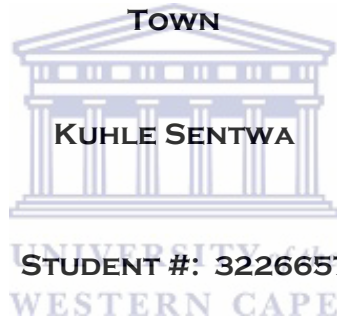




UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE
DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
MA LINGUISTICS PROGRAMME (FULL THESIS)

**EXPLORING DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES OF 12- TO 15-YEAR-OLD
CHILDREN FROM PHILIPPI AND KHAYELITSHA TOWNSHIPS IN CAPE
TOWN**



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APRIL 2018

KEYWORDS

Technology

Digital literacy

Education

Literacy practices

Repertoires and Resources

Multimodality

Mobile Phone

Online Stories

Philippi

Khayelitsha



ABSTRACT

Despite the spread of digital communication technologies and the integration of mobile phones into everyday life, young children's literacy practices are changing rapidly, and schools are struggling to address the potential of these digital communication technologies for learning. Mobile phones are currently a key consumer item, an image of social capital, and they initiate their users into a portable web of numerous applications including those literacy related. Much research has been done on children's relationship with digital technologies and the implications of this for their literacy learning and education in general, but there is almost no research on this in the global south, and almost none in South Africa. Filling this gap is crucial given the crisis in South Africa in basic education. The main aim for this research is to establish the kinds of digital technology and information systems affordances (internet facilities, tablets, books, magazines, newspapers, radios, TVs, video and computer games, etc.) in the homes of the selected children to explore how these digital technologies and information system affordances could be used to enhance the academic literacy development of 12- to 15-year-old children in informal settlements or townships in Cape Town.

This research outlines the out-of-school literacy practices of six 12- to 15-year-old children from different family settings in Philippi township and Khayelitsha township in Cape Town, focusing on their literacy practices in their home domains and their involvement with mobile phones. It follows on the ethnographic research tradition of Heath (1982, 2012, 2010), Street (1985), Prinsloo and Bayham (2013) and others in studying ways in which homes and school literacy practices can be bridged. Thus, this study made use of approaches to ethnographic research the qualitative and the quantitative research approaches combining comparative research designs, descriptive research design and the observation studies. This involved information gathering through interviews, observations, field notes, recording and story writing, and reading.

The circumstances of the six children in this study are a representation of the reality of living in a black township in South Africa. Overall, the research findings suggest that, even though children may be exposed to certain digital literacy resources, without the supervision or contribution of a parental figure, and despite the presence of digital material affordances, these children will most likely be unable to utilize these technologies in a way that will

benefit them. This is the reason why it is vital that guardian/parental figures are engaged with their children's educational advancement. The important role of the family is very crucial in helping children locate useful literacy practices in the digital technology and information systems available for education development and advancement. Thus, the findings of this study suggest that parents or family members should become involved in their children's educational advancement.

The findings also underscore the need for children to be involved in extracurricular activities such as reading clubs, and programmes that help develop learners in primary/secondary schools through tutoring programmes and mentorships, as they are a crucial component in every child's life. Extracurricular activities have an impact in helping children to develop and grow mentally and perform well or improve academically at school. Engaging in extracurricular exercises enables the child to improve academically, as well as encourages positive behaviour as children enjoy positive communications with their peers and support appropriate conduct and social interaction during these activities. It was also clear during the course of the research that children enjoy reading stories online more than hardcopy books.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that, as much as children are exposed to mobile phones, they are not exposed to the sites where they can read online stories. Both the children and the parents/caregivers in this study enjoyed the idea of reading stories online through a mobile phone, but the only concern they raised was that of data. Data is expensive and they indicated they often find it difficult to afford to buy data on a regular basis so that their children can have access to online stories. Although children are familiar with how to use digital technology such as cell phones and computers, they might need to be directed to sites with academic-related information, or with texts that would help with the development of literacy practices that are required in the school context. This would require some level of dedication and literacy on the part of guardians/parents. Since a good percent of parents/guardians come from underprivileged backgrounds, they may not necessarily have the ability to read, or the patience to help their children after work. Therefore, one recommendation is that schools should not only provide hardcopy story books, but should introduce a platform where children are able to read stories online as part of reading and literacy development.

DECLARATION

I, **Kuhle Sentwa**, hereby declare that the content of the dissertation, *Exploring digital literacy practices of 12- to15-year-old children from Philippi and Khayelitsha townships in Cape Town* is entirely my own work, except where stated. Research was gathered using online databases and printed texts and all work referenced is included in the reference list. No help was sought from an external professional agency and the thesis has not been previously submitted for academic examination towards any qualification at this or any other University.

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Signature

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank God Almighty for His mercy and enrichments throughout this journey. I would not have possessed the capacity to accomplish this if it was not for His grace.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Felix Banda, for his excellent supervision, support and constructive comments. I truly enjoyed this journey because whenever I needed guidance, he was always there for me. I would also like to thank him for providing material resources. I have learnt a lot from him as my supervisor and I will always treasure that knowledge.

I dedicate this thesis to my loving and supporting mother, Nomvisiswano ‘May’ Sentwa, who has been there for me throughout my whole academic career, ready with support and encouragement. Thank you for the sacrifices you have made to ensure that I reach the end of this journey. I will never be able to repay you for everything you do for me, so I pray this thank you will suffice.

To my friend, Mhlahli Ndzabela and my colleagues, Dillan Stevens and Wade Kearns, thank you for the continuous support, encouragement, love and for keeping me sane during the times when I felt overwhelmed. Words cannot express my gratitude for all the love and support you have shown me during this time.

To all the participants (children and parents) in my study, thank you again for your availability, support and time. Your contribution was a very important asset to this research. I really appreciate your cooperation and contribution.

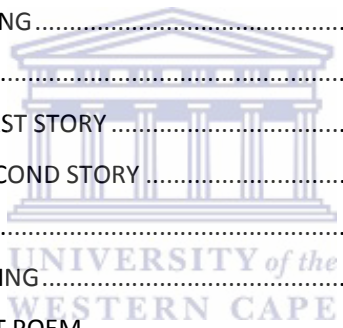
The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEYWORDS.....	i
ABSTRACT	ii
DECLARATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH SITES.....	2
1.3.1 Khayelitsha Township	2
1.3.2 Philippi Township	3
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	3
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	4
1.7 RATIONALE.....	5
1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE.....	5
1.9 SUMMARY.....	6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	7
2.2 NEW LITERACY STUDIES (NLS): THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL ISSUES.....	7
2.2.1 Autonomous versus ideological models of literacy	7
2.2.2 Literacy events and literacy practices	8
2.2.3 The digital turn in New Literacy Studies	8
2.2.4 Multimodal literacies and digital material affordances	9
2.3 LITERACY AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE.....	10
2.4 LITERACY IN OUT-OF -SCHOOL CONTEXTS.....	11
2.5 CHILDREN’S DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES / STORYTELLING RESOURCES AND REPERTOIRES	12
2.6 DIGITAL LITERACY - A MATTER OF LEARNING AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE.....	12

2.7	DIGITAL LITERACY IN PRACTICE.....	13
2.8	MULTIMODALITY.....	14
2.8.1	Multimodal digital Literacies and Education.....	15
2.8.2	Multimodal Repertoires and Resources.....	16
2.9	CONNECTING COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY PRACTICES	17
2.10	SUMMARY.....	19
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY		20
3.1	INTRODUCTION	20
3.2	RESEARCH APPROACHES.....	20
3.3	RESEARCH DESIGN	21
3.4	ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH METHODS.....	22
3.4.1.	Field notes	24
3.4.2.	Interviews with caregivers.....	24
3.4.3.	Observations	24
3.4.4.	Story Writing and Reading.....	25
3.5	RESEARCH SITES	26
3.6	RESEARCH SAMPLE	26
3.7	MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF LITERACY MATERIAL AND AFFORDANCES.....	27
3.8	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	28
3.9	SUMMARY.....	29
CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE MATERIAL OF THE LITERACY ARTEFACTS IN TOWNSHIPS AND HOMES.....		30
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	30
4.2	CONTEXTUALISING LITERACY.....	30
4.3	LITERACY PRACTICES AT HOME	34
4.4	EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL CONTEXT	42
4.5	FAMILY LITERACY PRACTICES AND INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN’S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	46
4.6	SUMMARY.....	48
CHAPTER 5: MULTIMODAL AND DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES AND ACCESS TO ONLINE STORIES.....		49
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	49
5.2	DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES	49
5.3	CHILDREN’S RESOURCES AND REPERTOIRES	55
5.4	INTERACTION WITH TECHNOLOGIES AND MOBILE LEARNING.....	70

5.5	SUMMARY	78
	CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	80
6.1	INTRODUCTION	80
6.2	FULFILMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	80
6.3	CHALLENGES FACED.....	81
6.4	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	82
	REFERENCE LIST	83
	APPENDICES.....	90
	APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM	90
	APPENDIX 2: ASSENT FORM	92
	APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET	93
	APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CAREGIVERS.....	94
	APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN.....	95
	APPENDIX 6: AYANDA’S DRAWING.....	96
	APPENDIX 7: AYANDA’S STORY	97
	APPENDIX 8: THAMSANQA’S FIRST STORY	98
	APPENDIX 9: THAMSANQA’S SECOND STORY	99
	APPENDIX 10: ASANDA’S STORY.....	100
	APPENDIX 11: ASANDA’S DRAWING.....	102
	APPENDIX 12: LUYANDA’S FIRST POEM.....	103
	APPENDIX 13: LUYANDA’S SECOND POEM.....	104
	APPENDIX 14: ATHANDWA’S STORY.....	105
	APPENDIX 15: ATHANDWA’S DRAWING.....	106
	APPENDIX 16: UMPILE’S POEM	107
	APPENDIX 17: UMPILE’S STORY	108





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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the digital literacies of 12- to 15-year-old children from Philippi and Khayelitsha townships in Cape Town. In this chapter, I briefly discussed the background to the study, the background of the research sites, and the objectives and the rationale behind the study. The chapter further presents an outline of the entire dissertation.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Traditionally, the term literacy has been taken to refer to the ability to read and write effectively. However, of late, many scholars argue that the concept of literacy, referring to the ability to read and write, is rather limited and narrow. Literacy is the thing that individuals do with reading and writing in different settings and why they do it. For this reason, literacies or literacy practices, rather than literacy, is the phrase that is in vogue. According to Barton and Hamilton (2000), literacy practices are simply what individuals do with literacy. Literacy practices include more than just activities with texts: literacy practices join with, and are moulded by qualities, states of mind, feelings, and social relations. Literacy practices are all the more conveniently comprehended as existing in the connections between individuals, with gatherings and groups rather than as an arrangement of properties residing in a person.

This study looked at the literacy and digital literacy practices of three 12- to 15-year-old children from Philippi township and three 12- to 15-year-old children from Khayelitsha township. Philippi and Khayelitsha, classified as “black areas” even before the apartheid era, are now townships mostly composed of black isiXhosa-speaking individuals and families on the Cape Flats. This research looked at what these children are doing with digital literacy and computerized assets in their home domains. Much research has been done in the global north as to how digital technologies are being used and are taken for granted. However, the case is different in South Africa; access to and use of digital technologies cannot be taken for granted and hence, research is important in our contexts. This study

focused on how the three 12- to 15-year-old children from Philippi township and the three 12- to 15-year-old children from Khayelitsha township accessed and used digital technologies to expand motivation and engagement with literacy and learning. This included a critical evaluation of the material literacy and digital artefacts available in the homes (e.g. TVs and radios, videos and computer games, and internet facilities) and how the children interacted with them in terms of developing their literacies.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH SITES

1.3.1 Khayelitsha Township

Khayelitsha was established in 1983 with the main purpose of accommodating informal settlement dwellers in the Cape Flats (Cole, 2013). The name 'Khayelitsha' originates from isiXhosa which means 'new home', it is located 19km east of Wynberg and 25km South-east of Cape Town in the Western Cape. According to South African History online (2013), "Khayelitsha was built under the principle of racial segregation executed by the government. Due to the immense influx of people, it is the second biggest Black township in South Africa after Soweto in Johannesburg".

Khayelitsha has three subdivisions. The first is the old formal areas which were originally built by the apartheid government known as the A-J sections - Bongweni, Ikhwezi Park, Khulani Park, Khanya Park, Thembani, Washington Square, Graceland, Ekuphumleni and Zolani Park. These are bank bond houses owned by middle/upper-class working populations. The second subdivision is one of the newer areas which were built around the older areas and these include, Site B, Site C, Green Point, Litha Park, Mandela Park, Makaza and Harare. These areas are informal settlements, Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses and informal backyard dwellers. Lastly, there are Notable Informal settlements, which are made up of QQ section, TR section and Enkanini. Residents in these areas gained access through their high profile conflicts with the government including protest actions.

According to Seekings (2013), cited in Clark (2015:4), "crime is a constant consideration in the lives of people living in Khayelitsha; it is a major constraint on moving around after dark and is a source of anxiety in many neighbourhoods even during daytime." Like many other

townships in Cape Town, Khayelitsha is known for its high rate of crime, of which murder rates are the most solid measures.

1.3.2 Philippi Township

Philippi is situated in the Cape Flats and was established in 1993. It was originally called 'Die Duine'. Similar to most black communities, the history and improvement of Philippi is connected to politically-sanctioned racial segregation strategies. Most settlers in Philippi township came from the Ciskei and Transkei homelands and settled in Nyanga, Langa, Gugulethu, and later in new squatter areas, for example, Crossroads, Brown's Farm and Samora Machel (Anderson, Azari, Van Wyk, 2009). Philippi progressively turned into a place of shelter from the political clashes and violence in the previous homelands. According to Adlard (2009, cited in Anderson, Azari and Van Wyk, 2009), Philippi is a large township with a number of farms, and as a result, most businesses see it as a good area for businesses related to development.

Cape Town is known as the murder capital in South Africa, Philippi being on the top of the list of the 'highest murder rate' hotspots in the country, together with Hillbrow in Johannesburg, and kwaMashu in Durban. The most violent area in Cape Town is the Cape Flats (Anderson, Azari and Van Wyk, 2009). According to the Department of Community and Safety (2003/2004:4), "though crime in general has been decreasing in Philippi the murder rate is still relatively high."

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to find out the kinds of influence, exposure and access to online stories through mobile phones have on the literacy practices of 12- to 15-year-old children. In turn, the purpose was to evaluate the kinds of literacy and digital literacy practices 12 to 15-year-old children engage in in their home domains and what implications these literacy practices may have for school-based literacy practices.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To establish the kinds of digital technology and information systems affordances (internet facilities, tablets, books, magazines, newspapers, radios, TVs, video and computer games, etc.) in the homes of the selected children.
2. To examine the digital literacy practices of 12- to 15-year-old children living in informal settlements around Cape Town such as Philippi township and Khayelitsha township.
3. To investigate how exposure / access to online stories through mobile phones increase or add to children's storytelling resources and repertoires of 12- to 15-year-old children in informal settlements or townships in Cape Town.
4. To evaluate how the children respond to technology through medium of online stories.
5. To evaluate the potential implications of reading stories online for the children's literacy development.
6. To evaluate the relationship between the availability of digital technology and information systems affordances (books, magazines, newspapers, radios, TVs, video and computer games, etc.) in homes and literacy development of the children involved in the study.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What kind of digital technology and information systems affordances (internet facilities, tablets, books, magazines, newspapers, radios, TVs, video and computer games etc.) are found in the homes of the selected children?
2. What are the digital literacy practices of 12- to 15-year-old children living in informal settlements around Cape Town, such as Philippi Township and Khayelitsha Township?
3. How does access to online stories through mobile phones add to children's storytelling resources and literacy repertoires of 12 to 15-year-old children in informal settlements or townships in Cape Town?
4. How do children respond to technology through the medium of online stories?
5. What is the potential implications of reading stories online for the children's literacy development?
6. Is there a relationship between the availability of digital technology and information systems affordances (internet facilities, books, magazines, newspapers, radios, TVs, tablets, video and computer games etc.) in homes and literacy development of the children involved in the study?

1.7 RATIONALE

Many studies on digital literacy are based in the educational settings. Many scholars suggest that digital technology should be introduced in schools so as to assist those children who cannot access such technologies in their homes. Having access to digital technologies like computers helps broaden children's thinking capacity.

This research was influenced by the works of Shirley Brice Heath (1982). In her study, she made it clear that exposure to literacy practices helps children prepare for formal education. Like many townships in Cape Town, Khayelitsha and Philippi are faced with many social problems which include, high rates of crime, substance abuse, and lack of basic education. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to discover what literacy and digital literacy practices 12- to 15-year-old children engage in in their home domains, and what conclusions may be drawn from these engagements with regards to children's educational development.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter One of the study contains the introduction and provides background to the notion of literacy. It states the aims and objectives, the rationale, as well as the challenges motivating the desire for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter provides a comprehensive literature review on previous research relative to literacy events and practices, digital literacy, multimodality, and education.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodologies deployed in this research. This includes the research design, the research site, and the research sample and data collection. The advantages of the analytical tools and theoretical frameworks used in the research will also be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Evaluation of the material literacy artefacts in township homes

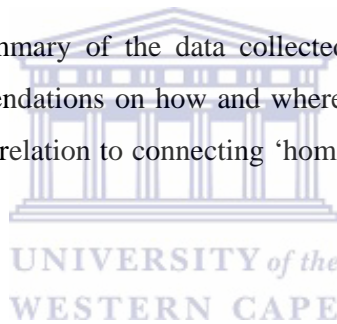
This chapter evaluates the kinds of material artefacts found in the homes such as TVs and radios, videos and computer games, and internet facilities, and how the children interact with these artefacts in terms of their literacy development.

Chapter 5: Multimodal and digital literacy practices and access to online stories

This chapter is on the multimodal and digital literacy practices that the children take part in, with a focus on mobile phones and online stories as literacy resource. The interest is on how exposure and access to online stories through mobile phones add to the selected children's storytelling resources and repertoires. Also of special interest is how the children transform content and meanings using multiple modes, and how this enhances their story telling resources and repertoires.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendation

This chapter gives a brief summary of the data collected, discusses the findings of the research, and outlines recommendations on how and where to improve in terms of literacy and digital literacy practices in relation to connecting 'home' and 'school' literacy practices in South Africa.



1.9 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the background and the rationale of the study. It further discussed the problem which underline the research and gave a brief background on the research sites. In addition, it presented the major aim of this research as well as the objectives to be investigated. The next chapter reviews literature on literacy and digital literacy and the impact they have on children's repertoires and resources.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter has focused on what the literature says in relation to literacy and digital literacy practices, and the impact these may have on children's literacy repertoires and resources. This chapter consists of two kinds of literature. There is literature to do with literacies, which includes analysing Autonomous versus Ideological models of literacy and digital literacies. The other literature has to do with theory and analytical issues. The topics that are discussed in this literature review include: *new literacy studies (NLS)-theoretical and analytical issues, Literacy as a social practice, Literacy in-out of school context, digital literacy - a matter of learning as a social practice, children's digital literacy practices / storytelling resources and repertoires, multimodality, and digital literacy practices.*

2.2 NEW LITERACY STUDIES (NLS): THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL ISSUES

2.2.1 Autonomous versus ideological models of literacy

According to Street (1988), the standard perspective in numerous fields, from schooling to formative projects, works from the suspicion that literacy in itself – autonomously - will have consequences for other social and intellectual practices. Street (1988) refers to the autonomous model of literacy as enhancing psychological aptitudes, and enhancing monetary prospects for illiterate and poor people that will make them better citizens, notwithstanding their social and financial conditions that represent their absence of education in any case. Street (1988) suggests that autonomous model of literacy camouflages the social and ideological presumptions that support it so that this model can be represented as “neutral and universal”, and that literacy itself will have an agreeable or approach effect.

On the other hand, the ideological model of literacy offers a more socially sensitive perspective of literacy practices as they fluctuate, starting with one context then onto the next (Street, 1988). This model differs from the autonomous model, as it asserts rather that literacy is a social practice, not just a specialized and neural aptitude that is constantly embedded in socially built epistemological principles. According to Street (1988: 2), this

model is about knowledge - “the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being”. Reading and writing are strongly embedded in the formulation of knowledge.

2.2.2 Literacy events and literacy practices

According to Schoeffel and Meleisea (1998: 280), “literacy has been, and often still is, perceived as an autonomous set of skills, but is gradually being seen as a social practice that can be explored through the observation and analysis of literacy events and practices situated in context.” Prinsloo and Bayham (2013) argue that literacy events are regularly portrayed by blends of text, talk, dissemination of action and turn-making in correspondence, and cooperation, and additionally incorporate movements of single reading and composing. Studies of everyday writing draw attention to the wide range of literacy practices which people participate in, and how these literacy practices serve a wide range of purposes in people’s lives. The notion of literacy practices in diverse settings endeavour to handle the occasions and the patterns of exercises around the occasions, but connects them to something more cultural and social.

