

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



**Local ways of knowing: Schooling, language, and
literacy in a marginal, culturally distinctive
community in Botswana**

A minor dissertation submitted to the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Education.

Faculty of Humanities
By
Cornelious Binnie Macheng

Student No: MCHCOR001

Supervisor: Associate Professor Mastin Prinsloo

Declaration

I, Cornelious Binnie Macheng, hereby declare that this minor dissertation is entirely my original work and that I have not received any gratuitous assistance towards its production, except for the normal guidance from my supervisor. No part of this work has been submitted in the past to any degree at this university or any other university.

I hereby grant the University of Cape Town licence to reproduce this dissertation, in whole or in part, for purposes of research.

Cornelious Binnie Macheng

(Signed declaration sent by fax from rural Botswana)

10 February 2011

Abstract

In this minor dissertation, I undertook to examine perspectives held by people in one, marginal, culturally distinct immigrant community in respect to schooling, language, and literacy and how these are likely to impact on their children's participation in schools. The methodological frame for both data collection and analysis for this study aligned with those employed in most 'ethnographies of literacy'. I however, settled for what is referred to as an ethnographic-style study to account for time constraints.

Theoretically, my study was informed by insights laid down by social practices researchers and theorists of literacy, or New Literacy Studies scholars. I therefore approached my study of a local, marginalised community group in Botswana from the perspective of literacy as embedded in ideology and power and thus never applied uniformly across social contexts. From this perspective literacy is not a single autonomous skill that people need, irrespective of their diverse social contexts, so as to avoid the so-called social pathology of 'illiteracy'.

This study shows this local community as struggling both to adapt to their social circumstances as a minority cultural and linguistic group while fiercely defending their cultural identity in the face of disparaging educators and others in the wider society. The outcomes of this study paint a picture of hope for migrant groups across Africa; hope that people still manage to hold onto 'local' ways of self-determination and self-sustenance, in the face of pressures for their children to be absorbed as inferior subjects into mass schooling. Local and resistant ways are at times developed when 'local' people draw from their cultural resources as well as on specific aspects from dominant Discourses in the wider society, that suit them as a people, often by resisting institutionally imposed literacy practices. The data also paint a gloomy picture, one where learners and users of language and literacy sanctioned by powerful forces in society continue to be marginalized, as well as the perpetuation of the creation of marginalised minority communities. I recommend, amongst others, more comparative ethnographies of literacy, especially to do with children in moving, migrant or mobile communities similar to the one I studied, for the simple reason that not much ground has yet been covered, in Botswana and elsewhere in Africa.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Associate Professor M. Prinsloo. for guiding the process of this research work. Working with you has been a remarkable but fulfilling academic experience. Throughout the process of this work, you provided a socially comforting, academically empowering, and motivationally sustaining interaction. I thank you so much Mastin.

Kenneth Pule has been with me from the beginning to the end, assisting and supporting me during difficult times. The completion of this enterprising work is thus indebted to him. Le ka moso Rraagwe Ame. Mr Kleinsmith is acknowledged for always appreciating challenges peculiar to students. Printing those journals more than invigorated me, Chris! It will be a great gaffe on my part not to mention Mrs Bitha Koontse for her timely and well thought-out words of encouragement. I am highly humbled and for that, I say 'Montsamaisa bosigo ...' Bitasto.

I also acknowledged my family- Osadiki, Bronia and Cornelious Jr. for their humility, patience and understanding. Thanks a lot for the sacrifice you made during *the* elongated academic expedition. Ke ne ke sa kopafale.

Last, but not least, my sincere recognition goes to people who provided data for this work. To them I say, Ke a leboga!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Contrasting 'literacies' of a focal community with those of 'mainstream communities' in Botswana	1
1.2 Research Question	6
1.2.1 Primary Research Question	6
1.2.2 Secondary Research Questions	6
1.3 Statement of the Problem	7
1.4 The Purpose of the Study	7
1.5 The Significance of the study	8
2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERACY AS SITUATED SOCIAL PRACTICE	9
2.1 A theoretical disjuncture: 'Literacies' in dominant institutions and in ordinary people's everyday life	9
2.1.1 The New Literacy Studies approach to the study of literacy	9
2.1.2 Ideological Model	10
2.1.3 Autonomous Model	11
2.1.4 Literacies	12
2.1.5 Discourses	13
2.1.6 Apprenticeship and Teaching	17
2.1.7 Mediation and 'guiding 'lights'	19
3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	23
3.1 Research Methodology	23
3.2 Instrumentation	24
3.3 Sampling Procedures	25
3.4 Site	25
3.5 The Analysis Process	26
3.6 Ethical considerations	27

