your understanding of literacy. Anything that you understand when we talk about literacy. To you if someone talks about literacy, how do you view it?

100. Hlumisa: Literacy is related to school. I think it is important because, from an infant stage at home, you are reading. There is a lot that you learn at home from four years in fact during birth. Because you are going to ... you are going... when you were walking next to the fire long ago, you would find out that you were made aware that you were going to burn. That was an awareness

101. What do you understand about literacy? Anything that you understand when we say literacy

102. Hlumisa: Literacy 'mos' is something which is related to school. I think it is important because while you are still an infant at home you are reading, there is a lot that you learn. While you are still at home when you are four years five years, in fact when you are born because you will say when you are walking next to the fire, long ago, you find out that they say 'hata' (beware of the fire). That thing is an awareness that gets into your mind that you are going to burn. So, literacy comes from home. You find out that a child knows once water is boiled, he should be careful because the water is going to burn him. It is also educational. Stoves are scarce in the homes; it depends on our ways of living. Some parents would think that for their children to wash they should take and warm the water outside from the sun. You see, that is education. So, there is a lot that you learn before you come to school. You don't come to school empty. Then when you are here at school you differentiate. Things are going according to the order, you see that.

103. I: Mhm! (*knoding the head*)

104. Hlumisa: You know that things now are going to be different. You begin to remember that Oh! When they say I must boil water it was something. A chicken

would hatch some eggs at home and I saw that these eggs are five. So, here I take that to Maths. We say, yesterday there were five eggs and today a hen hatches two which makes seven. So, now we differentiate that and say it Maths. And when we go to isiXhosa, it is different from Maths. We learn many things at home in isiXhosa but we now differentiate and say this is 'isifanekiso-zwi', isigaba sentetho (*figure of speech*), 'ixesha eladlulayo' (*past tense*). There is a lot of teaching even at home you don't come to school empty.

105. I: Why do you think it is important to teach literacy or literacy is central to teaching?

106. Hlumisa: You mean here at school?

107. I: Yes, it can be here at school or anywhere where children learn about literacy.

108. Hlumisa: Teaching literacy helps children to be able to read and write and do other activities.

109. I: What activities?

110. Hlumisa: Such as counting because even counting starts from teaching a child how to read and write.

111. I: So, does that mean you see reading and writing as central to teaching literacy?

112. Hlumisa: Yes, mem I can say that

113. I: Thank you Hlumisa for your responses

114. Hlumisa: Thank you mem.

Interview with Teacher Faith about her teaching experience in the FP (13/1/2014)

1. I: Were you trained for the FP?

2. Faith: Yes

3. I: Oh! You were trained for the FP

4. Faith: Yes

5. I: Were you trained in college or University?

6. Faith: At the college

7. I: Where did you start teaching? Did you start teaching at the FP?

8. Faith: Yes, I started teaching at the FP

9. I: When was that?

10. Faith: It was 1984, no 94

11. I: In 1994?

12. Faith: Yes

13. I: Then, you taught FP since

14. Faith: Yes

15. I: You never change

16. Faith: No, I never change

17. I: How do you find teaching the FP? Which grades were you teaching here at the FP for example?

18. Faith: I taught Gr 2, otherwise when I started teaching I taught Gr 3, they asked me to move to Gr 1.

19. I: Since then, you have been teaching Gr 1?

20. Faith: Yes

21. I: How do you feel about teaching the FP? What can you say about FP?
22. Faith: No, teaching the FP is nice, very much. I don't know maybe it is because I am used to it. I did not experience teaching in another phase, but it's enjoyable because to deal with young kids, they are genuine, they are themselves. So, it is easy to study them quickly if she has a certain challenge or a problem you can study them because they are young. Even the one who is not happy it is easy to see him.
23. I: Tell me Faith, what is your understanding of Literacy? What do you understand about literacy?
24. Faith: Literacy is where all the subjects come from because immediately a child has mastered it, mastered speaking, writing, listening and speaking, writing and reasoning if he mastered those in literacy he won't have any problem with other subjects. I will make an example about the robot. You may teach the robot from literacy and it also appears from another subject. So, that person who teaches the subject finds it easy when a child has mastered literacy because a child can speak, write and can see what the picture is for. A child can guess about the drawing and figure out what the story is about.
25. I: So, are you saying literacy is about those skills such as listening, reading and so on
26. Faith: Yes.
27. I: Why do you think it is important to teach literacy or literacy is central to teaching?
28. Faith: Children learn all the literacy skills from literacy. So, it is important that literacy is taught so that after they have mastered the skills they have no problem in reading and writing.
29. I: Am I correct when I say you understand literacy and its importance as teaching children to master literacy skills that includes reading and writing?
30. Faith: Yes, you are correct.
31. I: Thank you Faith for all your responses
32. Faith: Thank you mem.

Interview with Teacher Zoleka, a second Grade 1B teacher, about her teaching experience in the FP and her understanding of literacy (13/1/2014)

1. I: Were you trained to teach in the Foundation Phase (FP)?
2. Zoleka: No, but I go to these training like CAPS
3. I: But initially what were you trained for?
4. Zoleka: I was trained to teach STD (Senior Teacher's Diploma)
5. I: You were not trained to teach in the FP
6. Zoleka: No
7. I: Which phase were you suppose to teach when you are trained for STD?
8. Zoleka: You are supposed to teach at the Senior Phase (SP) but because of the job scarcity, you take whatever job you get
9. I: Oh! So, you were trained for STD and after you completed your diploma, did you get the post for STD or where did you start teaching? Which phase did you start teaching?