2.2.3 The digital turn in New Literacy Studies

Mills (2010:2) argues that, “Literacy has become a process of commodification in which literate learning is entangled with commodities.” Kinder (1991), cited in Mills (2010), refers to this as a ‘transmedia intertextuality’ which refers to the mixing of interconnected texts across modes and media. Mills (2010) argues that children and youth today are experiencing childhood in an altogether different world than eras past. By this she is referring to the ways in which children nowadays are exposed to and able to use technologies such as tablets, computers, cell phones, etc. in their early childhood stages, even before they are able to use human language properly. Through these technologies, children are able to download educational applications, which could potentially enhance their literacy practices.

The knowledge economy in the new world order is vigorously dependent on innovations that help the flow of information. According to Mills (2010), the knowledge economy is a means to benefit efficiently and compete advantageously. As a result, the individuals who do not have the most up-to-date technological knowledge may get themselves weakened socially and economically, as others discover information faster, work viably and adaptably, and produce information, media and products that have worldwide impact (Mills, 2010).

2.2.4 Multimodal literacies and digital material affordances

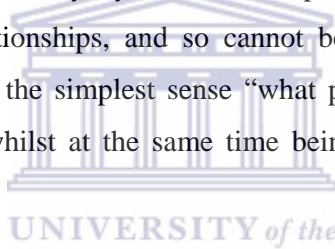
Aronin and Ó Laoire (2012: 3) define material culture as relating to “physical items, produced by humans as well as events and spaces interconnected by and with local and global mentality, culture, tradition and social life.” Traditionally, these include food, artworks, weapons, pots and traditional medicine found in homes and communities. However, the onset of digital technology and information systems means that materialities include television, radio, tablets, gaming equipment and mobile phones. From a social semiotic perspective, multimodal literacy can be said to refer to literacy abilities related to transmediation (Suhor 1984, cited in Mills 2010), which Mills (2010: 67) defines as “translating meanings across multiple modes.” This does not necessarily mean reproducing knowledge in a different mode; it involves people transforming content and meanings. As Mills (2010: 68) argues: even if a literacy task, at face, seems to involve the mere reproduction of knowledge (e.g. story retelling through drawings), the act of translating semiotic content via a different expression plane necessitates the transformation of meaning. For example, if the child’s drawing translates the meanings of words in an author’s book, or a child’s drawing plan of movie frames (storyboard) is used as the basis to create a digital film, there is never a mere reproduction. Rather the cross-channel of communication involves inventing connections and weaving between two or more different symbolic systems. In such communication practices children must choose from multimodal semiotic resources that do not have direct equivalence, thus inviting creativity and transformation.

It is therefore through transmediation that a multimodal approach to literacy practices, as used in the proposed study, differs from literacy practices that only involve spoken and written words. Therefore, my study made use of multimodal approaches to literacy to explicate how the children in the study use material culture of digital technology and information systems affordances (such as mobile devices and information obtained through social media sites) in their homes, and especially multimodal and digitally mediated modes of communication (Mills 2010: 88) for literacy purposes and development. In Uganda and South Africa, the kinds of material affordances (presence, books, radios, TVs, etc.) in homes have been associated with initial literacy success for learners (Banda 2003, 2004; Banda and Kirunda 2005). Therefore, in my data collection, I noted the kinds of material culture, digital technology and information systems in the homes of the participants.

2.3 LITERACY AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

This study was informed by the literacy as social practices approach. Literacy studies developed into a field of research in the early second half of the twentieth century from clashing perspectives on what literacy is, including claims and counter-claims about the part and significance of reading and writing in social advancement, industrialization and the rise of the west (Prinsloo and Baynham, 2013). Looking into social change, literacy is a continually advancing term that requires adaptability with respect to both educators and learners (Bisceglia, Mott and Oaks, 2013, cited in Mwale, 2014). According to Edwards (2012:3):

The term literacy practice is understood to mean the ways in which people use written language in their everyday lives. These practices involve values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships, and so cannot be simply defined as observable behaviours. They are in the simplest sense “what people do with literacy’ and are internal to individuals whilst at the same time being social processes that connect people with one another”

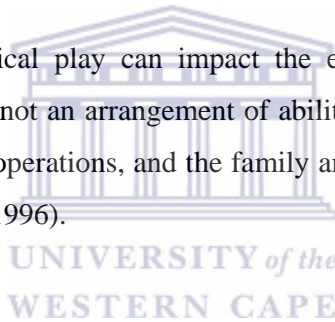


What has come to be termed the ‘new literacy studies’ speaks to the advances made in the understanding of what literacy is, which concentrates less on the procurement of abilities, as in prevailing methodologies, but instead on what it means to consider literacy as a social practice. Many scholars argue that the concept of literacy referring to the ability to read and write is limited and narrow. Instead, when looking at literacy as social practice, we focus on the fact that literacy is the thing that individuals do with reading, writing and messages in social settings and why they do it. According to Barton and Hamilton (2000), cited in Perry (2012), literacy practices are what individuals do with literacy. Literacy practices include more than just activities with texts; literacy practices join with, and are moulded by, qualities, states of mind, feelings, and social relations. Literacy practices are all the more conveniently comprehended as existing in the connections between individuals, with gatherings and groups rather than as an innate ability residing within people.

It is critical to comprehend education as being the relationship of learners to the world. That is, to gain literacy is more than a mental and mechanical rule of reading and writing methods. To be literate does not merely mean that you have to be able to read and write, but

you have to understand what you are reading, and you have to be able to write what you understand. There is no point in reading without comprehension because there is no knowledge gained from that, as well as writing what you understand because there is nothing to write if you do not have any understanding. “In defining literacy as reading both the word and the world”, Freire (2001) cited, in Perry (2012: 57), perceived that literacy is more than a subjective ability, in that it incorporates power connections. Banda (2003) states that it is about how individuals’ learning, personality and being impact the decisions they make between distinctive literacy practices and the way they collaborate around reading and writing. Socio-cultural scholars have a view that learning does not happen in separation. Learning relies upon the cooperation and shared procedures of participating in discourses and critical thinking. This demonstrates that literacy improvement is implanted in educational settings, as well as in wider socio-cultural environments and contexts where the children take part in distinctive practices out of school (Ntshuntshe, 2011).

Incorporating literacy into typical play can impact the early development of children’s literacy. Henceforth, literacy is not an arrangement of abilities that one gains, but instead is moulded by people’s social co-operations, and the family and home are obviously key areas for such engagements (Barton, 1996).



2.4 LITERACY IN OUT-OF -SCHOOL CONTEXTS

In line with the social practice approach, Spedding *et al.* (2007: 6) have argued that literacy develops in settings that provide resources and opportunities for children to become involved with its cultural tools. We might also add to that the linguistic resources and repertoires that children have access to. Children’s first literacy encounters are essentially in the home, the family, the community and early childhood education. Spedding *et al.* (2007) state that the advancement of literacy capability starts with children and their guardians, caregivers and families talking together, singing, reading, playing, and observing their general surroundings. Nowadays, children grow up in societies where they are surrounded by opportunities to improve the use of literacy skills. Children take an interest in a world in which there are “multiliteracies” (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000), a world in which their families and communities build specific methods for educated thinking and behaving, and value particular sorts of literacy.

2.5 CHILDREN'S DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES / STORYTELLING RESOURCES AND REPERTOIRES

Acts of literacy are constantly implanted in social practices of communication, in which individuals from a community try to build specific personalities, relationships, or valued activities and objects (Meyers, 1996). Reading and writing of various sorts are changing quickly in their uses and purposes, such as writing for the web, on computers and on mobile phones, on paper, at home, at work and for recreation (Prinsloo & Baynham, 2013). According to Walsh (2010: 212), "The increased accessibility and mobility of digital technology have rapidly changed the way we communicate and these changes intensify the need to clarify the relationship between literacy and technology". Presently, through the use of various multimedia devices such as cellular phones and computers, we have the capacity to instantly send and receive messages through various modes, and to combine these messages with content, photos, or videos. Walsh (2010) argues that children of today rapidly take in the scope of technology which permits them to multi-task with a variety of computerized media and portable innovation to surf the web, send an instant message or photograph to a companion, play a game while listening to music, or make their own multimedia texts through hybrid messages, for example, weblogs.

2.6 DIGITAL LITERACY - A MATTER OF LEARNING AS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

UNESCO, cited in Olsson and Edman-Stalbrat (2008), characterizes literacy as the capacity to recognize, comprehend, interpret, make, impart and process, and utilize printed and composed materials related to differing settings. Literacy involves the learning ability to achieve one's goals and to acquire the knowledge and potential needed to be able to play a role in the wider community. Scholars define digital literacies as different kinds of abilities which can be learned, whose objective is to master development or improvement in a communities of social practices.

2.7 DIGITAL LITERACY IN PRACTICE

To be digitally literate is to have access to an expansive range of practices and social assets which draw on the capacity to use computerized tools. It is the capacity to make, to represent and share meaning in diverse modes and arrangements; to collaborate, and communicate successfully and to see how and when computerized advances can best be utilized to support these procedures (Payton and Hague, 2010).

Gillen and Barton (2010) argue that digital literacy is an essential part of young people's lives in an increasingly digital society. Digital literacy helps them to take complete interest in social, cultural, economic and scholarly life, now and in the future. Being exposed to advanced devices does not make you digitally literate, but having the ability to utilize these devices makes you digitally literate. This is an important distinction, which will be addressed in the following chapters.

Digital literacy gives young people the capacity to exploit new developing opportunities, identifying with advanced innovation, and confronting / dealing with the obstacles that new innovation brings. Over the previous years, computerized advances have turned out to be central to mainstream culture, and cell phones in particular are ordinarily utilized by young people (Gillen and Barton, 2010). Both children and young people are connecting with computerized media and are utilizing distinctive advances, such as watching television, playing online games, listening to music and chatting online.

Children are progressively being exposed to innovation and media. According to Burnett (2010), young children's inclusion in digital literacy assists them with education improvement, e.g. nowadays, young children access the internet to get information for their school projects. Children can get applicable data from these new advancements, and add to what they know about what is occurring in their general surroundings. Children who are connecting with advanced technologies are more inventive and have the capacity to think outside the box.

Gillen and Barton (2010) suggest that digital innovation empowers children and young people to take a dynamic part in their education and in social, cultural, economic, political and scholarly life, furnishing them with the ability to work with others.

2.8 MULTIMODALITY

The term multimodality was introduced to highlight the significance of considering semiotics other than language being used, for example, picture, music, motion, etc. The expanded universality of sound, picture, and film through TV, the PC, and the web is without a doubt behind this new accentuation and enthusiasm for the multi-semiotic intricacy of the representations we deliver and see around us (Iedema, 2003).

Multimodal literacy refers to meaning-making that happens through the reading, review, comprehension, reacting to, and creating and associating with sight, sound and advanced writings. Multimodal literacy may incorporate oral and gestural methods of talking, listening and sensationalizing, and in addition writing, planning and creating such messages. The preparing of modes, for example, picture, words, sound and development inside of writings, can happen at the same time and is regularly firm and synchronous. Once in a while particular modes may command (Walsh, 2010). There are two important topics rising up out of emerging and current research into multimodal proficiency, and these contemplations have suggestions for classroom practices. The primary subject is the impact of the mechanical changes that are characteristic in reading and writing 'on screen', contrasted with reading and writing print-based writings. The second topic identifies the progressions that are happening in the social practices of education which have changed and extended exponentially with the advancement of Web 2.0 innovation.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), cited in Walsh (2010), suggest that multimodality, as a site of dispute among researchers, contests whether there is a difference between the processing of straightforward, traditional reading of print-based materials, and the processing of different modes of text (visual, digital or media). "Students of today quickly adapt to the navigation potential and the processing of different modes within digital texts" (Gee, 2003; Prensky, 2001, cited in Walsh, 2010: 212). The facilities of Web 2.0 have further changed the conceivable outcomes of students' written work or content creation.

While writing on screen has been around for quite some time due to the invention of word-processing tools, the term 'writing' today may include things such as illustrations, photos and formatting. Considering the differences between reading and writing onscreen and reading and writing in the traditional sense, it is quite a different matter separating onscreen reading and writing with the social processes that are associated with them. These practices

have changed and expanded exponentially with the advancement of Web 2.0 innovation (Walsh, 2010).

2.8.1 Multimodal digital Literacies and Education

Technology is an essential tool for children's educational development in the new South Africa. Many scholars believe that technology should have space in the classroom, as Perry (2012), cited in Merchant (2012:770), suggests:

Mobile learning and the literacies involved should play an important role in education. The role of digital literacy in education is to support the improvement of subject learning in the setting of a society in which information and meaning are progressively made and communicated through advancements, for example, the web. Children who are exposed to technology have better chances to perform well at school than those who are not exposed to any kind of digital literacy, because with all the technologies they are exposed to, they are presented with information that can better their studies.

As of late, the ideas of literacy events and practices have received impressive consideration in educational research and policy, especially in ethnographic research. The New Literacy Studies has championed the thought of literacy as a plural phenomenon including heterogeneous practices, writings and events (Esposito, Kebede and Maddox, 2012).

Merchant (2012) argues that teachers would benefit from students' everyday uses of technology and their learning with Web 2.0 innovations in and outside of classrooms. The children in this study explained that they liked their first encounters with reading stories online rather than reading from a hardcopy book. Reading online is different from reading from a hardcopy book and it was something new to them, and they found reading online more interesting. That means if the Web 2.0 innovations could actually be introduced in the education context, children could read more and engage in their school work with the help of the innovations and they could improve academically.

Children who are exposed to digital literacy both at school and at home are at an advantage in that they are able to access information and they are always informed about current issues happening around them and worldwide.

Digital literacy in the classroom can help them to expand and extend their use of technology for creativity and self-expression and to develop a greater understanding of the complexities of what they're doing (Payton & Hague, 2013: 8).

Education frameworks need to help young children to comprehend and benefit from their engagement with advanced innovation and computerized societies. Encouraging advanced literacy in the classroom gives one route in which to make subject learning relevant to a society in which developing innovation is changing the way that both grown-ups and children speak to and impart information and meaning and participate in social life (Payton & Hague, 2012).

Some children come from disadvantaged backgrounds and they do not have the privilege to be exposed to digital literacies such as laptops or computers, therefore the introduction of digital technologies in the education setting is an advantage to such children, because they get opportunities to benefit from what they cannot benefit from at home. Hence, the media literacy task force (2004) and Snyder (2001), quoted in Burnett (2010:2), argue that “educational contexts should provide children with opportunities to explore digital environments, and develop their critical evaluation of digital texts and critical participation in digital worlds.”

2.8.2 Multimodal Repertoires and Resources

Most young children growing up in poor communities usually have a handful of resources because of their background, they are usually exposed to different languages and varieties. This is because children from poor communities always experiment as they play. When talking about the notion of repertoires, Blommaert (2013: 453) refers to “a term used, but when it is used it often stands for a list of languages spoken by people.” The environment in which a child grows up in influences their linguistic repertoires in a sense that they will only speak what is spoken in their environment, because they are only exposed to that kind of

language, e.g. if they grow up in a black area where isiXhosa is the only medium of interaction, then they will also converse in the language that they hear is spoken by the people around them.

Most children build on their linguistic resources once they meet different people and go into a different environment. Once they start meeting different people, they are exposed to different languages and varieties which build on their own repertoires. E.g. a child is only exposed to their mother tongue language as toddlers and young children, but once they start attending formal schooling, they meet different people from different environments and are therefore exposed to different language varieties. Children can easily pick up on languages that are different from theirs, even if it is the same language but a different variety, and in that way they build up on their linguistic repertoires.

Blommaert (2013:446) argues that “in literacy-poor environments, infrastructural issues are obvious and crucial constraints on literacy achievements and the digital revolution has broadened the gap between various literacy economies in the world.” Most townships and rural areas in South Africa often have issues of poor infrastructure, and these areas are often characterised by lack of resources. Due to the lack of resources, literacy development is impossible to such areas. This factor is important because most children from informal settlements, townships and rural areas lack technological and linguistic resources, and the lack of these resources are an obstacle to their literacy and educational development. Therefore, the background an individual comes from has an influence on their linguistic repertoires, because they do not have enough resources to build on their linguistic resources.

2.9 CONNECTING COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL-BASED LITERACY PRACTICES

Considering the literature on practices and theories on literacy reviewed above, this research was, among others, particularly influenced by the works of Shirley Brice Heath (1982), *what no bedtime stories mean: Narrative skills at home and school*. In her study, she made it clear that exposure to literacy practices in the home domain helps children prepare for formal education. Heath draws on the notion of literacy events as occasions in which written language is vital to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive procedures

and strategies. Literacy events incorporate reading bedtime stories, and additionally written language on cereal boxes, TV promotions, and road signs that might currently be considered piece of children' linguistics landscapes. Heath additionally recognizes mainstream and non-mainstream "methods for taking" from books, noting that through the custom of bedtime stories, school-orientated guardians frequently mingle their children into initiation-reply-evaluation discussion/questioning sequences before the age of two years.

Of particular relevance to this study is Heath's (1982) description of literacy practices in three communities, in which the practices in one community appeared to prime and already introduce children to kinds of literacy practices found in schools before they reach the age of two years. Heath distinguishes between three communities. Maintown is a white-middle class community in which children are exposed to books, nursery rhymes, characters and they are asked book-related questions from as early as six months. Roadville is a white working-class community, in which Children are brought home from the hospital as babies to very stimulating environments with cloth books, brightly coloured, textured toys. Their home environments or surroundings allow them to learn by engaging with alphabets and number books and communication from parents. The main difference between Maintown and Roadville is that, "Roadville adults do not extend either the contents or the habits of literacy events beyond book reading" (Heath, 1982: 61). Lastly, Trackton is a working-class black community where adults do not sit and read with their children and there are no reading materials available for children, with the exception of Sunday school literature. Children in this community are often given child-friendly toys such as dolls and cars and are rarely given manipulative toys such as puzzles, blocks and books.

Given that children from Maintown come from a literate community, they enter kindergarten and primary school with a strong literacy foundation. Roadville children enter school with the similar background as those from Maintown, but with more of a focus on learning through conversations. Trackton children differ from the other two communities in that "they learn to talk as opposed to teach them how to talk" (Heath, 1982:57). Most of the Children in my study relate more into the Trackton community than in the other two communities in that they have less access to the kinds of literacy practices at home that prepare them for formal education.

2.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on what the literature says in relation to literacy and digital literacy practices, and the impact these may have on children's repertoires and resources. This chapter looked at two kinds of literature. Literature to do with literacies, which focused on the analysis of Autonomous versus Ideological models of literacy and digital literacies. The other kind of literature that was discussed in this chapter was literature to do with theory and analytical issues.

This literature review has attempted to cover the speculations that exist within literacy, digital literacy and mobile learning. It especially conceptualized the new literacy studies by locating it within of the domain of literacy as a social practice. The hypotheses of literacy as a social practice provided a comprehensive portrayal of the literacy and digital literacy practices found in the South African context. The following chapter will discuss how data was collected for this study with aims to answer the research questions.



CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents detailed information that explains the methodological procedure followed in the current study. The nature, the source and the size of data to be analysed are also presented. It further provides a detailed description of the procedures and methodological techniques used by the researcher to access and collect data. In addition, the procedures followed to process and analyse data are also presented in this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACHES

Henning (2004) defines methodology as the coherent gathering of techniques that supplement each other and that have the ability to fit to convey information and discoveries that will reflect the research question and suit the research topic. Kothari (2004) defines research methodology as an approach to systematically solve research problems. Research methodology might be comprehended as a study of understanding of research done systematically. In it, we think about the different advances that are for the most part received by a researcher in studying his research problem, alongside the rationale behind them.

This study made use of the two basic approaches to research: the qualitative and the quantitative research approaches. Creswell (2014) refers to qualitative research as an approach for examining and understanding the significance people or gatherings attribute to a social or human problem. The procedure of research includes rising questions and procedures, information commonly gathered in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general subjects, and the researcher making translations of the meaning of the data.

According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research is an approach for testing target speculations by looking at the relationship among factors. These factors can be measured, commonly on instruments, with the goal that numbered information can be examined utilizing statistical methods. Creswell (2014:4) argues that, "the main distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative)

rather than numbers (quantitative), or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions).”

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Leedy (1997:195), cited in Mafuwane (2012:68), “research design is a plan of study, providing the overall framework for collecting data.” MacMillan and Schumacher (2001), also cited in Mafuwane (2012), characterize research design as a plan for choosing subjects, research sites, and information gathering strategies to answer the research question(s). “Research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and execution, or implementation of the research strategy” (Durrheim, 2004:29, cited in Mafuwane, 2012:68).

Parahoo (2006) argues that the design selected for research ought to be the one most suited in order to accomplish a response to the proposed research question. Since this study was centred on the literacy practices of children in their home contexts, qualitative, quantitative and ethnographic methods were utilized. According to Burns and Grove (2009), qualitative research is an orderly, subjective way to deal with life experiences and give them meaning. Quantitative research deals with numbers and anything that is quantifiable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena and their connections (Leedy, 1993). Ethnographic methods, according to Prill-brett (2011), refer the study of the assorted variety of human societies in their specific social settings. Ethnographic methods include: observations, interviews, field notes and recordings.