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: 'LOCAL' STORY: "WE DO NOT DO THAT IN OUR CULTURE."	29
4.1 The Subjects' Profile	29
4.2 School-going across generations	30
4.3 Language dynamics	33
4.3.1 Schooling and language	33
4.3.2 Language struggles in school	35
4.3.3 Signs of language shift and language variation	36
4.3.4 Speaking English	39
4.4 Greeting and deference at home and school	41
4.5 "A person can lead a good life with little ... reading and writing."	43
4.6 Work and marriage: Routes out of school into local 'ways of being'	45
4.6.1 Moving from school into work	45
4.6.2 Marrying young	46
4.7 Ambivalent attitudes to schooling	47
5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	51
5.1 Socio-culturally framed literacies	51
5.2. Appropriation of literacies for 'specific local purposes'.	51
5.3 Local response to 'acculturation' overtures	58
5.4 Formal educational interventions: On whose terms?	60
5.5 Limitations	61
5.6 Conclusion	62
5.7 Recommendations	63
6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY	65

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts with a brief background of the community that is the focus of research for this study. The chapter goes on to outline the research question and the focus of the research. I follow this route because some background is a key to making sense of the research concern, as it emerged from a puzzlement on my part over how this marginal community was represented in popular accounts with regard to community members (non-) participation in school and how community members maintained their community identity, language and literacy despite their marginal status in the larger village community. My research starts with a query as to what an ethnographic study of this group's language and literacy practices, informed by the resources of a social practices approach (Street, 1984) to the study of language and literacy, might illuminate around this puzzlement.

1.1 Contrasting 'literacies' of a focal community with those of 'mainstream communities' in Botswana

Botswana is a landlocked country in Southern Africa, nestled between South Africa to the south and southeast, Zimbabwe to the northeast, Zambia to the north and Namibia to the west. Formally known as Bechuanaland Protectorate, the country gained independence from Britain on 30th September 1966 to become the Republic of Botswana. This Southern African country is internationally acclaimed for her multi-party democracy and has so far held ten peaceful and successful general elections (Government of Botswana, 2007). The first elections were held in 1965 and the latest in 2009. During this period, the country has witnessed three smooth presidential successions. The current president, Lieutenant General Ian Khama Seretse Khama; the son of the first president-Sir Seretse Khama, became the fourth president of the country on 1st April 2008. For political administration, Botswana has ten District Councils each with Sub-Districts, two City Councils and four Town Councils. The country is governed through three arms of government, the legislative, the judiciary and the executive (Government of Botswana, 2007). Ethnic groups in the country are led by Chiefs (Dikgosi) who ascend the throne through either birthright or nomination. While Parliamentarians represent their constituents in the National Assembly (Parliament), Dikgosi have membership in Ntlo Ya Dikgosi (formerly House of Chiefs), which is part of the legislative arm of government entrusted with customary matters.

Setswana is the national language, while English is the official medium of communication (Government of Botswana, 2007; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008)

The people who are the focus of this study are part of an ethno-linguistic community found across Botswana. This community originates in Zimbabwe and first settled in Botswana about four or so decades ago, mainly due to the Zimbabwean liberation wars of the 1960s and 1970s as well as, it would seem, for the quest for its members to broaden their market base; the members of the community are predominately entrepreneurs who produce and sell locally manufactured merchandise. Initially, members of the community settled in the northern areas of Botswana, around Francistown¹, and later spread across the country. In Botswana, the community came to be referred to as the Zezuru, apparently after their language, Zezuru. The language is one of several dialects of Shona, one of the national languages in Zimbabwe (PanAfriL10n), where it is spoken mainly in the capital city Harare and its periphery. According to PanAfriL10n, there are six dialects of Shona, each with sub-dialects found both within and without Zimbabwe. Karanga (southern Shona) is spoken by the largest number of people and is found mainly in the areas surrounding Masvingo and the Midlands province. The second largest group speaks Zezuru (central Shona), while the third largest group speaks Korekore (northern Shona), which is spoken by people near Mvurwi and in places leading to the Zambian border. Other dialects of Shona are Manyika, spoken in eastern Zimbabwe near Mutare and around the Manicaland province, and Ndaou, which has majority of speakers in places along the border with and in Mozambique (PanAfriL10n, online).

Nyati-Ramahobo (2008), drawing on the Botswana Population and Housing census of 2001, estimates that as of January 2008, three thousand people spoke Zezuru in Botswana while Cook (cited in PanAfriL10n, online) placed the number of Zezuru speakers in Botswana at eleven thousand. Unlike other ethno-linguistic groupings in Botswana, both Tswana and non-Tswana²,

¹ Francistown is found in the northern part of the country near the boarder with Zimbabwe and is one of the two cities found in Botswana. The other is the capital city Gaborone.