10. Zoleka: I started at the SP. I used to work as a substitute until I got the permanent post
11. I: When did become permanent?
12. Zoleka: I became permanent in 2008
13. I: 2008. Did you become permanent to teach in the FP?
14. Zoleka: No, here in the FP
15. I: So you started teaching FP in 2008?
16. Zoleka: 2007,
17. I: How do you feel that you are teaching Gr 1?
18. Zoleka: No, I am feeling alright now it was in 2007/8, it was worse in 2008
19. I: Because you were still adjusting
20. Zoleka: Yes I was still adjusting especially with the things of charts and what, what, I knew nothing about those things then
21. I: But now how do you feel?
22. Zoleka: No it is better now
23. I: If it could happen during this rationalisation process that you are changed and taken back to SP, will you be comfortable?
24. Zoleka: Yes I would be comfortable I won't have any problem
25. I: In fact would you prefer to go to the SP or remain here at the FP?
26. Zoleka: I would stay here but I would prefer to go to the SP
27. I: Tell me, what do you understand about literacy?
28. Zoleka: I can say everything starts from literacy. It is education. When you say literacy, it is teaching you to see. Even while you were growing, those things they used to say, don't do certain t things, take some things. You saw that you were learning at home although you didn't know that you were learning. So you see that many things I know because I learned about them from home. Also at school, when you read and write.
29. I: Things like what?
30. Zoleka: Things fetching cattle and sheep from the field. You have to count them for example to see if they are all there. Lots of things that you can learn from home.
31. I: In all, you are saying you understand literacy is about reading and writing as well as what you do at home.
32. Zoleka: Yes.
33. Why do you think it is important to teach literacy or literacy is central to teaching?
34. Zoleka: Literacy is important, especially in the Foundation Phase because every child has to be able to read and write.
35. I: So, you are saying literacy is about reading and writing?
36. Zoleka: Yes, because without being able to read and write a child cannot proceed to the next grade
37. I: Thank you Zoleka for your responses
38. Zoleka: Thank you mem.

Interview with Teacher Nathi about her teaching experience in the FP and her understanding of literacy (13/1/2014)

1. Interviewer: Let's talk about your teaching experience. When did you start teaching?
2. Nathi: I started in 1991
3. Interviewer: Which phase were you trained to teach?
4. Nathi: At primary

5. Interviewer: Meaning in the Foundation Phase
6. Nathi: Yes
7. Interviewer: So, you are a Foundation Phase teacher
8. Nathi: Yes, I trained Primary Teacher's Diploma
9. Interviewer: Where did you start teaching?
10. Nathi: I started in 1991 at Xhora (Elliot Dale)
11. Interviewer: You started teaching FP there?
12. Nathi: No, I taught at Senior Phase
13. Interviewer: For how long?
14. Nathi: For two years, then I left Xhorha for Ngqeleni
15. Interviewer: Was it FP or SP?
16. Nathi: At Intermediate Phase. I taught 1 year there, from 1992 Intermediate Phase and 1996 till now I taught FP because I was at Pre-school teaching Grade R
17. Interviewer: When did you start teaching Grade 1?
18. Nathi: I think this is the third year
19. Interviewer: So, how is it like to teach in the FP?
20. Nathi: I enjoy teaching FP because children are curious, they are eager to know though there are things that are challenging.
21. Interviewer: Like what?
22. Nathi: Like the problem of not having enough space, the overcrowding. They are too many in so much that you are unable to do individual attention because of their number. At the same time, you find out that, now that they are beginners there is also too much paperwork which makes you at times neglect them.
23. Interviewer: What is the paperwork for?
24. Nathi: There are external things such as children's ID numbers
25. I: From the department?
26. Nathi: Yes, from the department, also the health department arrived. I must say our focus is not on teaching alone.
27. I: What does health want?
28. Nathi: Health comes for their assessment from the same children. You find out that, most of the time, even the feeding scheme also distracts us. Because there are so many children in this school when they are going to eat they take a lot of time.
29. I: How many children are here in the school?
30. Nathi: More than 1000
31. I: How many children are here in Gr 1?
32. Nathi: They are 152 or 154. Otherwise, it is nice because they are eager to learn.
33. I: Otherwise you are comfortable teaching Gr 1
34. Nathi: Very much
35. I: What is your view or understanding about literacy?
36. Nathi: When I talk about literacy, I first have a purpose because what do I want this child to know exactly. Literacy is what we teach our children. We teach them to know how to read and write.
37. I: So in all you say literacy is about reading and writing.
38. Nathi: Yes
39. I: Why do you think it is important to teach literacy or literacy is central to teaching?
40. Nathi: So, I have this, that in the end, as I teach literacy, this child should write. So it is important that all my children must be able to write at the end.
41. I: Oh! He/she should write at the end

42. Nathi: Yes. My child should be able to read and once he/she gets a reading skill he/she becomes more interested because everything is based on reading.
43. I: So, reading and writing are key to literacy?
44. Nathi: Yes, a child must be able to write and read.