The research design(s) used in this study are the comparative research design, descriptive research design, and observation studies. According to Mills *et al.* (2006), comparative research design is often used to look for similarities and differences between one or more variables, the similarities often apply to general theory, while the differences often apply to general processes across different contexts. Therefore, the comparative research design was utilized to compare how these different children from different townships and backgrounds respond to technology and their engagement with stories on mobile phones. I did a comparison on their literacy development based on reading material that they were exposed to in their home domains and the kind of learning support system they had in their homes.

Knupfer and McLellan (1988) define descriptive research design as a type of research that aims to identify the attributes of an observed situation or exploring relationships between two or more variables. Therefore, this research design was used to observe the children and the environments that they live in. According to Knupfer and McLellan (1988:1202), observational studies “are involved in both quantitative and qualitative methods. In this type of design, the researcher will try and maintain objectivity in accessing the behaviour being studied.” This research design was used to observe the children’s behaviour throughout the course of the study, especially when they read stories online on the mobile phone for the first time.

I have adapted an ethnographic approach for data collection. According to Papen (2005: 307), “Ethnography refers to close, in-depth examination of social activities as they occur in real life settings”. The ethnographic methods involved me spending time in their homes conducting interviews with their parents and/or caregivers, writing of field notes, and observations. According to Mwale (2014), interviews are essential when we cannot observe emotions and how individuals translate their general surroundings. Patton (1990) states that we interview individuals to find out from them those things we cannot straightforwardly observe such as things that occurred at some past point in life. The design also included a small intervention in the sense that I introduced the children and their families to the idea of reading stories on mobile phones and how this could provide a valuable home resource for engagement with literacy.

3.4 ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH METHODS

Brewer (2000) defines ethnography as a style of research instead of a solitary method, and uses an assortment of strategies to gather information. He defines this style of research as, “the study of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ by means of methods which capture their social meaning and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, in order to collect data in a systematic manner without meaning being imposed on them externally” (Brewer, 2000: 312). It includes the full engagement of the researcher in the everyday lives or culture of those under study.

Angrosino (2007), cited in Sangasubana (2011), argues that ethnography, as a method, has certain particular attributes. To begin with, it is conducted locally or in a naturalistic setting in which actual individuals live. Secondly, it is customized, since you as the researcher are both observer and participant in the lives of those individuals. Lastly, ethnography is dialogic, since conclusions and understandings shaped through it can be critiqued or criticised by the research participants.

According to Angrosino (2007), ethnography has three modes of data collection, namely: observation, interview, and archival research. These modes are discussed below. Given the ethnographic point of view embraced for this study, the method for information gathering that was utilized were interviews, observations, field notes, story writing and reading.

I made four visits to the homes of the participants. The first visit was to inform the primary caregivers of the children about the nature of the research. I handed out consent forms that the caregivers signed, and the information sheet stating the nature of the research, which contained my and my supervisor's contact details. On the second visit, the children wrote a story and thereafter read an online story through a mobile phone on the African storybook site and fundza stories. On the third visit, they wrote a second story. On the last visit, I conducted interviews with their caregivers. At each turn, (1) I looked at fluency in reading, that is, word and phrase recognition, translation into spoken words of pictures and other multimodal illustrative material in the stories; (2) I tested their comprehension of the stories (I asked the children general questions about the stories); (3) for the story writing component, I was interested in their narrative construction, organisational and logical development of themes and story lines, and use of multimodal illustrative materials; and (4) I was interested in how digital media (and the observed literacy artefacts) influenced the children's multimodal literacy practices. During the course of the visits, I also observed, and with permission, took photographs of material culture in the homes related to literacy such as digital technology/information systems such as television, iPad, video gaming machines and print material (books, magazines, newspapers, etc.) I also asked the children and caregivers to what purposes they use these digital technology/information systems.

3.4.1. Field notes

Over the course of the study, I made reflective notes of the considerable number of observations that I made. I recorded notes on every visit to their individual homes. Strydom (2001: 335) states that “in participant observation the gathering of data boils down to the actual observation and taking of field notes”. Field notes should comprise everything the researcher sees and hears. At first, this may appear to be uninteresting and exhausting, however, the researcher is unable to know at the start of the study what may be critical later on. Field notes should reflect an ordered portrayal of what happens in the setting and with the participants (Grinnell and Unrau, 2008, cited in Strydom, 2001).

3.4.2. Interviews with caregivers

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the primary caregivers of the children. The reason I conducted semi-structured interviews was because I was trying to get in-depth responses from my participants, but still wanted to maintain some sort of guiding structure which was necessary in order to come to a good conclusion. There is a clear advantage to the freedom of expression approach in semi-structured interviews. Interviews have many other advantages such as “participants can provide historical information and it also allows the researcher some control over the line of questioning” (Creswell, 2009: 179). The interviews I conducted focused on reading and writing habits of the children, the kinds of television programmes the children watch, their net-surfing and computer gaming habits, and so on.

However, the disadvantages of using semi-structured interviews are that, sometimes, when the responses are too diverse, it is difficult to come to some sort of conclusion. Bearing this in mind, I still nevertheless preferred this from a structured interview, because the structured interview may influence participants to respond in a particular manner rather than obtaining ‘raw’ responses where “the respondent is at liberty to formulate a reply as he wishes” (Corbetta, 2009: 126).

3.4.3. Observations

Observational data speak to a direct experience with the phenomenon of interest as opposed to a second-hand record of the world obtained from an interview (Merriam, 1998). Gravetter

and Forzano (2003), and Jackson (2003), all cited in Strydom (2001), state that through observations, a researcher can observe regular or genuine practices. “Participant observation may be regarded as a research procedure that is typical of the qualitative paradigm, which implies that data cannot really be reduced to figures” (Strydom, 2001: 329). I observed the children and the setting on every visit, and noted any changes in the children’s practices. I observed their everyday language practices after school, and observed the kind of literacy practices they are exposed to in their environment and their homes, such as daily newspapers, magazines, story books, etc. As noted above, I observed and took photographs of material culture related to digital technology/information systems. The idea was to see whether these technologies had a differential effect on the writing and reading (literacy) practices observed.

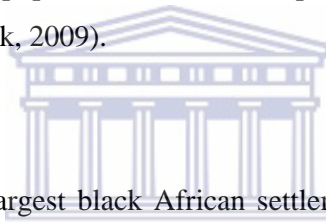
3.4.4. Story Writing and Reading

“The process of becoming a writer through learning, how to produce a text has been seen as both a cognitive and a cultural one, including knowledge of different genres and familiarity with the type of literacy event that takes place in the child’s community” (Kenner, 2003:89). The child’s surroundings offer particular imperatives and possibilities with regards to the act of composing texts. Together with the children, we read an online story on a mobile phone from the *African storybook site and Fundza stories*. I spent about 30 minutes to an hour with each child, reading and discussing the story. I allowed the children to choose the stories they wanted to read in whatever language they liked. I observed their writing and reading abilities, through which I looked at certain aspects such as their linguistic repertoires and the kind of resources they are exposed to that are influential to their writing and reading skills.

According to Kenner and Kress (2003: 105), “the process of becoming a writer through learning, and how to produce a text, has been seen as both a cognitive and a cultural process, including knowledge of different genres and familiarity with the type of literacy event that takes place in the child’s community”. Children learn writing through many ways; apart from being taught how to write by their educators, they learn how to write with what is presented to them in their communities and their surroundings as a whole. By merely seeing written posters hanging on the street walls, they learn how to read and how to compose their own texts.

3.5 RESEARCH SITES

Philippi is one of the largest townships in Cape Town. Like most black South African townships, the history and improvement of Philippi is connected to politically-sanctioned racial segregation approaches. The majority of residents in Philippi Township originated from the previous Ciskei and Transkei homelands and also settled in Nyanga, Langa, Gugulethu, and later in new squatter areas, for example, Crossroads, Browns Farm and Samora Machel. Philippi progressively turned into a place of shelter from the political clashes and violence in the previous homelands. Philippi's population consists of 94.37% black Africans, while 5.47% are coloured. The male population make up 50.953% of the Philippi population, while females make up 53.156% of the population. IsiXhosa speakers make up 91.13% of the Philippi population, and 5.61% speak Afrikaans (Adlard, 2009, cited in Anderson, Azari and Van Wyk, 2009).



Khayelitsha, perceived as the largest black African settlement in Cape Town, is officially home to more than 391 000 individuals. It is situated on the Cape Flats in the city of Cape Town. It is reputed to be the biggest and quickest developing township in South Africa. Khayelitsha was sanctioned due to the country's racial segregation laws. Plans to build Khayelitsha were declared by Dr Piet Koornhof in 1983, then Minister of Co-operation and Development. By 1985, the area, Site C, had 30 000 individuals residing there. The ethnic makeup of Khayelitsha is around 90.5% black African, 8.5% coloured, and 0.5% white, with Xhosa being the overwhelming dialect of the residents (Cole, 2013).

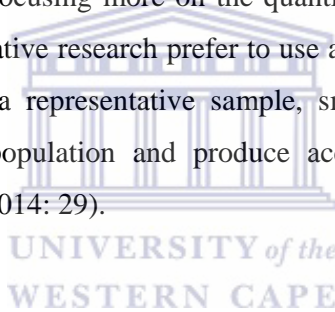
For this study, the data collection was conducted in Philippi and Khayelistha Townships, in the respective homes of the children.

3.6 RESEARCH SAMPLE

The participants used for this study were six 12- to 15-year-old children. Of the six participants, Thamsanqa (12, male), Asanda (13, female) and Ayanda (14, male) were from Khayelitsha, and Umpile (14, female), Luyanda (15, male) and Athandwa (12, female) were

from Philippi. For anonymity, I am using pseudonyms for participants. I chose this age range or group because at the age less than 12 years, especially in black families and communities, children do not usually have phones or access to phones because they are considered too young. In addition, the majority of parents in black townships are socioeconomically deprived and would rather use whatever income for food and other necessities than to buy a cell phone for a 10 year old child. After the age of 15 years, children become more independent and the story range was aimed at the age group between the ages of 12- 15 years.

Following other ethnographic studies on literacy practices such as Heath's (1982) and McCarthy (1997) that make use of not more than six participants, this study made use of six participants from different family settings in Philippi and Khayelitsha townships. The research methods used in this study are a combination of both the qualitative and the quantitative research methods focusing more on the quantitative method. Most researcher doing ethnographic and quantitative research prefer to use a small number of participants as their primary goal "is to get a representative sample, small number of individuals but representative of the bigger population and produce accurate generalization about the population" (Ishak and Bakar, 2014: 29).



3.7 MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF LITERACY MATERIAL AND AFFORDANCES

This study made use of multimodal literacy rather than multimodal discourse analysis. According to Walsh (2010: 213), multimodal literacy refers "to meaning-making that occurs through the reading, viewing, and understanding, responding to and producing and interacting with multimedia and digital texts." It might incorporate oral and gestural modes of talk, listening and performing, and in addition composing, outlining and producing texts. It involves a combination of various semiotic modes. Semiotic modes refer to texture, movement, graphics, colour, sounds, and verbal and nonverbal languages that contribute to the making of meaning (Ball and Charlton, 2014).

The children participating in this study emulated what Walsh (2010) referred to in her study as language and literacy practices (multimodal literacy) with print and digital texts. This involved the process of talking and listening, and reading and writing. Talking occurred

when the children responded to the digital story they had read. They read a story on the *Fundza* and *African story book* website via a mobile phone. I then discussed the story with each child. Reading entailed children being involved in shared, modelled and independent reading with various phonics, word recognition and vocabulary activities appropriate for their age. On-screen reading involved multisensory activities such as searching, viewing, browsing, and scrolling (Walsh, 2010). Writing involved all six children writing stories, a poem or a drawing after reading stories (which included pictures) from the *Fundza* and *African story book* website on a mobile phone. This process involved the children composing, planning and producing stories.

Some children expressed themselves better in drawing than writing, and some expressed themselves better in writing in their home language, IsiXhosa. Also, a few children preferred to read Xhosa stories and write their own stories in Xhosa, while some preferred to draw and write poems rather than writing stories.



3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When conducting any kind of research, it is of utmost importance that the interests of the participants taking part in one's research are a priority and are considered. These interests need to be protected whilst simultaneously taking the social and moral context into consideration. As Denscombe (2010: 59) highlights, "the research will be conducted in an honest, open and transparent manner as far as possible". This is highlighted because some researchers may want to overlook ethical concerns for the convenience and success of their research, thus influencing the outcome of their research.

Ethics refers to morals or values "by which individuals can judge their actions as right or wrong, good or bad; and social researchers are expected to conduct their research in an ethical manner" (Denscombe, 2010: 1). It is thus of utmost importance that researchers are ethical people who put their participants' interests first. Ethics may interfere or hinder one from getting suitable results and may stand in the way of "conducting worthwhile research" (Denscombe, 2010: 63). This is, however, the reality of any research environment. The protection of the interests of the participants may be "affected as a consequence of engaging in the research" (Denscombe, 2010: 63) even if unintended. Hence, their interests should

always be a priority by making sure that the research is conducted in a comfortable place where the participants do not feel any kind of discomfort.

This is achieved by the presence of informed consent, where the freedom of choice to participate is highlighted, where it is stated that the research is voluntarily and that the participant may withdraw from the research at any point in time, if any discomfort is felt. Information about the study and its purpose need to also be included in the study, and “the basis on which the participants has been selected to take part, the purpose for which the data will be used and the extent of the anonymity and confidentiality that can be assured” (Denscombe, 2010: 69). The voluntary nature of the research, together with written consent, are also of utmost importance. It is very important that the informed consent has adequate information, because too much information or too little information may misdirect the research, or may affect the interest level to participate in the research. Where vulnerable participants like children are concerned, it is important that their guardians / parents sign a letter of informed consent, to protect the children’s rights. The informed consent protects the participants’ anonymity and ensures confidentiality. The data obtained should not be disclosed to anyone not involved in the research project.

Taking the above into consideration, I ensured that all my participants did not feel obligated to take part, but allowed them room to decide for themselves. This was ensured by the presence of an informed consent that was signed by all those who wanted to participate voluntarily. In this case, since the children I was working with were under the age of 18 years, I obtained permission (in the form of informed consent) from their parents or guardians, who allowed their children to take part in the research.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter described the research design and methodological approach that underpin this study. The researcher adopted a mixed-methods approach by combining both qualitative and quantitative data. The chapter described the participants and material used as data sources. In addition, it explained how data was analysed. It also provided an overview of the ethical considerations followed in the study.

CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE MATERIAL OF THE LITERACY ARTEFACTS IN TOWNSHIPS AND HOMES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The data analysis for this study is divided into two chapters: the first chapter (Chapter four) is the critical evaluation of the material of literacy artefacts in townships and homes; and the second chapter (Chapter five) is the multimodal and digital literacy practices and access to online stories. These chapters display the discoveries of the study; they centre on the literacy and digital literacy practices that the six children from Philippi and Khayelitsha townships take part in, in their home spaces and their involvement with mobile phones.

This chapter evaluates the kinds of material artefacts found in the homes of the children such as televisions, radios, video and computers games, internet facilitations and how the children interact with them in terms of literacy development. The themes that are discussed in this chapter include: literacy practices at home, digital literacy practices, activities outside of the school context, and family literacy practices and involvement in children's educational development.



4.2 CONTEXTUALISING LITERACY

It is essential to describe the physical environment where literacy practices occur, because it gives the readers a sense of understanding as to what the writer is talking about. Because they already have a picture of the physical environment in mind, readers will be able to make the connection of what is being said and the physical environment in which it occurred. Below follows a detailed description of my initial visits to the research sites, Philippi and Khayelitsha.

The first time I went to Philippi Township, Vietnam to be specific, popularly known as Macasgavi, was with my cousin who is familiar with the place. He grew up there and as a result, he is well known, even by the so-called "ziikoli" (thugs). I was a bit scared as I was not used to the area and because of the high crime rate. At the same time, I felt safe with my cousin because I knew that no one, not even the so-called "ziikoli" would come near me. As

I walked, I observed things like the streets were no longer made of tar but were just pure gravel, and had a lot of potholes. There were a lot of people walking around, adults, school children and even small children around the ages of two years.

The houses are reconstruction and development programme (RDP) houses, some are formally extended into bigger houses, and all the houses had outside toilets just near the gate. The toilets are made of brick, a bit spacious, and just by the corner of the toilet door there is a built-in sink which is also very huge to a point that you can wash your clothes in it. There were shacks (for large / extended families and some for rental purposes) behind most of the RDP houses, if not all. On the street, there were the voices of street vendors selling fruit, vegetables and a whole range of snacks. Some have written signs advertising their products and services, some of which display what has been called ‘grassroots’ or ‘peripheral normativity’ literacy practices (Blommaert, Huysmans, Muyliaert and Dyers, 2005).



Figure 4. 1: Street Vending

On the other side of the street were old and broken-down cars, and a mechanic’s workshop, with the sounds of grinding and metal being hammered coming from it. Sewerage water (Figure 4.3) and a substance that may have been motor oil ran down the street (Figure 4.2).



Figure 4. 2: Car Oil Streaming in Street

Figure 4. 3: Sewerage Water Running on Street

I had mixed emotions of excitement and anxiety. I was excited that I was in a completely different environment and would be working with different children from different backgrounds. I felt like I was about to discover or learn something new. It was not just the smells of old ‘rusted’ oil and sewerage water that put my senses on edge, I was also overwhelmed by trepidation because of the high rate of crime in the area. Recent studies in linguistic/semiotic landscapes have indicated that in capturing the influence and effects of multimodal literacy practices in place, the focus should not only be on language, but more so on the multisensory (including sound and smell) aspects of space constituting the sense of place (Banda and Jimaima 2015; Peck and Banda 2014) at which the literacy practices are produced and consumed. Although I was with my cousin I did not feel safe, but nonetheless, that was not going to stop me. The three children I worked with lived in the same street, just a few houses apart from each other. I believed that that was going to make my research easier as I would not have to walk long distances from one child to the other.

Khayelitsha was the second township I visited. Like most townships in Cape Town, Khayelitsha is also one of the townships known for its high rate of crime. I have been to Khayelitsha before a few times, visiting some *tshisa nyamas* (*tshisa nyama* is a place in most townships where people can buy or barbeque meat). Khayelitsha is one of the biggest townships in South Africa, thus, I cannot say I am familiar with the place simply because I have been there a few times. This time, I had to go there alone. When I “first” went there (I am going to say “first” because the other few times do not really count), I observed that the number of shacks were more than the number of brick houses. Just like any other townships, there were vendors on the streets, selling vegetables and fruit (Figure 4. 4), African beer

(*Umqombothi*) (Figure 4. 5), Tripe (*Ulusu*) (Figure 4. 6), clothes (Figure 4. 7), and even barbequed meat.



Figure 4. 4: Fruit and Vegetables for sale

Figure 4. 5: Umqomobothi (African beer)



Figure 4. 6: Tripe (*Ulusu*) for sale

Figure 4. 7: Clothes for sale

There are carwashes, and playgrounds for children, which did not appear to be safe, as most of these were near the busiest roads, and accidents can easily happen.

When I visited Khayelitsha, I had the same feelings I had when I visited Philippi Township, because, as much as Philippi is not safe, Khayelitsha is not safe either, and being an outsider made it worse because one is exposed to danger more than the people residing in the area.

4.3 LITERACY PRACTICES AT HOME

“Literacy has been, and often still is, perceived as an autonomous set of skills, but is gradually being seen as a social practice that can be explored through the observation and analysis of literacy events and practices situated in context” (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1998: 280). According Prinsloo and Bayham (2013), literacy events are regularly portrayed through blends of text, talk, dissemination of action and turn-making in correspondence and cooperation, and additionally incorporate movements of reading and composing. Studies of everyday writing draw attention to the wide range of literacy practices which people participate in, and how these literacy practices serve a wide range of purposes in people’s lives.

For many years, numerous authors trusted that most children are taught to read and write in the school context through formal education. Marsh and Millard (2000) contend that this point of view has been tested by analysts interested in young children’s utilization of literacy inside of their home surroundings. This study demonstrates that children do not just obtain literacy through formal education, but additionally, and perhaps more importantly, through their regular home experiences (Banda 2004; Perry 2012; Banda 2017). It was clear that the children in this study, although living in socio-economically deprived communities as illustrated above, and coming from low-income families, and the fact that they are not exposed to the sorts of literacy practices that middleclass families are exposed to, their community surroundings still offer aspects of literacy. These are in the form of literacy material such as road signs, graffiti on the streets, and numbers on walls, etc. For example, while Thamsanqa and his younger siblings were walking with me to the taxi rank one afternoon, we approached a ‘stop’ sign, I heard them arguing about what the sign meant. Finally, Thamsanqa’s younger sister said to me “*teacher* (as they called me), *lento* (pointing at the stop sign) *means uba mazime iimotor nhe?*” [This means that cars must stop?]. Despite the fact that children may not know precisely what is written, they associate the written words as signs meaning ‘stop’. In light of the fact that they are acquainted with these aspects of literacy as they see them on a regular basis, even when they read ‘stop’ in a text at school, they will know what it means. This demonstrates that the acquisition of literacy is not just confined to educational contexts, but also in other socio-cultural environments such as the home and the streets, where the children take part in distinctive literacy practices.

The first visit I made in Khayelitsha was to Asanda's home. Asanda is a 13-year-old girl from Site C in Khayelitsha Township. She is in grade 7 at Kuyasa Primary School. She stays with her grandmother, mother, uncle, and her twin sisters. She lives in a two-bedroom house with a shack where her uncle sleeps. She sleeps next to her mother on the bed, while her younger twin sisters sleep on a mattress on the floor and her grandmother sleeps in the other room. Her home is very rich when it comes to literacy resources, during every visit I would find newspapers and magazines on the coffee table. Her grandmother loves reading newspapers so she buys them on a daily basis. Her mother buys them story books. Therefore, Asanda is exposed to many literacy resources at home. Not only is she exposed to literacy at home, but also in her community, as there are things such as numbers on the walls, shop names, graffiti and road signs.

I then visited Thamsanqa, who does not live far from Asanda's home. He is 12 years old and in Grade 6 at Kuyasa Primary School. He stays with his mother, both grandparents, aunts and his cousins. The family altogether consists of nine adults and eleven children. He lives in a two-room house with quite a number of shacks in the backyard where all his family stays. In the main house there is an open-plan kitchen and lounge and one bedroom where his grandparents sleep. He sleeps with his mother and younger sister in one of the shacks behind the main house and the other shacks are occupied by his aunts and their children (his cousins). Thamsanqa is an active child. He is involved in many activities at school and outside of school that have a direct or indirect impact on his literacy acquisition. At school, he plays hockey and soccer, and is involved in poetry and drama. Outside of school, he is part of an afterschool programme called Zukhanye -Children and Youth. The programme has drama and poetry lessons and offers different sports, and Thamsanqa is assisted with his schoolwork. The programme is designed to expose children to a range of activities such as sport, drama, and poetry, while at the same time offering academic assistance.

Thamsanqa has a very strong support system at home. Even though his mother is always at work and is not formally educated, Thamsanqa has cousins who are in university and in high school and they have made it clear to me during the interview that they made it their duty to make sure that they help their younger siblings with their homework, assignments and school projects. His mother and aunts always make sure that they provide all the necessary resources needed to help them excel in their studies. In an interview held with his aunt, she said that, *"thina singabazali asifundanga, kodwa bakhona abadala ababancedisao kwinto*

zeskolo” [we as the parents are uneducated, but the older siblings help the younger ones with their schoolwork]. She went on and said that *“uThamsanqa uyasithanda isikholo and uzimisele, and bendiciga nobathengela ilaptop yenzele bazokwazi ugooglish into zabo zesikolo*” [Thamsanqa loves school and is very dedicated, I was even thinking of buying them a laptop so that they can be able to access information needed for their schoolwork.] Despite the fact that Thamsanqa does not come from a wealthy family and that his parents are not educated, he still receives all the attention and support he needs and that his parents take his and his siblings’ education very seriously, to a point that they make sure that all the resources needed to help them achieve in school are available to them.

The last child I visited in Khayelitsha was Ayanda. He is a 14-year-old boy, also from Site C. He is in grade 7 at Masiphumele Primary School in Khayelitsha. He lives with his grandmother, mother, older sister and two younger sisters. He lives in a three-bedroom house. He shares a room and a bed with his mother, his sisters’ sleep in the other room, and the grandmother in the third one. Ayanda is not involved in any activities at school or his community, besides playing soccer with his friends. He does not have a very strong support system at home. His mother and older sister have little involvement in his education, and no one really helps him with his schoolwork. When I had an interview with his grandmother, I asked her who helps Ayanda with his homework. She said, *“akhomntu umncedisayo, uyazenzela ngokwakhe xa ebuya eskoleni, ufane ke ngalomaxesha xa kukho into angayaziyo alinde kubuye umama wakhe okanye u sister wakhe omdala emsebenzini amncedise*” [no one helps him with his homework, he does them by himself. Very seldom times when he does not understand something he waits for his mother or older sister to come back from work to help him]. A couple of times when I went to visit Ayanda at his home, I would find a lot of elderly people sitting on his veranda and in the lounge drinking alcohol and smoking. It looked like his grandmother was running a sheeben. In all the visits I made to Ayanda’s home, I never saw a single magazine or newspaper laying around. In the conversations I had with Ayanda, I asked him once whether he had any storybooks or just random books that he had at home, he replied, *“hayi andinazo*” [No I do not have]. When I asked him whether he ever went to the library to get or read books, he said, *“hayi*” [No], and when I asked him why not, he replied shyly, *“andazi, andinalo icard*” [I do not know, I do not have the library card]. His grandmother was there when this conversation took place, so I asked her why Ayanda does not have a library card. She said that, *“kufuneka kubekho umntu omdala uhamba ayomvulela, and umama wakhe no sister wakhe omdala basoloko bengekho*

besemsebenini” [there has to be an elder when he goes open the cards and his mother and older sister are always not around, as they are always at work]. Ayanda is not exposed to too much literacy at home, the only literacy he is exposed to is the literacy around his community of which it is not enough for his literacy development as a child. He is not given much attention and does not have as much support as he needs.

In Philippi, I first visited Athandwa. She is a 12-year-old girl who is in grade 6 at Hyacinth Primary School in Mitchell’s plain. She lives with both her parents and younger brother. Her home is a three-bedroom house. She has her own room and her younger brother shares a room with her parents. Athandwa is exposed to literacy at home as her parents bought her poetry and story books, and she sometimes goes to the library to go fetch books to read. Her mother is a housewife so she is always around to help Athandwa with her homework. She even has a smartphone with which she can access a lot of relevant information from the internet, but like any other child, she uses her phone for music, selfies and games. Athandwa likes writing poetry and stories, and she enjoys drawing as well.

I visited Luyanda who stays a few houses from Athandwa’s home. Luyanda is a 13-year-old boy and he is in grade 7 at Zanemfundo Primary School in Philippi Township. He lives with both his parents and older brother. He lives in a two-bedroom house with a shack at the back, where his older brother sleeps. He has his own bedroom inside the house while the other bedroom is occupied by his parents. Luyanda is exposed to very few literacy resources at home, but he often goes to the library to either read books or fetch them and read them at home. Most of the time he does his homework by himself and sometimes his mother helps him. His mother describes him as a child who is very dedicated in his schoolwork: *“uLuyanda wenza kakuhle eskolweni kwaye no teacher bakhe batsho njalo”* [Luyanda does well at school and his teachers say so too]. Luyanda has a smartphone, which he uses it as his calculator and also to access information for his school projects. He also uses it to download and play games, listen to music, download videos, and take pictures. Even though Luyanda is not really interested in poetry, his older brother is a poet, who writes and recites his own poems. At times, his mother would tell him stories, such as growing up stories.

Umpile stays just across from Luyanda’s home. She is a 12-year-old girl doing Grade 6 at Zanemfundo Primary School in Philippi. She lives with her grandmother, mother, two older siblings and three younger siblings. She enjoys writing love poems and likes reading. She often get books from Sunday school and she also has storybooks at home. Every Sunday

morning before she goes to church, she listens to Mhlobo wenene FM (*Mhlobo wenene fm* (92.1) is a radio station formally known as *Radio Transkei*, the main language used on this radio station is isiXhosa). She listens to Sis Thoz, who is a presenter of a Sunday school session every Sunday morning and her target market is children. She tells her listeners stories from the Bible and gives them homework which usually require the listeners to go and read certain Bible verses. Her grandmother, mother and older siblings often help Umpile with her homework. Her grandmother also enjoys telling growing up stories and fairy tales to her grandchildren. Umpile has a library card, therefore she often get books from the library and also from a programme she attends every Saturday. Every Saturday, from nine o'clock in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon, Umpile and her younger siblings attend a Khululeka programme at Zanemfundo. This programme ensures that children receive the best possible educational stimulation from an early age through their early childhood development (ECD) programmes, giving them a real hope for excelling in the future. She has access to her mother, grandmother and older sister's phones, but like most children, she mostly uses it to play games and sometimes uses it to access information for her school projects.

Since most of these children share rooms with their parents or siblings, there are no posters of alphabets or cartoons on the walls. In most houses there are family photos, graduation photos and parents' wedding photos on the walls and the room dividers. Despite the fact that none of the houses showed children particular treasured artefacts, the children's wealthiest wellspring of print is their neighbourhood surroundings, e.g. the graffiti on the walls, posters, numbers, road signs, etc. Their parental figures also tell them stories about the photos on the walls and dividers. This is similar to Heath's (1982) discoveries of the offspring of Trackton who were skilled narrators. Given that numerous children of Trackton do experience this extensive variety of literacy practices, rather than encountering broad story-book understanding, it would be basic and important to draw on these experiences once they go to nursery or school (Marsh & Millard, 2000).

Some parents in this study buy their children reading books. These are books that consist of poetry and random stories. In some homes, there are magazines that belong to the older siblings and parents, and some newspapers laying on the table. Below are the reading books that belong to some of the children in the study.

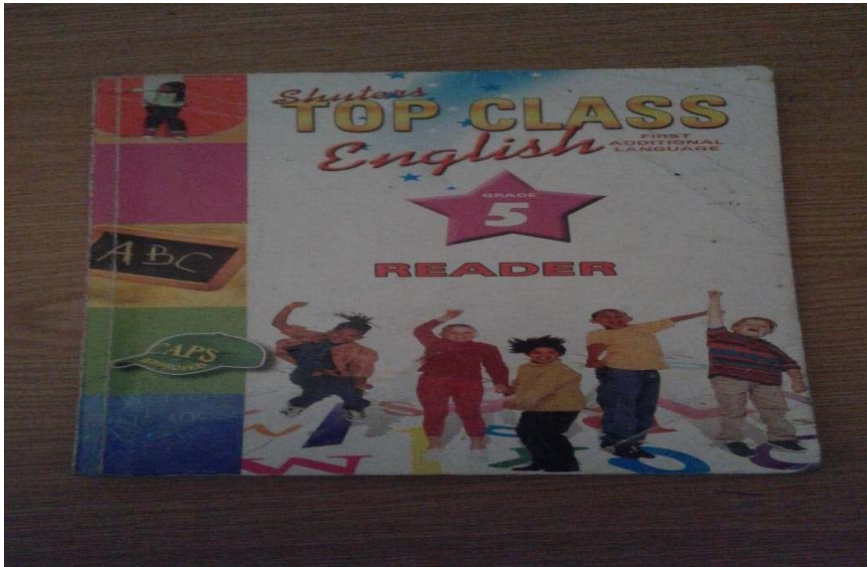


IMAGE 3.1. ASANDA'S READING MATERIAL

This Shuters (publishing company that is committed to providing educational needs) *Top class English reader* consist of poems, stories, plays, pictures and activities that children can engage in, especially in the school context. Asanda loves poems and stories, therefore she makes use of this book at home to read poems and stories to her younger siblings.



IMAGE 3.2. ATHANDWA'S READING MATERIAL

My Big Fat Zombie Goldfish is about Tom and a goldfish that his brother Mark, is using in a science project. Mark dunks Frankie the goldfish into toxic gunk, then Tom and Pradeep, another character, zap Frankie back to life. Then Frankie turns into a zombie goldfish and has his revenge on Tom.

The Story of Snow White and Other Tales is a combination of different stories/tales such as: Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Beauty and the Beast, The Little Gold Fish, The Princess and The Pea, Hansel and Gretel, The Wise Little Girl, and The Little Mermaid.

Who Made Me show the facts of life in their proper human context, based on the authors' own experience in answering questions their children have asked. It is written with frankness and humour enabling the inclusion of God, love, marriage and families to help explain what can be a complicated and potentially embarrassing subject. This book reveals the facts about sex, marriage, families and childbirth in a non-confrontational, easy-to-read way. It was made for children from the ages of 7+.

Anansi help 'n vriend (Anansi helps a friend) is about a spider called Anansi. Her children were not happy because the other children (monkey and rat's children) did not want to play with them. One particular day Anansi and her children helped snake and all the other children now wanted to play with Anansi's children.



IMAGE 3.3. UMPILE'S READING MATERIAL

The three Billy-Goats Gruff is a Norwegian fairy tale about three smart goats who outsmart a mean troll.

Short Stories for Young Readers is a book with composition of short stories.

Shane is a western novel written by Jack Schaefer. In this book Shane represents Schaefer's beliefs regarding what makes a man and what we should admire in people we consider heroes.

The Wheels On The Bus/ The Boat On The Waves is a book about a bus that keeps going round then the boat on the boat on the waves has a very up and down ride on the waves. They are both nursery rhymes.

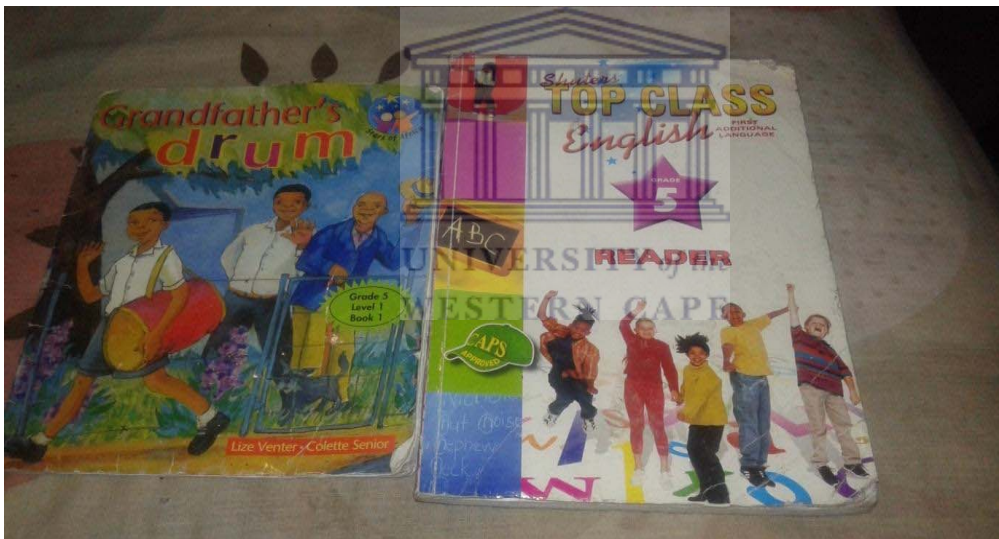


IMAGE 3.4. THAMSANQA'S READING MATERIAL

Grandfather's Drum is an English non-fiction children's book written by Vanessa Rowley Lesley Beake. The book is about a boy named Thabo, who took his grandmother's drum to school.

A home rich in literacy resources is imperative in the early years of adolescence (Tarelli & Stubbe, 2010). Children who are exposed to a rich literacy environment at a young age are likely to excel academically when they start attending school because of the rich literacy

background they were exposed to at an early age. Therefore, it is important that children are exposed to rich literacy. Take for instance Trackton Town and Roadville Town in Heath's (1982) study. The children from Trackton Town were not exposed to any kind of literacy practices while growing up, and as a result, that affected them when they started school. School was difficult for them, because everything was new to them due to the lack of exposure to books, reading or writing. The Roadville Town children, on the other hand, did not have any difficulties when they started school because books, reading and writing were not new to them. Just like the children in my study, some of them fall under the Trackton town category while some fall under the Roadville town category. Some of the children come from homes that are literacy rich, while some come from homes that are not surrounded by literacy which then has an impact in the way they perform at school. Therefore, it is important not to restrict or deprive children of literacy practices before they start school.

In almost all the visits I made to Asanda's home, I would find her younger siblings sitting in the lounge with their stationery and drawing books or with story books or sometimes even magazines or newspapers. These children come from a rich literacy background, their literacy events are not only confined to the school context but to the home context as well. Asanda's home is an example of what Heath (1982) refers to in her study, *What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school*, that children should be exposed to a rich literacy environment that will help them do well at school. Asanda's mother said that she was very pleased with Asanda and her siblings' performances at school. Their literacy practices at home have an influence in preparing them for school-based literacies.

4.4 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

Taking an interest in extracurricular exercises is critical in that it exposes children to different learning environments that are not accessible in the school and home contexts. According to Marsh (1992), children who participate in extracurricular activities benefit from both the experiences and the life lessons they learn during those extracurricular activities. Wilson (2009) argues that a youth who takes an interest in extracurricular activities adapts more at school and get basic thinking abilities. The participants in this study engage in different afterschool activities. These are activities such as drawing, poetry,

hockey, cricket and soccer. Thamsanqa participates in all of these activities, Ayanda and Luyanda are only involved in soccer, Athandwa and Umpile participate in drawing and poetry, while Asanda does not participate in any of these activities.

Every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, Thamsanqa go to *Zukhanye-Children and Youth* in Makhaza in Khayelitshah township to participate in afterschool activities. Zukhanye is a non-profit organisation which aims to expose youngsters to a positive way of life through community-based activities, as well as teaching them leadership skills, entrepreneurial skills through creative arts, and how to conquer social ills, such as HIV and Aids, violence, teenage pregnancy, unemployment, and discrimination against sexual orientation. Zukhanye offers activities such as the performing arts – poetry, story-telling, traditional and modern dance, and singing, as well as various sport codes, and aftercare, where children are assisted with their homework. These activities are offered as a means of keeping the youth off the streets, where they would otherwise be exposed to the negative aspects of community life, such as crime and drug abuse, amongst others.

One of the primary objectives of Zukhanye-Children and Youth includes an early childhood development programme to assist the development of learners in schools through tutoring programmes and mentorships, as well as invite parents' participation in the overall development of their children. The organization believes that the more parents are involved with their children's education, the greater the student's achievement will be.

These afterschool programmes expose the youth not only to social practices but also literacy practices, by engaging the youth in literacy events such as reading and reciting stories, poems and plays. By encouraging the youth to build on their verbal abilities and their imagination. For example, Thamsanqa is an outspoken child, and he is able to express himself fully; on the other hand, Ayanda, who is not involved in any kind of afterschool activities (besides soccer) is very shy and finds it very hard to express his feelings. Zukhanye not only offers them various programmes to keep them busy both academically and physically, but also helps them to socialise and build confidence. Thamsanqa is able to meet and interact with different people. This programme enables him to visit different places around Cape Town such as the Waterfront and Ratanga Junction that he would otherwise not be able to afford had he not been part of the programme. Through this programme, he is exposed to different environments different from his own and he experience new things. Thamsanqa has gained the support of the grown-ups who encourage

this programme, and this encouragement allows him to perform well and to be good example to the other children. Thamsanqa was awarded a certificate in the programme for drama, and he is also planning on acting out a story which he had recently read for his class.



IMAGE 4.1. CERTIFICATE AWARDED TO THAMSANQA FOR DRAMA



Umpile and her siblings attend the Khululeka Programme in Philippi, which is about creating a positive environment and ensures that children receive the best possible educational stimulation from an early age, giving them a real hope for excelling in the future. Khululeka’s vision is to provide a safe world where children grow up with a belief in the future and the possibility to influence their own lives. Its role is to provide a sanctuary where children have the opportunity to develop their self-esteem, ambition and belief in the future. Its mission is to give children and youth better opportunities in life through a meaningful spare time, it creates opportunities for vulnerable children and youth by strengthening their personal and social development.

Umpile’s grandmother finds the programme very helpful and says that it plays a huge role in her grandchildren’s educational development, especially to Umpile’s younger siblings: *“umzukulwana wam [referring to Umpile’s sister] uyakwazi ubala, uyakwazi ubhala igama lakhe kwaye akoyiki uma phambi kwe class yakhe abalise amabali. Inqondo yakhe iyasebenza and uclever. Kuluvuyo ubona uba ukhulule ekhuleka”* [My granddaughter

[Referring to Umpile's younger sister] knows how to count, she can write her own name and she is confident to stand in front of her class and tell stories. Her mind is really working and she is so clever. I'm really proud to see how much she has developed at Khululeka.]

Asanda is not involved in any extramural activities. Despite the fact that she performs well academically, this is worrying, since taking an interest in social exercises is crucial for social improvement. Asanda does not appear to be shy, but she is an introvert and only speaks when spoken to. When Asanda was asked what she likes doing, she said, "*I like writing stories*" and due to this, her mother considers her a bookworm.

When Asanda was asked why she does not attend the Zukhanye-Children and Youth programme, she replied, "*My mother did not register me for the programme*". On the other hand, Asanda's mother had this to say, "*uAsanda wayengenamdla woyo attenda eza programmes zase Zukhanye zase afterschool, inqina nda registerisha oosister bakhe aba bancinci kuphela*" [Asanda was never interested to attend the Zukhanye children and youth afterschool programme, and as a matter of fact I only registered her younger twin sisters.] Asanda's mother feels that her child is brilliant and loves her books, yet at the same time, she has a desire for her child to meet new people in order to conquer her introverted personality. Asanda, however, appeared very confident during my visits and the conversations we engaged in. She not only answered questions, she initiated conversations in fluent English and in full complete sentences. This was different with Ayanda, who was very shy and only answered with one-word answers when asked a question and then kept quiet.

What can be drawn from the above data is that extracurricular activities are a crucial component in every child's life as they have an impact in helping them to develop and grow mentally and perform well or improve academically at school. Being involved in extracurricular activities does not only help the child improve academically, but also encourages positive behaviour as they enjoy positive interactions with their peers and encourage proper conduct and social interaction during these activities.

4.5 FAMILY LITERACY PRACTICES AND INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The family is a vital part of the child's educational advancement. There have been studies which have studied the extensive variety of literacy practices embraced by families with different socio-economic statuses (Heath, 1982; Purcell-Gates, 1991). According to Compton-Lilly (2000), Lareau (1989), and Moll and Greenberg (1990), there have likewise been various studies outlining the amount of time and effort that lower-salary families spend on helping their children in school. Some families can support their children financially and fail to be there for them academically, while other families fail to provide for their children financially but be there for them in whatever way they can academically. Hence, Allington and Cunningham (2007) state that families do vary widely in the kind of support they can provide.

Thamsanqa lives in a one-room house with a few shacks in the backyard. Regardless of the sprawling family, he is still able to get educational support from his family. Since Thamsanqa's family is very large, he receives all the help he needs from his older sister and cousins who are in high school and college. Thamsanqa's aunt sees it as an advantage that there are many children in the house under one roof: *“aba badala bancedisa abancininci nge homeworks zabo, ingakhulu kwi maths ne English”* [The older children help the younger ones with their homeworks, especially in Maths and English.] Not only do the siblings help with homework or areas of academic struggle, but they also read and tell stories to them: *“andifun'xoka shame, asibabaliseli or sibaxelele amabali. Aba bantwana badala base high school ngabo ababafundelayo nabababalisela amabali, ngamanye amaxesha xa bengaxakekanga baye babaliselani ngezinto ababezibukela abanye anangazange bazibukela. Kodwa thina singabazali asibafundeli okanye sibabalisele iintsomi”* [I do not want to lie we don't tell or read stories to them [referring to them as parents] the older siblings that are in high school tell and read to them, and sometimes when they are not busy they would tell what they have watched that others never watched, but we as parents do not read stories to them or tell them bedtime stories.] Based on this quote, it is clear that the older siblings provide academic support to their younger siblings, and since the adults in the family are not formally educated, the older children make it their duty to help the younger children with whatever academic needs they have.

This is proof that a strong family environment can play a part in educational advancement, as indicated in Heath's (1982) study which demonstrated that, despite the fact that the children in the Trackton group did not have the fundamental literacy skills for formal education, they had rich associations with grown-ups who encompassed those literacy skills.

As for Ayanda, he does not receive enough attention at home. When he was asked who helps him with his homework, he responded, "*akhonmtu undincedisayo, ndizenzela ngokwam okanye ngamanye amaxesha usisi wam andicedise xa ebuya emsebenzini*" [No one helps me, I do my homework by myself, but my sister helps me sometimes after work.] Even his grandmother agreed with him when she was interviewed: "*uAyanda usenzela ngokwakhe umsebenzi wesikolo, usisi wakhe ufane amcedise ngalomaxesha*" [Ayanda does his homework by himself, his sister rarely helps him.] On many occasions when I visited Ayanda, I would find older people sitting on the veranda and some inside the house drinking and smoking, therefore, in such conditions, Ayanda would not be able to get adequate attention.

Thamsanqa and Ayanda demonstrated the significance of the family's contribution to a child's education. Despite the fact that Thamsanqa originates from an impoverished family, his more established siblings offer him with some assistance with his schoolwork. This is fairly distinctive from Ayanda and Luyanda who do not get help at all or need to wait for their older siblings or mother to return from work. Asanda receives academic help from her mother who ensures that Asanda does her homework first thing after school before going outside to play with other children. As for Umpile, her situation is similar to Thamsanqa's situation. She has a lot of older siblings who are in college, who help her with all her assignments. Her grandmother and mother also provide her with assistance when her siblings are not around. Both Athandwa's parents are involved in her education, as they are the ones who help with her homework.

The data is clear that the family's role cannot be overlooked when considering how children perform academically and socially. The family involvement in children's educational development and advancement is very crucial, hence it is encouraged that parents or family members become involved in their children's educational advancement.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has described the kinds of material artefacts found in the homes and the communities of the children, and how the children interact with these material artefacts with regards to literacy development. The themes that were discussed in this chapter included: literacy practices at home, digital literacy practices, educational activities outside of the school context, and family literacy practices and involvement in children's educational development.

This chapter displayed that family is a vital part of the child's educational development. It denoted that children do not just obtain education through formal education, but perhaps more importantly, through their regular home experiences. Extracurricular activities are basic in that they give children enhanced learning experiences that are not available in the school and home settings, hence, it is important that children take part in extracurricular activities so that they can gain social skills.

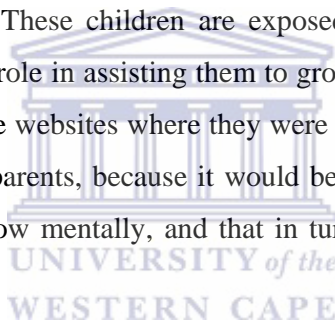


CHAPTER 5: MULTIMODAL AND DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES AND ACCESS TO ONLINE STORIES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the multimodal and digital literacy practices that the children take part in, focusing on mobile phones and online stories as literacy resources. The interest is on how exposure and access to online stories through mobile phones add to the selected children's storytelling resources and repertoires. Also of special interest is how the children transform content and meaning using multiple modes, and how this enhances their storytelling resources and repertoires.

The previous chapter dealt with the material of literacy artefacts in townships and homes of the selected children. The focus of the chapter was on their literacy resources and practices outside of the school context. These children are exposed to digital resources and these resources can play a very huge role in assisting them to grow academically, hence, I felt the need to introduce them to online websites where they were able to access material resources with the help of caregivers or parents, because it would be a great platform for them to be able to gain knowledge and grow mentally, and that in turn has a positive impact in their educational development.

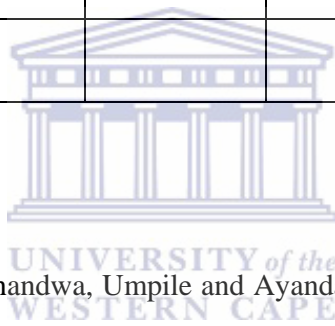


5.2 DIGITAL LITERACY PRACTICES

Blanchard and Moore (2010), cited in Mwale (2014), contend that most young children in developed nations live in media-organized homes, schools and communities. Digital literacy is an essential entitlement for all young children in an increasingly digital world. Children from wealthy families frequently have full access to innovative devices and the internet from an early age, and are profoundly more creative, innovative and media proficient when they enter school. Children from lower-income families might have little to no access to digital innovations in either their homes or schools (NAEYC, 2012). The six children in this study come from disadvantaged homes. Their access to digital and media technologies includes only the radio, television and cell phone. Be that as it may, because of their diverse circumstances, access to these assets varies with every child. The following is a table that demonstrates the children's access to these assets.

TABLE 2.1. SUMMARY OF ACCESS TO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES	ATHANDWA	LUYANDA	UMPIL	AS	AY	THAM
Television	X	X	X	X	X	
Radio	X		X	X	X	
Cell phone	X	X	X	X	X	X
Computer/Laptop						



In table 2.1 above, Asanda, Athandwa, Umpile and Ayanda have access to the same digital resources. However, having literacy resources and interacting with artefacts that require reading and writing or oral-aural-visual literacy does not mean one uses them for literacy practices, but the resources may give them an advantage over children who are not exposed to them (Banda, 2004; Banda and Kirunda, 2005). In what follows, I discussed the kinds of literacies and literacy artefacts the children are exposed to, as a way to determine the kind of literacies that are in place in their respective homes.

Asanda hardly watches television. When asked which programmes she does watch, she responded: “*My favourite TV programmes is Hectic Nine 9* (Hectic Nine-9 is the revolutionary, daily magazine show for teens on SABC 2, which airs weekdays from 4.00pm to 5.00pm Hn9, as it’s known, is where the worlds of TV and teens collide, where their opinions matter), *Muvhango* [is a popular South African television series, created, written and produced by Duma Ka-Ndlovu. Duma is Zulu by birth, but can speak and is fluent in all South African Languages. Muvhango was the first Tshivenda language TV drama, but later became multilingual in order to showcase that languages and cultures of South Africa should

be used to unite all South African people rather than dividing them] *and Uzalo*”[Uzalo tells the story of two affluent families in the township of Kwa-Mashu: the Mdletshe family which presides over the Kwamashu Kingdom Church and the Xulu family that runs a car theft syndicate. The two families are connected by the fact that their eldest sons were switched at birth during the period when Nelson Mandela was released from prison. *Uzalo* is written by playwright-producer Duma Ndlovu and is produced by Gugulethu Ncube and Pepsi Pokane. The drama is in isiZulu.]

Asanda is not interested in any educational programmes such as *Takalani Sesame* as she believes such programmes are too childish for her. [*Takalani Sesame* is the South African adaptation of the internationally acclaimed children’s educational media programme. Inspired to be a distinctly South African television, radio, digital (online and mobile), and community outreach programme; *Takalani Sesame* has been designed to support the reception year of South Africa’s national primary school curriculum. It promote literacy, numeracy and basic life skills. *Takalani Sesame* endeavours to incorporate all of South Africa’s 11 official languages into the project’s various components]; “*Takalani ngowabantwana abancnci, not for abantwana abangangam, only my sisters watch Takalani*” (she points to her younger twin sisters, seated on a couch opposite us). [Takalani is for small children not for children my age, only my sisters watch Takalani]. Not only does she hardly watch television, but she does not listen to the radio at all. When her grandmother is listening to the radio, she pays no attention to what is being said on the radio. Asanda’s grandmother explains that the one thing Asanda would rather do is her schoolwork. “*uAsanda uyazithanda iincwadi zakhe kakhulu; akakuthandi udlala nabanye abantwana. Oko xa eyodlala phandle, uphuma nje imizuzwana emibalwa aphinde abuye ajongane neencwadi zakhe.*” [Asanda likes her books very much; she does not even like playing with other children. Every time when she goes outside to play she would play for few minutes and come back and be busy with her book.] Asanda’s favourite subject at school is maths; when asked why she loves maths, she, “*Because I want to be a doctor one day.*”

Thamsanqa has access to a cellphone in his home. Even though he says he enjoys watching cartoons and the soapies such as *Muvhango* and *Skeem Saam* [*Skeem Saam* mostly revolves around the township by the name ‘Turfloop’], there is no television in his home. When asked where he watches these programmes, his response was, “*bendidla ngozibukela kwi TV*

yasekhaya before ibolwekwe” [I used to watch them on our television before someone borrowed it].

Ayanda hardly listens to the radio, and he only listens when music is playing (different genres in English and isiXhosa), he enjoys watching TV, and his favourite programmes are *Cool Cat* [Cool Catz is a funky, fun studio based show it embraces the energetic imaginative world of pre-school audiences. it entertains, excites stimulates and motivates them to enter into the magical world of Cool Catz] and *YOTV* [Mzansi’s premium and long standing teen variety show, the live show has games such as battle station, let’s get quizzical and the popular talk show Blue Couch. There are give-away prizes, crazy games, fabulous celebrities and fantastic surprises]. Ayanda’s grandmother added that, “*uAyanda uyakuthanda nobukela iwerstling, akava nangendlebe xa ebukele yona*” [Ayanda also likes watching wrestling (Wrestling is a battle sport including hooking type techniques, such as clinch battling, tosses and takedowns, joint locks, pins and other grappling holds. The game can either be showy for entertainment, or fairly competitive), he does not even hear with his ears when he is watching it.]

Athandwa does not listen to the radio at all. She watches cartoon, movies, *Generations the Legacy* [Generations the Legacy, is about stimulating a conversation on the transfer of wealth, knowledge and culture. Successive generations in African society have produced men and women of great intelligence, vision and the drive for excellence. For a variety of reasons -some no doubt related to our painful past, our development as a people has been stymied. Generations The Legacy in its own way addresses this issue -not in a didactic manner but in interesting narratives] and *Isibaya* [Isibaya depicts the battle for wealth and power between the Zungus and the Ndlovus, two rival families living in Thukela Valley. The bitter feud between the two powerful families continues in Egoli, the city of gold, where the Zungus seek to build their fortune] on the television. She loves drawing, and writing stories and poems. She hardly goes outside to play with other children. Athandwa’s mother had this to say about her daughter: “*uAthandwa uyathanda uhlala endlini ezoba, she is full of surprises, uyahamba ayodlala xa enomdla*” [Athandwa likes staying indoors drawing, she is full of surprises, and she only goes to play when she feels like it]. Athandwa enjoys maths and says it is her favourite subject, “maths is my favourite subject, I love it because it helps me understand numbers and I also enjoy it because I want to be a doctor.”

Luyanda enjoys watching *Uzalo* and *YOTV* on the television, but he does not listen to the radio at all. He enjoys English and says it is his favourite school subject. “*Ndithanda ienglish ngoba kulula ufunda amagama and ndiyayonwabela*” [I love English because the words are easy and I enjoy reading.] He usually goes to the library because that is the only way he can find storybooks to read. He does not take books with him to read at home. He only reads them at the library. He wants to be a lawyer when he grows up. His mother says that, “*uLuyanda wohlukile kwabanye abantwana ngoba akathandi ukuthetha usoloko serious, uthanda ubukela iTV and usoloko ebusy edlala ngala phone yakhe*” [Luyanda is different from his older sibling because he is uptight and does not talk too much, if he is not watching TV he is busy playing with his phone.]

Umpile listens to the radio on Sundays before church. “*I listen to umhlobo wenene, sis Thoz, she talks about the Bible and give out homeworks.*” She enjoys reading, and she often obtains books from Sunday school, and she likes writing poems as well. After school, she watches TV. “*Ndibukela imovies ku loksin bioskop, cartoons, YOTV and hectic nine 9.*” [I watch movies on Lokshin Bioskop, *cartoons, YOTV and hectic nine 9.*] (Lokshin Bioskop is a channel on DSTV that plays original *kasi* movies, locally made movies and stories from all around Africa).”

A few of these children watch and enjoy educational programmes like *Hectic Nine 9*, *YOTV*, *Cool Catz*, etc. while others find these educational programmes childish and uninteresting.

Out of all six children in this study, only two of them have their own cell phones; most of them use their parents’, siblings’ or guardians’ mobile phones for whatever purpose. When Asanda’s grandmother was interviewed, she mentioned that Asanda has access to her mother’s and her grandmother’s phones of which she uses them for educational purposes: “*ngaphandle kothumela iimiyalezo kumalume or kutata wakhe, uAsanda usebenzisa uphone yam okanye ek mama wakhe for inzinto ezifana no google xa esenza umsebenzi wakhe weskolo.*” [Besides sending messages to her uncle or father, Asanda also uses either my cell phone [grandmother] or her mother’s phone to access Google when she is doing her school projects.] Therefore, Asanda uses her mother or grandmother’s phone for educational purposes compared to most children who prefer to play games when they lay hands on a phone.

Ayanda does not have a phone of his own, but has access to his older sister and aunt's phone. He uses a phone to play games and listen to music. Thamsanqa also has access to his mother's phone. When Thamsanqa's aunt was interviewed, she mentioned that Thamsanqa likes playing games on the phone. "*uThamsanqa uykuthanda udlala igames especially ualphabet*" [Thamsanqa likes playing games, especially alphabet] [alphabet is a word game, more like word search, it is one of the educational games invented especially for young children]. According to Thamsanqa's aunt, Thamsanqa also uses a phone to access Google for educational purposes, just like Asanda. Thamsanqa's aunt mentioned that she wanted to buy a laptop that the children can use so that they can access information. "*ewe, bendisthi kunina kaThamsanqa ndifuna ubathengela ilaptop so that abantwana bakwazi ukufumani iinformation abayidingayo for umsebenzi wabo wesikolo. And azikho duru shame*" [Yes, I was saying to Thamsanqa's mother I want to buy a laptop so that the children can access all the information they want for their schoolwork. And they are not expensive (referring to a laptop.)] Thamsanqa's aunt is very concerned about the educational development of her children and her nephews and nieces.

Luyanda has his own phone, and says he play games, and downloads music and videos. "*I also read a Bible online.*" His mother also mentioned that he likes going to church. "*uLuyanda ngumntana olungileyo ongathandiyo ukudlala. Uyakuthanda uya ecaweni nasesikolweni.*" [Luyanda is a good child who does not like playing. He likes going to church and school.]

Umpile has access to her grandmother's phone, her mother's phone and her older sister's phone. When her grandmother was interviewed, she said, "*uUmpile uyakuthanda ukudlala iigames ephonini*" [Umpile loves playing games on the phone.] Umpile also confirmed that she plays games on the phone, and that she never thinks of reading stories online.

Athandwa also has her own phone. However, like the other children in this study, she uses her phone for games and taking pictures. When her mother was interviewed, she mentioned that, "*uUmpile udlala iigames ephonini yakhe and uphonela iicousins, nomalume bakhe okanye umakhulu no tamkhulu bakhe.*" [Umpile play games on her phone and also call her extended family and grandparents.]

What can be drawn from the above finding is that, even though children may be exposed to certain digital literacy resources without the supervision or involvement of an elder or

caregiver, they still may not be able to use them in the manner that will benefit them. Take for instance, all the children in this study have access to a mobile phone, but only two of them actually use the mobile phone to access information that will be helpful to them. Most of them rather play games and download videos than access information that is beneficial to them and will help them do well in their studies. This is why it is important that parents/caregivers are involved in their children's educational development.

5.3 CHILDREN'S RESOURCES AND REPERTOIRES

According to Heath (1983), Street (1995), and Collins and Blot (2003), cited in Blommaert (2013:441), "new literacy studies have, since the 1980s, broken ground in identifying writing and reading as sociolinguistic-ally sensitive areas of practice and the emerging ethnography of writing has demonstrated the complexities of writing practices as embedded in specific social and cultural contexts." More recently, inquiries into new digital literacies and into linguistic landscapes have invited an increasingly sophisticated view of written language as a complex of practices as well as a semiotic object.

Blommaert (2013) states that a critical component of composing texts revolves around the ability to draw, plan and arrange visual images in a controlled way. Words can be written in several ways and some children may find it difficult to express themselves in words. As a result, they express themselves through drawing. In this study, Ayanda found it difficult to express himself through words and through writing, but expressed himself better through drawing. Even when he was asked to write a story, he could not, he first did some drawing (figure 5.3.2) and later wrote a story about his soccer games with his friends (5.3.8).

Below are all the stories (and drawings) the children wrote before and after reading the stories they read online.

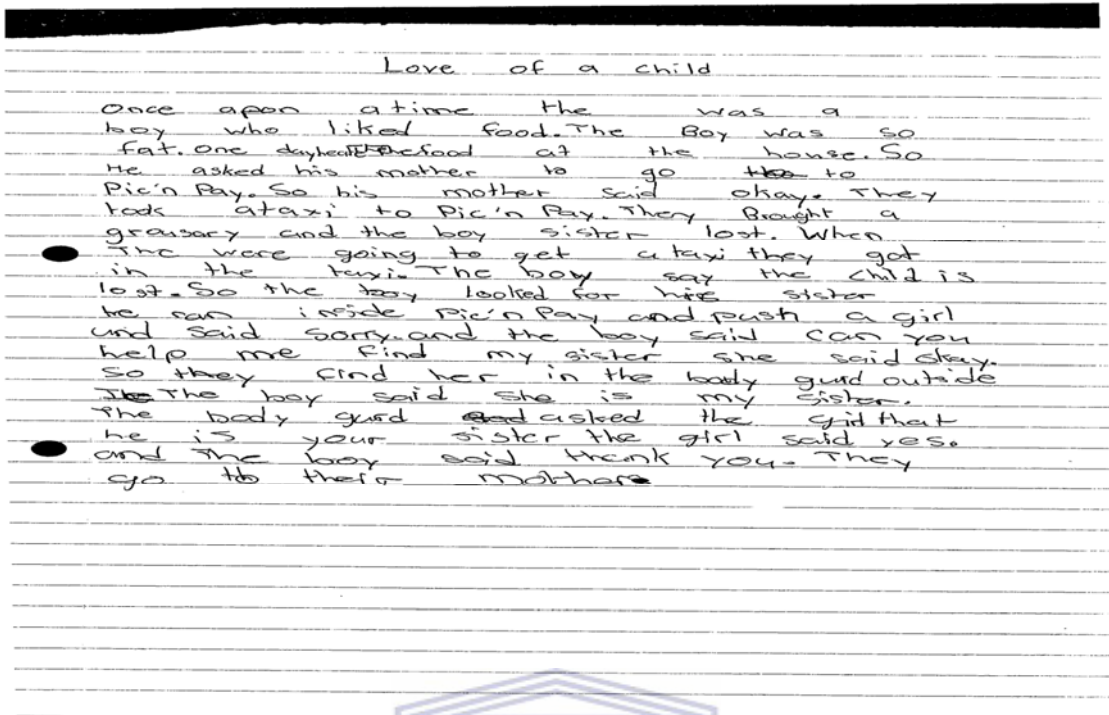


Figure 5.3.1. Thamsanqa's first story



Thamsanqa wrote a story in English titled 'love of a child' about a boy who liked food and how his sister went missing while they were grocery shopping. Thamsanqa's story is short and simple, and is based on a true story that happened within his family. His story lacked punctuation, such as commas. It is a well-constructed story with a few spelling and grammatical errors. From the story he read online with me, he was able to pick up a different styles of writing, which he employed when he started his second story with "once upon a time". The story he read online had an influence on the way he constructed the second story he wrote, of which his first story is just a narration of what once happened, and is not well structured and the second on he wrote about reading an online story.

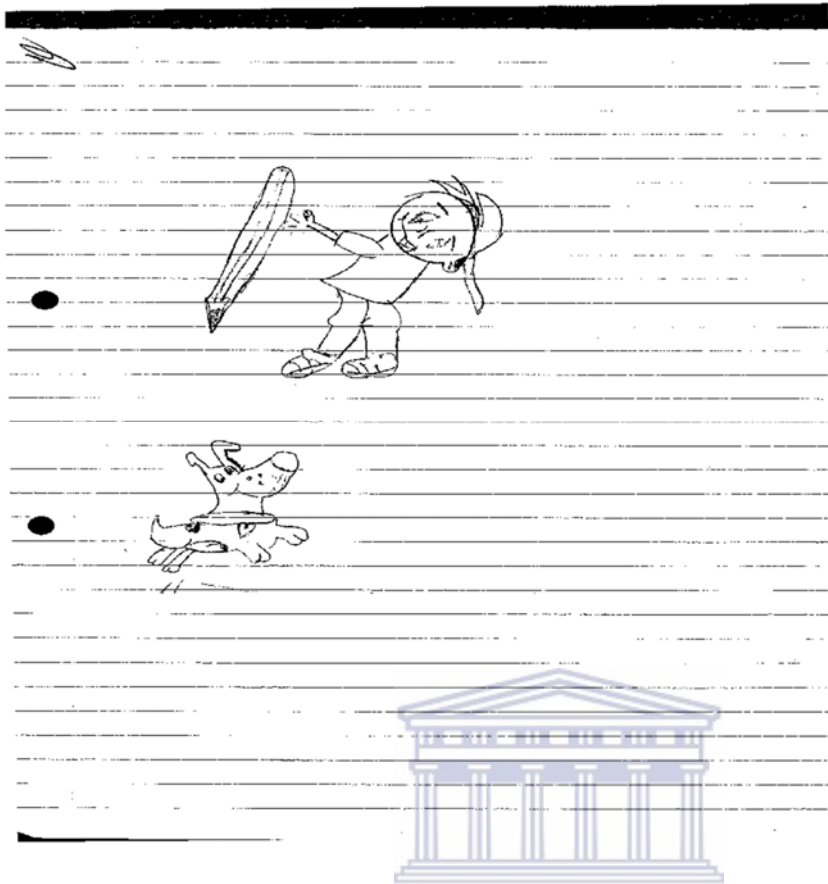


Figure 5.3.2. Ayanda's drawing UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

Ayanda decided to do a drawing instead of writing a story the first time. When I asked him why he preferred to do a drawing instead of writing a story, he shyly said, “*ndiyakuthanda ukuzoba ukoqitha ukubhala amabali kuba andikwazi ukubhala amabali*” [I love drawing more than writing stories, because I am not good when it comes to writing stories]. When I asked him what inspired him to do this drawing, he said, “*ndizoba izinto endibonayo, okanye ngamanye amaxesha ndivele ndizobe izinto endizicingayo*” [I draw what I see around me, or sometimes I draw what I think about]. Some people are better at expressing their feelings or thoughts through drawing than writing or telling, like Ayanda, who is not good at writing but rather prefers drawing to express his thoughts. The drawing above is not inspired by any thought or feeling, but is a mere drawing that is usually seen in the cover of an exam pad.

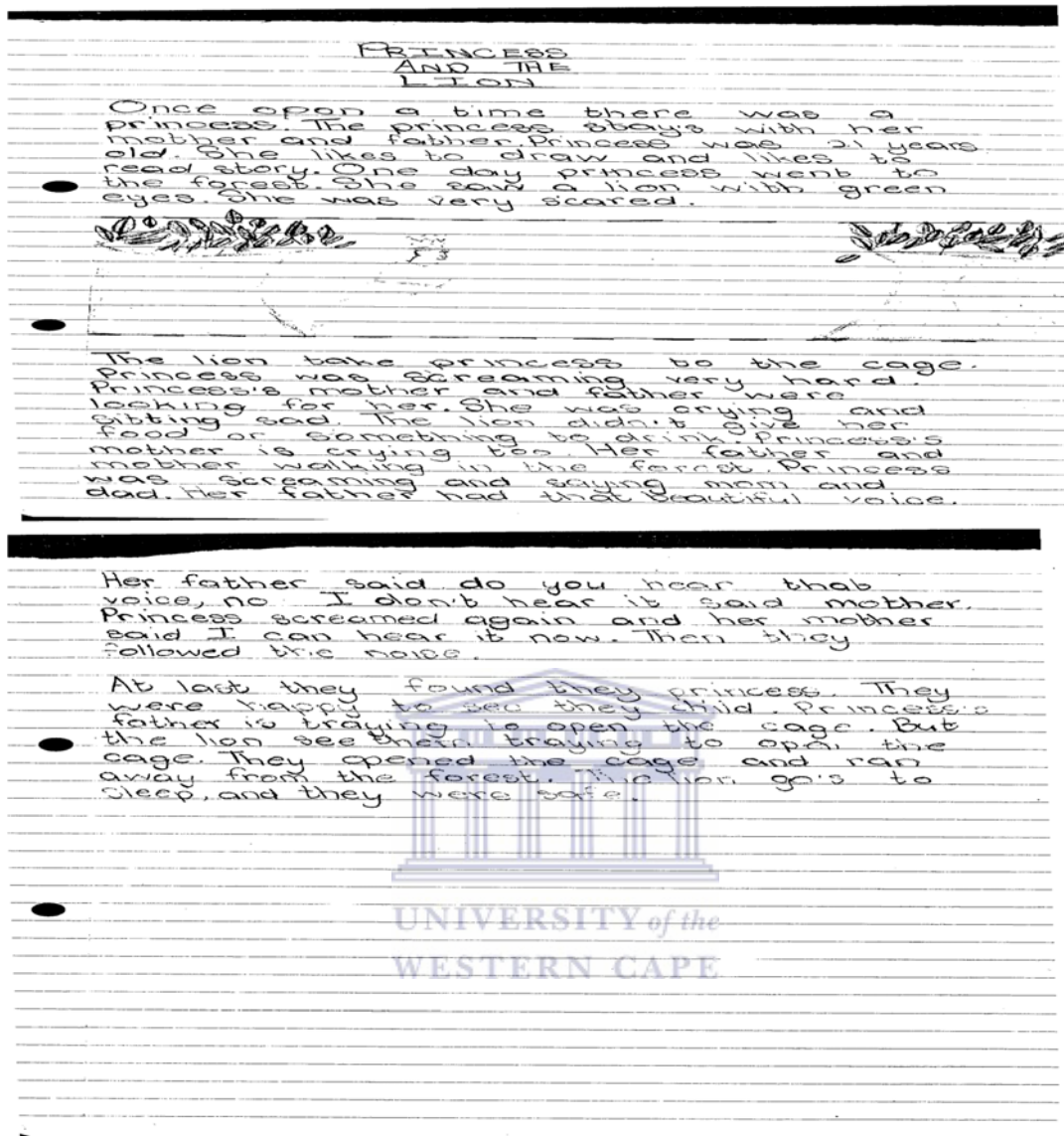


Figure 5.3.3. Asanda's First Story

Asanda wrote an English story titled, 'Princess and the Lion'. The story is about a princess who went to a forest and was taken by a lion with green eyes. This is one of her favourite stories she had read a while back. She says that it is her favourite story mainly because "elibali lisibonisa ukubaluleka kwe family because the Princess's patents risked their lives so that basindise ubomi bomntana wabo from the Lion" [This story shows us the importance of family because the Princess's parents risked their lives so that they could save the life of their daughter from the lion.] Some stories may be fictional but children see beyond the

fiction or fairy-tale, they actually learn something in every story they read or come across. Asanda's story was interesting and well-constructed with a few pictures. There were a few grammatical and spelling errors.



Figure 5.3.4. Athandwa's First Story

Athandwa wrote an English story titled, 'The poor family'. Her story is based on a poor family that believed in God and in prayer. Athandwa goes to church every Sunday and her family believes in prayer. Therefore, her story is a true reflection of what happens when you believe in prayer. When I asked her what inspired her to write this story, she said, "*ecaweni kwi Sunday school, sisoloko sixelelwa ukuba nokuba yintoni na into oyicelayo kuThixo ngomthandazo uzakuyifumana*" [In church at Sunday school we are often told that, whatever

you ask in prayer believe you have received it and it will be yours.] Athandwa’s story is based on what she is often told at church, therefore the experiences around her community contribute to her literacy practices. Her story followed logically, perfect sense, despite the spelling errors and lack of punctuation.

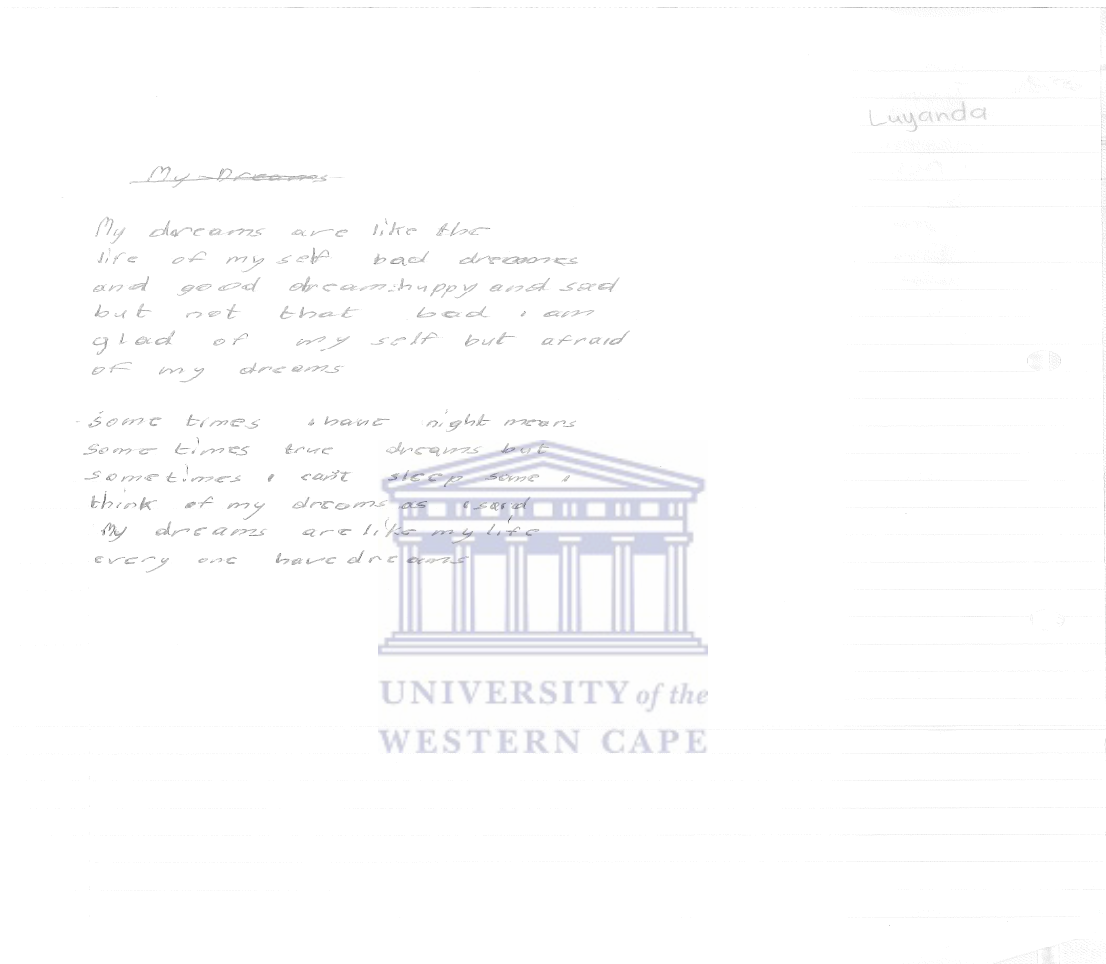


Figure 5.3.5. Luyanda’s Poem.

Luyanda wrote a poem titled, ‘My dreams’, based on his dreams and how scared he is of his dreams and future. When I asked him why he was scared of his dreams, he said, “*ndinamaphupho amakhulu, so I’m scared ngoba ingathi ndiyaphupha nje andazi noba ndizokwazi uwafezekisa*” [I have big dreams, so I am scared because it seems like I am only dreaming and might not be able to make my dreams a reality]. I asked him to tell me about his dreams, he said, “*iphupho lwam kufunda ndibeliqwetha ndizokwenza ubazali bam proud.*”

Then ndibathengele indlu enkulu entle.” [My dream is to become a lawyer and make my parents proud. Then I want to buy them a big beautiful house]. In his poem, there is a line that reads, *“My dreams are like my life, and everyone have dreams.”* Luyanda explained that he dreams of being a lawyer and if he fulfils that dream then that will be his life, and who he will be.

When I asked Luyanda why he decided to write a poem about his dreams, he said, *“ubhutwam uyathanda ubhala iipoems, so ndidla ngohlale naye xa ebhale emane endifundela. I enjoy his poems so ndaqonda uba nam mandibhale eyam ngamaphupho ama”* [My brother likes writing poems, so I’m always with him when he writes his poems and he would recite them to me. I enjoy his poems so I decided to also write my own poem about my dreams]. Luyanda’s exposure to poetry at home made him have an interest in poetry. The different households or communities’ experiences contribute to children’s literacy practices.

Luyanda’s poem had a few spelling and grammatical errors, the structure of the poem was fine besides the lack of punctuation.

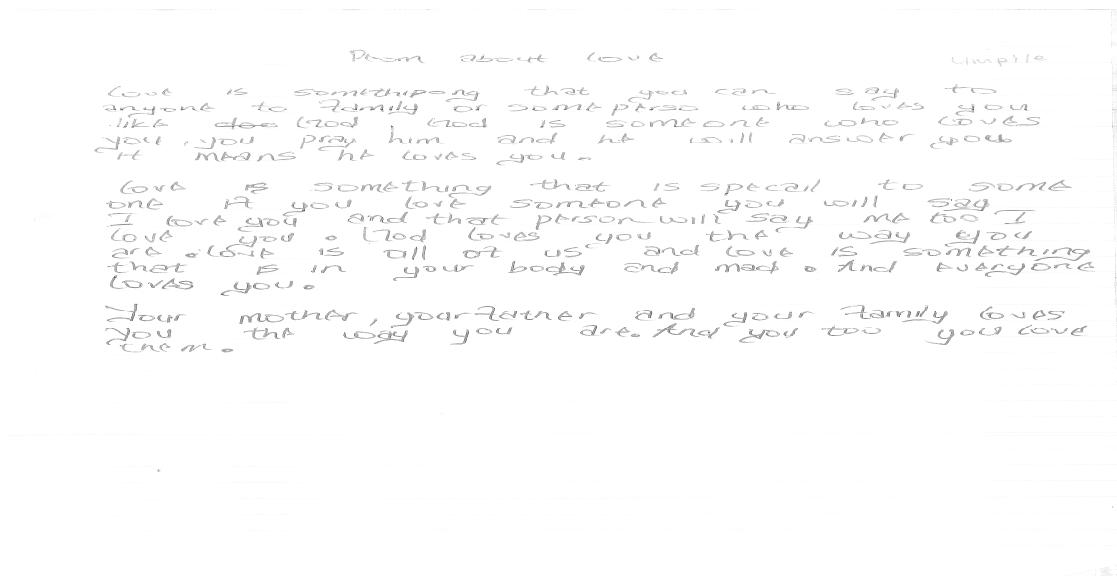
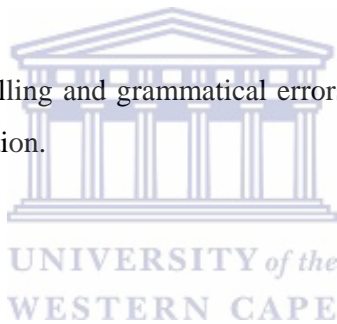


Figure 5.3.6. Umpile’s Poem

Umpile wrote an English poem about love titled 'poem about love'. Her poem was not a poem she had read before, but a poem she came up with on her own. Umpile's poem is a description of what love is. When I asked her why she chose to write a poem about love, she said, "ndikhethethe ubhala ipoem ngothanda because uthanda is everywhere." [I chose to write a poem about love because love is everywhere.] This demonstrates that not only physical material or artefacts contribute to children's literacy practices or their creativity, but also their life experiences. Just from receiving love, people are able to write about love because they know what love is, they are writing about something they know or have experienced.

Umpile's poem had a few grammatical errors and lacked punctuation. The structure of her poem was not in stanzas, but that of a story.

After writing these stories (first stories) and reading stories online, the children had to write a second story.



Umpile Dinkling (2)

Once upon a time A mother
 Duck had seven eggs. She kept
 them safe. One Morning the first
 Egg hatched and then all hatched. One
 big egg did not hatch. On Spring
 the big egg hatched. It was a
 big fat chick and ugliest duck
 in the world. The mother duck took
 them to the dam. Ugly duck
 swam better than the all ducks.
 On winter she was left and in summer
 she glave and ~~swims~~ swams. The
 swams was beautiful than him.
 When Spring came she was a lone
 in summer came he did not
 know that he was the most
 beautiful swam in the world so
 the other swams told him
 the end

Figure 5.3.7. Thamsanqa’s second story

Thamsanqa wrote a second story titled, ‘Ugly Duckling’. The story he wrote was very similar to the one that he had read before, but different in a sense that he wrote the story in his own words. When I asked Thamsanqa why he decided to write this story, he said, “*ndiyalithanda elibala ngoba lisibonisa into yokuba abantu bangakuhleka ngenxaye situation yakho kodwa abayazi ukuba uThixo angasitshintsa isimo sakho*” [I like this story because it shows us that, people can laugh at you because of your current situation but they don’t know that God can change your situation]. The first story he wrote before he read the online story was not that much different from the one he wrote after reading the online story. The style of writing was the same for both stories. I had hoped that the second story would be different from the first one he wrote in terms of the writing style. It was clear that he needs to consistently read stories for him to be able to be exposed and adapt to other writing styles.

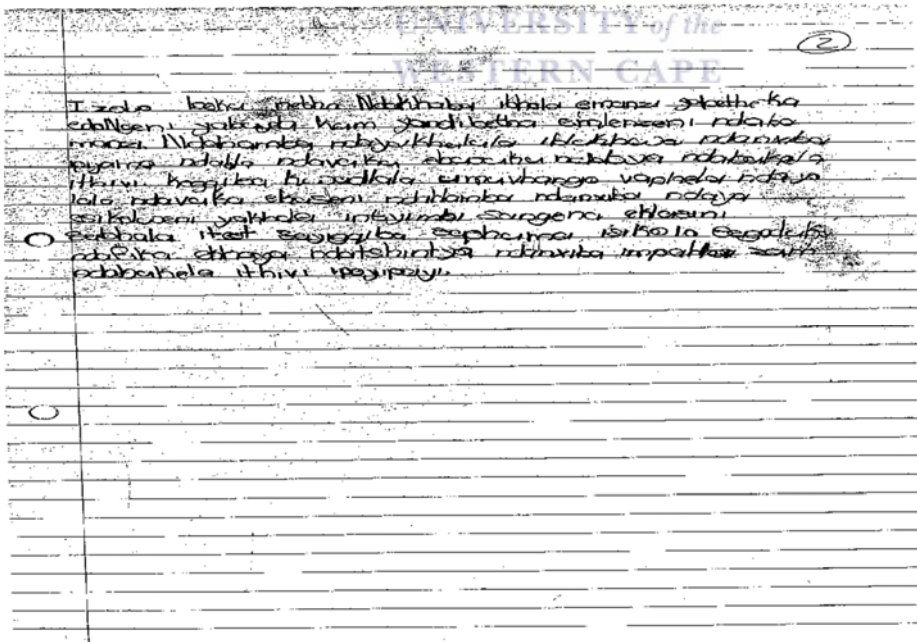
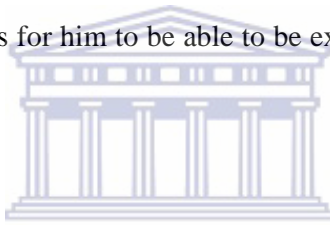


Figure 5.3.8. Ayanda’s Second Story

Ayanda wrote his second story in isiXhosa, which tells us of what he did the previous day. He wrote that he was playing soccer in the rain and he ended up getting himself wet. He went home and changed into his pyjamas and started watching his favourite soapies and thereafter went to bed. Ayanda is not a good storyteller or writer, and he prefers drawing more than writing or telling stories. It is evident in this piece of writing that he does not have a passion for writing - he lacks creativity when it comes to writing. Ayanda is not exposed to any reading material at home and is not part of any of the afterschool programmes. Therefore, because he is not exposed to the literacy-rich environment, he lacks creativity. Heath (1983) mentions that being exposed to a literacy-rich environment at an early age helps build cognitive, linguistic and social skills.



Figure 5.3.9. Asanda's drawing

Asanda did a drawing instead of writing a story. She says that the drawing was inspired by one of the cartoons her little sister often watched. She says that what she loved most about these cartoons was the setting: *“ndithanda the environment because intle. There are beautiful trees and flowers, and the grass is so green.”* [I like the environment because it is beautiful. There are beautiful trees and flowers, and the grass is so green.] Asanda's drawing is appealing because of the use of colours. Children learn from what is surrounding them,

their physical environments. Asanda was able to do a drawing based on what she saw, and she was able to mix the colours well to make her drawing beautiful and attractive.

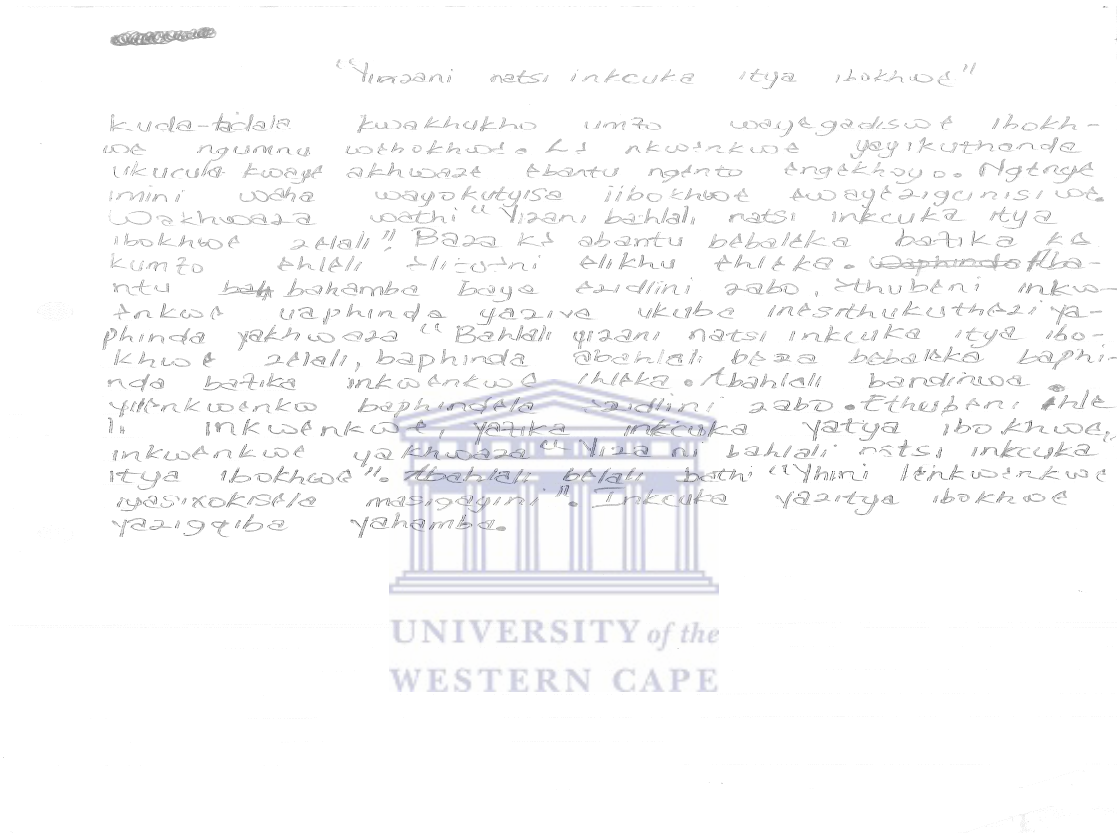


Figure 5.3.10. Umpile’s Second Story

Umpile wrote a Xhosa story titled ‘Yizani nantsi inkcuka itya ibhokwe’ [Come, here is a hyena eating a goat.] This story is about a boy who was a shepherd, and he looked after goats. During the day he would get bored and start calling the people of the villages telling them false stories and when the people of the village came out thinking he was telling the truth he would just laugh at them. One day a hyena came and started eating a goat but the boy called and no one came because they assumed that the boy was playing his games again, so the hyena ate and finished the goat. Her story is in standard isiXhosa, the only spelling error I identified was ‘*inkcuka*’ instead of ‘*ingcuka*’, which means Hyena in English. In our

conversations, she mentioned that she preferred isiXhosa more than English. Hence, she decided to write this story in isiXhosa and read a Xhosa online story. Umpile says that she decided to write this story because her younger siblings liked it and she usually tells it to them, and there is a lesson in this story that she and her younger siblings learn. “*Elibali lifundisa into yokuba ungabobabhanxa abantu njenagale kwenkwe yenzile kubantu belali yakhe ngokuba ngenye imini uyoze ubadinge and babe bengenamdla wokunceda kuba ungulo usoloko exoka.*” [This story teaches us that, never take people for fools like the boy in the story did because one day you will need the same people you have been taking for fools but they will not be interested in helping you because you are always lying and taking people for fools]. Umpile’s first story was in English, and you cannot really tell if there is a difference between the two stories she wrote, not because they are in different languages, but because she needs to get used to reading stories on a daily basis for her to be able to adopt the other authors’ writing styles.



~~My Friend~~
My Friend

I love my friend
we are good friends
not best friends we love
to chill but we don't
fight we are glad of
each other but we
do not gamble

We care for each other
others we don't make fun
of others and we will be
friends for along time
I will never be angry
with my friend but I will
be happy



Figure 5.3.11. Luyanda's Second Story

Luyanda wrote a second poem titled 'My Friend'. When I asked him what inspired him to write this poem, he said, "*because ndiyayithanda itshomi yam and yi tshomi elungileyo ndisoloko ndonwabile xa ndikunye naye.*" [because I love my friend and he is a good friend, I'm always happy when I am with him.] Luyanda's poem has a lot of spelling and grammatical errors.



Figure 5.3.12. Athandwa's drawing

Athandwa was one of the few children who decided to do a drawing instead of writing a story. In her drawing there is a pattern of what looks like flowers and hearts. The pattern in her drawing looks like those patterns found on playing cards. When I asked her what inspired her to do this drawing or what exactly this is, she said, "*this is my design, ndivele nje ndacinga ndazoba, nam andiyazi ukuba ndizothi yintoni.*" [This is my design, it just came to mind so I draw it, I also don't know what I would say it is.] Most children who are exposed to reading material are creative and are quick thinkers because reading gives the brain a workout. In Athandwa's case, she regularly borrows books from the library as she has a library card.

It is evident that being exposed to reading material has an impact in children's writing resources and repertoires. Exposure to reading material at home has an influence on

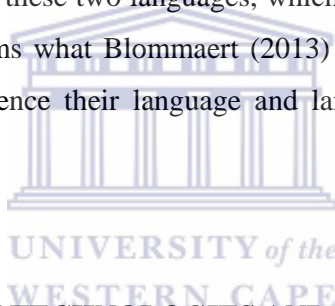
children's writing, thinking and creativity capacity. The few children in this study who are not exposed to any kind of reading material in their homes, such as Ayanda, seem to lack creativity when it comes to writing. Therefore, exposure or access to reading material in the homes is essential in a child's life, so as to improve their reading and writing skills as well as their creative abilities.

Some children may be more interested in drawing than writing, like Ayanda was in this study. Writing and drawing need infrastructural resources. According Blommaert (2013: 446), "the more intricate and costly the infrastructure for writing becomes, the bigger the gaps between those who have access to it and those who do not will be." Children often lack writing resources due to financial difficulties within the home. This was not the case with Asanda, as she has all the infrastructural writing resources such as pens, pencils, koki pens, crayons, drawing books and so forth, while the other children in this study lacked such resources. This is evident in the drawings made by Asanda (figure 5.4.9), Athandwa (figure 5.4.12), and Ayanda (figure 5.4.2). Ayanda and Athandwa's drawings lacked detail, complexity and colour, while Asanda's drawing is eye-catching, bold and more complex and intricate combinations of colours. Therefore, there is a huge gap between those individuals who have access to infrastructural resources than those who do not. Blommaert argues that "writing can only proceed when one has access to the material infrastructure for writing, and that differential access at this level is a crucial source of inequality in the field of literacy" (2013: 446). He adds that it should not be overlooked that all technologies for composing texts come with affordances and in addition imperatives (Blommaert, 2013). Blommaert (2013) identifies these resources as infrastructural resources and graphic resources.

Access to various resources had a tendency to vary considerably in this way, access to a language variety utilized as a part of composing differed from access to genres; and both differed from access to what is called infrastructure of writing (Blommaert, 2013). "The 'language' or language variety that enters into writing-say, the variety many people would identify as standard English needs to be ordered in specific ways" (Blommaert, 2013:447). The language and the language varieties that people use when writing or speaking is often influenced by their surroundings. People use the linguistic resources that they are exposed to on a regular basis. Take for instance a child who grew up in a household where the medium of communication is both standard English and isiXhosa and in his community he is exposed to the non-standard varieties of these languages, therefore all these languages build up on his

linguistic resources often referred to as linguistic repertoires. All six children in this study are exposed to IsiXhosa (Both the standard and the non-standard varieties) in their homes, as it is their home language. They are not only exposed to these varieties in their homes, but in the communities in which they live. IsiXhosa is a dominant language in both Khayelitsha and Philippi townships, and both these townships are mostly occupied by black isiXhosa-speaking individuals. They are also exposed to the standard and non-standard varieties of English in their communities, homes and the schools they attend. Therefore, both these languages and the varieties of these languages form part of their linguistic resources.

Take for instance, Umpile in this study. Her home language is isiXhosa. In her home, they consistently converse both in isiXhosa and English, using both the standard and the non-standard varieties of these languages. When Umpile was asked to write her two stories, she wrote one story in English and the other one in isiXhosa. When I had a conversation with her, she was switching between these two languages, which in linguistic terms is referred to as code-switching. This confirms what Blommaert (2013) says in his study about how an individual's surroundings influence their language and language varieties they use when writing and speaking.



5.4 INTERACTION WITH TECHNOLOGIES AND MOBILE LEARNING

According to Jones and Hafner (2012), having the capacity to send messages and to receive content requires more than physical access to a cell phone, one likewise should have the capacity to compose messages and to read messages. "It is a type of literacy, and thus a semiotic practice, which is not separate, but certainly different from school-taught literacies" (Jones & Hafner, 2012: 525).

Street (1997), cited in Marsh (2006: 19-20), refers to the range of multimodal meaning-making activities in which children engage in as 'communicative practices'. According to Cairney and Ruge (1998), cited in Marsh (2006: 20), the classification of literacy practices within homes is revisited in the light of children's changing practices in a digital world, and the categories they identified adapted accordingly. In addition, children's engagement with popular culture, media and new technologies in the home is explored in relation to current debates concerning the polarization of global and local, and public and private. Space, place

and time are central to consumption and production of media discourses and are thus embedded in the daily practices of many families who live in highly technologized societies.

Mobile phones have become ubiquitous in the day-to-day life of individuals almost everywhere in the world. Until the entry and uptake of mobile phones, individuals in the south had insignificant access to telecommunication advances. These days, even the general population at the base of the salary pyramid have a mobile phone; without precedent in history they can join in the telecommunication society (Velghe, 2011).

The first visit to the children's home was to inform the parents or guardians about the nature of the study. During this visit, I gave the parents information sheets that stated the nature of the research and an informed consent and assent form, which both the parents / guardians and the child signed. I observed the environment in which they live in to see the kind of literacy and digital technology they were exposed to. On the second visit, I asked each child to write a story of their choice, and thereafter we read an online story through a mobile phone. We read stories on the African storybook website, www.africanstorybook.org. African storybook is an initiative that aims to address the lack of relevant books for early reading in the dialects or languages of Africa. The vision of the initiative is for all young African children to have enough enjoyable books to read in a familiar dialect or languages to hone their reading aptitudes.

First, I introduced the participating children to the site called Fundza (*fundza* means to read or to learn). The aim of Fundza, as outlined on their webpage, www.fundza.com, is to motivate teenagers and young adult South Africans to read for pleasure and to continue loving it. The site adds that it trusts that all South Africans ought to have the opportunity to fall in love with reading and its benefits. It seeks to help teenagers and young adults to read for delight, and to make it something one needs to do each day. I also introduced the children and their parents to Nali'bali (which means *here's the story*). As indicated on their webpage, <http://nalibali.org/>, Nali'bali is a national reading for enjoyment campaign which aims to spark children's potential through storytelling and reading. The site is based on the simple rationale that an entrenched culture of reading can be a distinct advantage towards better education in South Africa. Furthermore, Nali'bali adds that literacy aptitudes are a solid indicator of future academic achievement in all subjects and children who consistently read and hear engaging stories in dialects they comprehend, are well prepared and motivated to read and write.

I let the children fiddle with my phone (iphone 5s) and asked each of them to choose a story from two English and two Xhosa stories that I had chosen from the Fundza and African storybook sites. I had chosen 'A Bitter Girl', and 'What Vusi's Sister Said'. Both these stories are in English. 'A Bitter Girl' is a non-fiction story, and 'What Vusi's Sister Said' is fiction. From the isiXhosa stories, I chose 'Shoooooes', and 'Uthando oluVuthayo', both non-fictional. In each story, there is always something to learn. I chose these stories because, firstly, they are age-appropriate for the children participating in this study, and I presumed that from these stories they would learn a lot because these stories are based on real-life experiences.

I did not give the children the freedom to choose any story from the sites, because I reckoned that choosing from only four stories in the two languages they were competent in would save time.

Five children chose to read in English and only one (Umphile) chose a Xhosa story. When I asked her why she chose to read in isiXhosa, she said, "*Ndiyakuthanda ufunda amabali esiXhosa kulula uwa understanda*" [I like reading Xhosa stories because it is easier to understand them.]

Most of the stories I read with the children were about social problems such as, sexual abuse (rape) and disability. Some were about relationships and love and about the importance of family. These stories were based on real-life issues. The children read the stories of their choice from the four stories I provided. Some stories had more difficult words than others. I explained all the difficult words they came across while reading for better understanding. We then discussed the stories. Our discussions included what they have learnt from the stories and what they would have done if they were in the main character's shoes.

Athandwa and Luyanda read a story entitled, '*A Bitter Girl*', by Nompumelelo Zandile Makhanye.

"Bang, bang, bang! The door wouldn't hold if he carried on, she realized. "I'm so tired of this," she whispered aloud. She stood up and turned the key and he pushed it open and grabbed her shoulder.

“Take off your pyjamas. You should know by now what’s needed from you. I can’t tell you one and the same thing for all these years. Come on.”

He smelled like a shebeen and was battling to stand up straight but he kept his hand on her shoulder, his fingers crushing her flesh. Her pyjama top was off and then her pants. With a shove he pushed her onto the bed and a minute later he was sweating on top of her. When it was over he rolled off and was immediately asleep.”

This story is centred on a young girl by the name of Anele, who was sexually abused by her uncle growing up, and her whole life was poisoned because of this abuse. She grows up cold and unfriendly. After the abuse she suffered as a child, she battled to trust people, especially men. It was easier to avoid socialising and dating. Anele became a doctor and met a man by the name of Thami, but it was not easy letting him in.

Athandwa and I had a discussion after the reading the story. I asked her what she had learnt from the story and she responded, *“elibali lindifundisa into ukuba ufuna iphupho lwakho lifezeke lizofezeka noba you are under any situation”* [what I have learned from this story is that, whatever life throws at you never give up on your dreams]. Luyanda said that, *“elibali lindifundise into yokuba abantu mabaxolele baqhubeka ngobomi bangabingamabanjwa babe benenzondo”* [I have learnt that people should forgive and move on with life instead of holding grudges and being prisoners to themselves].

Umpile read a Xhosa story titled, ‘Shoooooes’ by Peter Rule.

“Ibali likaLeonard Gregory [Leonard Gregory’s story]

ULeonard waye engumdlali webhola ekhatywayo obalaseleyo. “Wayevuth’ umlilo”, edlala kanye esuswini sebala, kunjalo nje esiza nawo amanqaku, amanqaku ayeqala ezinyaweni zakhe. Babe suka bagqume ababukeli, besithi “Shoooooes!” xa uLeonard ebambe ibhola esiya ezimpondweni, ibe phofu into ayifunayo ilinqaku. [Leonard was the best football player. He was a “fiery” fireman, playing in the stomach, so it’s just a score, the points that started at his feet. They just cut off the audience, saying “Shoooooes!” When Leonard grabbed the ball by the horns, and the only thing he wanted was to score.]

Ngephanyazo, yonke into yatshintsha! uLeonard wavelelwa yingozi emasikizi, walahlekelwa kukusebenzisa imilenze yakhe. Eli libali lika Leonard, indlela abambebele ngayo elukholweni lwakhe, kananjalo nendlela anyamezela wamkela ngayo ubomi bakhe obutsha. Waphinda wabonisa uluntu ukuba abantu abakhubazekileyo bangadlala enkulu inkxaxheba ekhuphuhliseni indawo abasuka kuzo. [Suddenly, everything changed! Leonard was involved in an accident, he could not use his legs anymore. This is Leonard's story, how he adhered to his faith, and how he endured his new life. He also showed people that people with disabilities can play a major role in promoting their environment.]

This story is based on Leonard Gregory, who was a famous soccer player. Everyone loved him because he was the best in his team; they called him 'Shoooooes'. Unfortunately, he was involved in an accident that left him paralyzed. Instead of feeling sorry for himself, he decided to organize a soccer match between Dangerous Dinosaurs from Durban and Vukuzenzele from Bizana, of which both the teams consisted of disabled players who were playing on crutches. Everyone was stunned as they had never seen disabled people playing soccer. Leonard was very excited, because people were able to see that people with disabilities have capacity to be active in sports and they are not useless.

I liked and enjoyed this story because, we live in communities where we are surrounded by people with different disabilities, and it is important that our generation and children know and understand that people with disabilities are also human and they should not be treated differently. They want to be accepted for who they are and people need to understand that because they have disabilities does not mean they cannot participate in certain activities.

Umpile also enjoyed the story and said that she learnt a lot from it. *“Elibali lindifundisa ukuba abantu abakhubazekileyo banzakhona, kwaye akufunekanga sibajongele phantsi kufuneka sibamkele ngendlela abayiyo. Lindifundisa into yokuba abantu abakhubazekileyo funeka bazamkele kwaye bangalahli ithemba ayikophela kobomi.”* [This story taught me that, people who are disabled have potential to do anything they want and we, in our communities have to accept them and do not undermine them. It also taught me that disabled people need to accept themselves and they also need to have faith.]

The children from Khayelitsha all read a story titled, 'What Vusi's Sister Said', by Nina Orange.

“Early one morning Vusi’s granny called him, “Vusi, please take this egg to your parents. They want to make a large cake for your sister’s wedding.” On his way to his parents, Vusi met two boys picking fruit. One boy grabbed the egg from Vusi and shot it at a tree. The egg broke.

“What have you done?” cried Vusi. “That egg was for a cake. The cake was for my sister’s wedding. What will my sister say if there is no wedding cake?” The boys were sorry for teasing Vusi. “We can’t help with the cake, but here is a walking stick for your sister,” said one. Vusi continued on his journey. Along the way he met two buliders building a house. “Can we use that stick?” one asked. But the stick was not strong enough for building, and it broke.”

This story is about a young boy who was sent by his grandmother to deliver an egg to his parents for his sister’s wedding cake as a gift. Along the way, Vusi encounters trouble that results in him losing the egg. And not getting to his sister’s wedding on time. But her sister was glad he was able to make it and told him she did not really care about the cake or gifts, she was just glad that everyone was there.

I had discussions with the children from Khayelitsha in relation to this story. The discussions were centred on what they had learnt from the story and what they would have done if they were in Vusi’s shoes. They all said that they learnt that family is important because Vusi’s sister did not get angry or shouted at him for not bringing the egg for the cake, but she was excited that her little brother made it to her wedding. They were not sure what they would have done if they were in Vusi’s shoes. However, what is important is what the children learnt from the story, because in this century most people value material things, more than family, forgetting that family is important.

The children from Khayelitsha read an online story from African storybook titled, ‘*What Vusi’s sister said*’. Asanda and Thamsanqa read fluently and confidently, and every time they came across a word they did not understand or could not pronounce, they would ask how the word was pronounced and what it meant.

Ayanda, on the other hand, struggled with most of the words, but did not ask for any assistance; he just read through the story and pronounced words incorrectly. While he was reading the story, he was shy and his tone was very low. It was clear that Ayanda did not receive much academic attention at home, for the mere fact that he did not bother to ask what certain words meant, he is used to doing his schoolwork alone without any assistance from an adult.

After reading the story we had a discussion about it, and Asanda and Thamsanqa were able to express their views and opinions as to what the story had taught them. Ayanda was very shy to express his views, not because he did not know what to say, but because he is just shy and maybe thought that whatever he was saying was wrong.

The children from Philippi chose their own stories to read. Umphile chose to read a Xhosa story titled, “Shooooes” She read fluently and with great confidence. Her Xhosa was very proper for a child, one would have thought that it was an adult reading the story. She was a bit shy when it came to expressing her views about the story.

Luyanda read a story titled “A bitter girl “His reading was fluent, even though he struggled with a few words here and there. He always asked when he could not pronounce or understand a certain word. He found it hard to express himself when we discussed the story, even though he knew what he wanted to say, but he could not put it into words or could not find the right words.

Athandwa, on the other hand, struggled to pronounce most of the words, nonetheless she still tried to pronounce the words. She was very confident when we had a chat about the story, and she was able to express her views without fear or being shy.

All the children seemed excited about reading the story through a mobile phone. This was because they had the freedom to hold the phone in their hands and also because reading a story through a phone was something different and new to them. When Thamsanqa was asked how he felt about reading the story through the phone, he said that, “*reading through a phone is easier and I love it more than reading from a book.*”

Mobile phones have become ubiquitous in the day-to-day life of individuals almost everywhere in the world. Until the entry and uptake of mobile phones, individuals in the south had insignificant access to telecommunication advances. These days, even the general

population at the base of the salary pyramid have a mobile phone; without precedent in history they can join in the telecommunication society (Velghe, 2011).

All six children knew their way around the phone. This is evidence that they have all been exposed to a mobile phone. The first thing they all did when they received the phone was to go straight to the games. When I asked Thamsanqa what he usually does with his mother's phone, he responded, *"I play a game, snake and ladders."* All six children do not read online stories even though they have access to phones or have their own phones, instead they take photos, listen to music and play and download games. When Asanda's mother was asked if she would carry on using the site I introduced to her and her child, Asanda, she said, *"These things need airtime, and they will finish up my bundles, therefore I doubt I will be able to use the site"*. Again, the obstacles are finances, Asanda's mother is working but still not financially stable, and therefore she cannot afford to buy airtime or data bundles so that she can access African Storybook online. Therefore, the issue of finances is an obstacle not only to Asanda but to other children who are in the same economic status as Asanda. Finances become an obstacle to their education.

When the children wrote the second story after reading the online story from the African storybook site, nothing much changed, this could be because this was a once-off activity, but if ever they could be acquainted with reading online stories, they could probably get new ideas and new ways of writing stories. Take Ayanda for instance, he is a very good artist, his drawings are creative. Even though he is not very good at writing stories, he is able to express his emotions multimodally (Kress, 2010). However, if he could read stories more often, whether from books or online, he could improve his thinking and writing abilities as well as his creative skills.

All parents/caregivers of the children in this study mentioned that, even though they do allow their children to play with their phones, they cannot really afford that much data for their children to read stories online. Even though they all agreed that this was something new and very interesting and that they would love their children to continue with reading online as it would help them grow mentally, finances would not allow them to do so.

What can be drawn from the data above is that, as much as children are exposed to mobile phones, they are not exposed to the sites where they can read online stories. Both the children and the parents/caregivers in this study enjoyed the idea of reading stories online

through a mobile phone, but the only concern they raised was that of data. Data is expensive and they cannot afford to buy data on a regular basis so that their children can have access to online stories.

Some children chose to read Xhosa stories while some preferred English stories. Both the children who read English and Xhosa stories had no problems in understanding what was happening in the story regardless of the different languages. Even when it came to discussing the story they had no issues because they were very much aware of what the stories they read were about. This comes back to their linguistics resources, both these languages form part of their linguistic repertoires. Hence, they had no problems in reading in any of the two languages and they had no issues when it came to comprehension of the stories they chose and having a conversation about the stories thereafter.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has described the multimodal and digital literacy practices that the children take part in, with a focus on mobile phones and online stories as literacy resources. It has looked at how exposure and access to online stories through mobile phones add to the selected children's storytelling resources and repertoires. It also focused on how the children transform content and meaning using multiple modes, and how this enhances their storytelling resources and repertoires.

The children in this study come from similar yet different backgrounds which influence their engagement with literacy resources at home. Due to their financial difficulties, these children are limited with regards to the kind of literacy and digital literacy resources they are exposed to. Their engagements with literacy resources differ because not all the children's homes are equipped with the literacy resources needed for their academic and social improvement, therefore, leaving the children who do not have access to literacy resources at a disadvantage.

One of the issues that arose was that some of the children in this study were not exposed to literacy resources at all in their home domains, for example, Ayanda. This lack of exposure leaves him at a disadvantage as he struggles to engage with texts and can only express himself well in visuals rather than writing. Most children engage with literacy at home on a

daily basis, like Asanda. Others engage with literacy more at the afterschool programmes that they attend, such as Thamsanqa. Those children who engagedd with literacy more outside of the school context are able to engage with texts and express themselves in writing, and they also perform well academically. This shows that literacy engagement and being exposed to literacy material and resources at home has a very huge impact in helping children to engage with different texts and also enables them to express themselves, not only with visuals, but in writing as well.



CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of this study. This study was influenced by the works of Shirley Brice Heath. In her study, she made it clear that exposure to literacy practices helps children prepare for formal education. Many studies on digital literacy are based in educational settings. Furthermore, many scholars suggest that digital technology should be introduced in schools so as to assist those children who cannot access such technologies in their homes. This research has affirmed the importance of home literacy involvement and exploring digital literacy practices within the home domain.

6.2 FULFILMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Most of the objectives outlined in chapter one were achieved. The first objective was concerned with the kinds of digital technology and information systems affordances in the homes of the selected children. Most of the children in this study were exposed to the basic digital technology and information systems affordances in their homes, such as books, magazines, newspapers, radios and TVs. Some children had access to storybooks, while others borrowed books from the library if they did not have their own books at home.

The second objective focused on the digital literacy practices of the selected children between the ages of 12 to 15 years. The six children in the study all come from disadvantaged homes. Accessible digital and media technologies included only the radio, television and cell phones. However, due to varying socio-economic circumstances, access to these assets varied with every child. For instance, in cases where there is one television set in the home, the child has to compete with other children or parents for access to the television. One child no longer has a TV in his home because it was borrowed. The study showed that children mostly watch adult soaps such as, *Generations*, *Muvhango* and *Uzalo*. Since these programmes mainly have adult themes, this shows that adults control what children watch. Only a few of them said they watched educational or child-friendly shows such as *Takalani Sesame*, *Hectic Nine* and *Cool Catz*.

All the children in this study have access to a cell phone. They mainly use the cell phones to play games, take pictures, listen to and download music and music videos. Even though all the homes of the selected children have radios, only two children listen to the radio, mostly on Sundays.

The third objective was to investigate how access/exposure to online stories through mobile phones added to children's storytelling resources and repertoires and how they responded to technology and the medium of online stories. This objective was not fully achieved in a sense that, the online story reading activity only happened once, so it was difficult to tell if this experience added to the children's storytelling resources and repertoire. For this objective to be achieved, the study would have to be carried out for a longer period, where the children would engage in the online story reading activity on a daily basis. However, they responded well to the medium of online stories. They were all able to operate the story sites I introduced them to, and were able to flip from one page to the next in just one click. All the children knew their way around the cell phone. This was because they were already exposed to a cell phone. They already knew where to go when they were looking for something.

The fourth objective focused on the potential implications of reading stories online for the children's literacy development. Both the children and the parents enjoyed reading stories online. Besides data being the only obstacle hindering them from continuing to read stories online, the parents would like to continue reading with their children, because they felt that their children were more eager to read now that they have been introduced to this platform. This could have a positive impact on the children's literacy development because being acquainted with reading helps broaden an individual's capacity to think. Furthermore, reading would not only add to their linguistic repertoires, but their communicative competences would improve as well.

6.3 CHALLENGES FACED

While doing this research, the biggest challenge I had was that of finding participants. My research is more focused on children. When it comes to children parents tend to be sensitive and protective. Therefore, it took me a while to find parents who were willing to listen to the nature of my research and allow their children to participate in my research. I had to change

research sites because in the initial area (Langa) I could not find participants. I ended up having to go to look for participants in a different area (Philippi).

6.4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The circumstances of the six children in this study are a representation of the reality we are living in in South Africa. The children in this study come from similar yet different backgrounds which influence their access to digital and literacy resources. Due to their financial difficulties, children are limited with regards to the kind of literacy and digital literacy resources they are exposed to. The main aim of this study was to discover what literacy and digital literacy practices 12- to 15-year-old children engage in in their home domains, and what conclusions may be drawn from these engagements with regards to children's educational development.

All six children in this study have access to basic technologies such as television, radio and mobile phones. However, despite the fact that these children are presented with these digital resources, without the guidance of their caregivers/ parents they are unable to utilize these resources in a manner that benefits them. They have cell phones or have access to cell phones but what they do with these cell phones does not benefit them in a way that will help them develop or grow mentally. Hence, it is encouraged that parents engage with their children's educational development, so that their parents are able to show their children how to use the resources that are available to them.

This study also discovered that some children's homes in the study contain academic literacy resources, including different storybooks for children, while some children are not exposed to such literacy in their homes and have to their local libraries in order to have access to a variety of books. Furthermore, this study discovered that some children in this study hold social skills from their extracurricular activities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Exploring digital literacy practices of 12-15 year old children from Philippi and Khayelitsha townships in Cape Town.

Researcher: Kuhle Sentwa

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.
4. I agree to take part in the above research project.
5. I agree that the data collected from me can be used in the research project.
6. I understand that I have the option to refuse audio recording during my interview.
7. I agree to be audio recorded during my interview.
8. I understand that I have the option to refuse picture taking of the things in my house.

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent
(If different from lead researcher) Date Signature

Lead Researcher Date Signature
(To be signed and dated in presence of the participant)

Copies: All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated version of the consent form and information sheet for themselves. A copy of this will be filed and kept in a secure location for research Purposes only.

Researcher:

Ms Kuhle Sentwa

Mobile: 0727318979
Email:
3226657@myuwc.ac.
za

Supervisor:

Professor Felix Banda
Mobile: 0823621100
Tel: 021 959
2380/2978
Email: fbanda@uwc.ac

HOD:

Professor Bassey
Antia

Tel: 021 959 2380
Mobile: 082
8154293

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APPENDIX 2: ASSENT FORM

ASSENT FORM

Title: Exploring digital literacy practices of 12-15 year old children from Philippi and Khayelitsha townships in Cape Town.

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way. I understand that I will be audio recorded during our conversations and during the interview.

Participant's name

Participant's signature



My contact details are: 0727318979 or 3226657@myuwc.ac.za

Please feel free to contact my Professor at UWC, Professor Felix Banda at 0823621100 or fbanda@uwc.ac.za, if you have any questions

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title: Exploring digital literacy practices of 12-15 year old children from Philippi and Khayelitsha townships in Cape Town.

My name is Kuhle Sentwa, and I am conducting research on the above topic as part of my Master's degree course in Language and Communication Studies. I will be looking at twelve to fifteen year old children's experiences with regard to exposure to online stories through mobile phones, as well as the way they engage and respond to digital technologies at home.

At your convenience, I would like to spend a few hours in your home (not more than 2 hours per meeting), observing you (child) in your natural environment. I will not make more than five (5) visits to your home. I would also like to interview you. I will make use of a tape recorder to record all interviews and will take pictures of the digital technologies that you engage with. I will also collect a portion of your SMS texts which will form part of my data collection. I will also conduct an interview with the parent/guardian, looking at your typical digital and literacy practices and how your environment plays a role in your literacy practices. With your parent/guardians' permission, I will take pictures of literacy material found in your home such as books, magazines, TVs, video games and radios and ask you a few questions about how you interact(s) with them.

This study does not aim to harm anyone but to benefit the participants. This study will not interfere with your normal activities, I will only be observing your behaviour. I assure you that this study will be kept confidential and you and your parent/guardians' identities will remain anonymous. If at any time you do not want to continue with the study, you are allowed to withdraw and your data will not be included. A copy of the study will be sent to you after the research has been completed in order for you to see the results.

My contact details are: 0727318979 or 3226657@myuwc.ac.za

Please feel free to contact my Professor at UWC, Professor Felix Banda at 0823621100 or fbanda@uwc.ac.za, if you have any questions.

APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CAREGIVERS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your child
 - How is s/he different from his/her siblings?
 - What are his favourite activities or things to do?
 - What are his/her strengths at school?
 - What are his general qualities?
2. What does your child do when s/he comes from school?
 - Is it the same every afternoon?
3. Does your child often get homeworks or how often does your child get homeworks?
 - Does s/he ever struggle doing his/her homeworks on his/her own?
 - Who helps with the homeworks?
4. Do you tell stories to your child?
 - If yes, what kind of stories?
5. Do you ever read to your child?
 - Do you have reading material?
6. What other reading material is available? In which languages?
7. Does anyone do writing in this house?
 - Tell me what kind of writing happens?
 - What kind of writing does your child do?
8. Does your child have access to a phone?
 - What does your child do with a phone?
9. Do you think that using a phone can help in your child's education?

APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite subject at school and why?
2. What activities do you like doing after school?
3. What do you want to be when you are older and why?
4. Do you ever listen to the radio or watch television?
 - What radio station do you listen to? Do you ever listen to the morning/afternoon children's programme?
 - What do you like/normally watch?
 - Do you watch any educational programmes?
5. How often do you get homework?
 - Who usually helps you with your homeworks?
6. Do you like/enjoy reading?
 - What kind of stories do you like reading?
 - Do you have any reading material?
7. Do you like/enjoy writing?
 - What do you like writing about?
8. Do you have a cell phone/ are you exposed/have access to a cell phone?
 - What do you do with your cell phone?
 - Do you ever read stories online/through your cell phone?

APPENDIX 6: AYANDA'S DRAWING



APPENDIX 7: AYANDA'S STORY

2

Izolo beka beba Ndehlabi khala emanzi gqetheka
edallgeni yakwazi kam yandibetha emlenzeni ndaba
manzi Ndehlabi ndayokhokola ikhokhwa ndanika
nyama ndaba ndavuka ebucuthi nabuya ndabuka
ithivi kagqiba kuzodlala umvungo vaphela ndaya
lala ndavuka ekhaseni ndabamba ndanika ndaya
esikolweni yakhale intyumbi sangena ekhaseni
O sebhalo itest seyigqiba ephuzeni isikolo sagaduka
ndabika ekhaya ndatshintya ndanika impahla zam
ndabukela ithivi neyinyi.



O

APPENDIX 8: THAMSANQA'S FIRST STORY

Love of a child

Once upon a time there was a boy who liked food. The boy was so fat. One day he ate the food at the house. So he asked his mother to go ~~to~~ to Pic'n Pay. So his mother said okay. They took a taxi to Pic'n Pay. They brought a grocery and the boy's sister lost. When

● They were going to get a taxi they got in the taxi. The boy says the child is lost. So the boy looked for his sister. He ran inside Pic'n Pay and pushed a girl and said sorry. and the boy said can you help me find my sister. She said okay.

So they find her in the body guard outside. The boy said she is my sister.

The body guard asked the girl that he is your sister. The girl said yes.

● and the boy said thank you. They go to their mothers.

APPENDIX 9: THAMSANQA'S SECOND STORY

UGly Duckling

(2)

Once upon a time A mother Duck had seven eggs. She kept them safe. One Morning the first Egg hatch and them all hatch. One big egg did not hatch. On Spring the ~~the~~ egg hatch. It was a big fat chick and ugliest duck

● In the world. the mother duck take them to the dam. Ugly duck swim better than the all duck.

On winter she ~~or he~~ left. and In summer She grows and ~~swims~~ swams. The swams we beautiful than him.

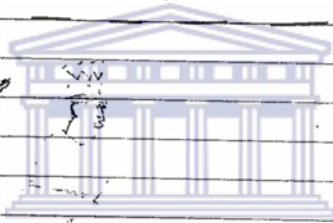
When spring came she was a lone in summer came he did not know that he was the most

● Beautiful swam in the world so the other swams told him the end.

APPENDIX 10: ASANDA'S STORY

PRINCESS AND THE LION

Once upon a time there was a princess. The princess stays with her mother and father. Princess was 21 years old. She likes to draw and likes to read story. One day princess went to the forest. She saw a lion with green eyes. She was very scared.



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The lion take princess to the cage. Princess was screaming very hard. Princess's mother and father were looking for her. She was crying and sitting sad. The lion didn't give her food or something to drink. Princess's mother is crying too. Her father and mother walking in the forest. Princess was screaming and saying mom and dad. Her father had that beautiful voice.

Her father said do you hear that voice, no I don't hear it said mother. Princess screamed again and her mother said I can hear it now. Then they followed the noise.

At last they found they princess. They were happy to see they child. Princess's father is trying to open the cage. But the lion see them trying to open the cage. They opened the cage and ran away from the forest. The lion go's to sleep, and they were safe.

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APPENDIX 11: ASANDA'S DRAWING



APPENDIX 12: LUYANDA'S FIRST POEM

Luyanda

My Dreams

My dreams are like the
life of my self bad dreams
and good dream happy and sad
but not that bad i am
glad of my self but afraid
of my dreams

Some times i have night means
Some times true dreams but
sometimes i can't sleep some i
think of my dreams as a sad
My dreams are like my life
every one have dreams

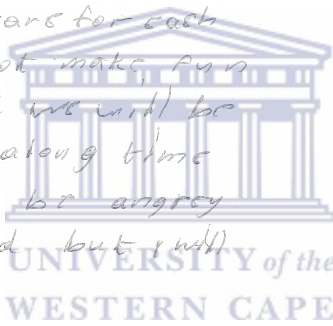
APPENDIX 13: LUYANDA'S SECOND POEM

~~scribble~~

My friends

I love my friend
We are good friends
not bedfriends we love
to chill but we do not
fight we are glad of
each other but we
do not get into

We care for care for each
other we do not make fun
of others and we will be
friends for along time
I will never be angry
with my friend but I will
be happy



APPENDIX 14: ATHANDWA'S STORY

The poor family.

Athandwa

Once upon a time there lived a village girl that had a poor family. They tried to get the family a little of money and food. The girl had nice friends but everytime when she plays with them she just don't feel her self so good. One day she dreamed about her family having a rich house they got to church every day they prayed and prayed. but one day her day become a true family. There dreams came true. In a weeks after they got a new house it was very nice and big. The End



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APPENDIX 15: ATHANDWA'S DRAWING

This is my design:



APPENDIX 16: UMPILE'S POEM

Poem about love

Umptile

Love is something that you can say to anyone to family or some person who loves you like God, God is someone who loves you, you pray him and he will answer you. It means he loves you.

Love is something that is special to someone. If you love someone you will say "I love you" and that person will say "Me too I love you." God loves you that way you are. Love is all of us and love is something that is in your body and mind. And everyone loves you.

Your mother, your father and your family loves you that way you are. And you too you love them.

APPENDIX 17: UMPILE'S STORY

~~Umpile's story~~
"Yizani natsi inkcuka itya ibokhwe"

kuda-tidale kwakhukho umzo wayegedswat ibokhwe ngunina wobokhwe. K! nkwanke yeyikuthende ukucuka kwaye akhwaaz abantu ngento engekho. Ngaye imini waha wayokutyise iibokhwe awayegunisiwa. Wakhwaaza wathi "Yizani bahlali natsi inkcuka itya ibokhwe zAlali". Baza k! abantu babelka batika ka kumfo ehlali elizini elikhu thitka. ~~Abantu~~ abantu ~~bah~~ bahamba baye eadlini zabo, ethubeni inkwanke vaphinda yavive ukube inasithukuthaziya phinda yakhwaaza "Bahlali yizani natsi inkcuka itya ibokhwe zAlali, baphinda abahlali baza babelka baphinda batika inkwanke thitka. Abahlali bandinwa. yinkwanke baphinda eadlini zabo. Ethubeni ehlali inkwanke yatika inkcuka yatya ibokhwe, inkwanke yakhwaaza "Yizani bahlali natsi inkcuka itya ibokhwe". Abahlali bAlali bathi "Yini lenkwanke yasixokisile masigagini". Inkcuka yazitya ibokhwe yazigqiba yahamba.