² Tswana communities are those who generally speak Setswana or languages that are dialects of Setswana. Non-Tswana groupings were traditionally enslaved by Tswana groupings and speak non-Setswana or 'minority' languages (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008). Certain areas are identified with certain ethnic groups in Botswana, for example, the Bakgatla tribe/ethnic group is predominantly found around Kgatleng District and Mochudi village,

which can be identified with certain parts of the country, Zezuru communities are found all over the country, with the majority of them settling in cities, major towns and major villages. Although they initially and occasionally travelled from one area to the other without erecting permanent settlements, today members of the community have permanent residences across the country. For example, the extended family under study settled in Mochudi in the late 1970s and although only one household settled then, today a number of households belonging to members of the community are a common sight, thus making this group of Zezuru-speakers one of a number of distinct ethno-linguistic communities found in the village.

Like other social groups whose languages are not officially used in government institutions in Botswana (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008), the Zezuru-speakers can be viewed as marginalized and their language as one of several indigenous or minority languages found in the country. According to Nyati-Ramahobo (2008), out of the twenty-eight languages spoken in Botswana and because of ‘assimilationist policies’, twenty-six of these languages are at risk of disappearing as they are officially excluded from use in schools, and the media. The Zezuru-speakers are also distinct from other communities in that the majority of them tend to belong to a Christian denomination called the Vapostori aka the ‘Gospel of God Church’ (Wapitso, 2008) whose membership is characterized by male members identifiable by clean-shaven heads and long groomed beard. While men dress ordinarily, the women dress in white robes with large headscarves. Men and women attend the same church services.

There is a common perception in Botswana that members of this community deviate from mainstream ways (Molosiwa, 2000, and Kebotsamang, 2004): “They do not send their children to school neither do they seek help from doctors, hospitals and Western medical institutions when they are sick” (Mphusu, 2004: 13). Members of the community rarely utilize mainstream facilities like schools, health care centres and hospitals but prefer the use of African traditional medicine or over-the-counter medication, and rely on African traditional midwifery during child labour rather than mainstream doctors and hospitals. Moreover, community members do not often seek formal employment in the mainstream public and private sectors of the economy and

while the Bakwena and Bakgalagadi are found around Kweneng District and Molepolole village and Kgalagadi/Ghanzi Districts and Tsabong and Hukuntsi / Ghanzi villages respectively.

rarely work in private or public sectors employment, although they are renowned for their commercial prowess.

The disposition towards craft production and trade on the part of Zezuru community members is manifested in a number of ways. On the one hand, both young and old male members of the community are renowned for the production and sale of locally manufactured wooden furniture such as tables, beds, cupboards, and so on, and metal household equipment like buckets, tripods, baths, livestock bells, to mention a few. Furthermore, male members of the community are competitively involved in the taxi and informal motor mechanical industries. On the other hand, both young and older female members of the community are responsible for clothing other members of the family, and they design and produce these clothes themselves, in addition to producing, sourcing and selling fruit and vegetables as well as household items such as wall decorations and floor mats. Members of the community acquire these skills directly from other family members who had similarly acquired them, and not from institutions such as Brigades³ or vocational (now technical) colleges, which offer craft or vocational (technical) training courses. Wapitso (2008: 34) quotes Pastor Ike Malunga of the Gospel of God Church in Francistown:

The founder of the church, Johane Masowe, stressed the importance of an economically independent religious community. He was a carpenter and maintained that all members must be independent tradesmen. We are satisfied with how we live. We are not rich and we are not poor. But we don't sleep on empty stomachs.

Further, Johane Masowe is quoted as having said:

³ The educationist, Patrick van Rensburg pioneered brigades in Botswana through his concept of 'education with production' to provide an alternative system of education which integrated vocational skills into the secondary school curriculum. Initially brigades were located within community secondary schools such as Swaneng Hill Secondary School in Serowe, Shashe River Secondary School in Tonota village near Francistown, etc, where secondary school students were required to take both academic and craft subjects (brick laying, auto mechanics, carpentry etc). Brigades later spread to other areas where communities ran them independent of schools, thus they ceased sharing the same premises with schools. Currently, brigades have been appropriated and funded by the government of Botswana (Ministry of Education and Skills Development). Together with vocational and technical colleges; brigades offer accredited vocational training for secondary school leavers (Government of Botswana, 1997).

I have brought to you the Holy Spirit from whom you are going to receive gifts that will make you satisfied and you must use these hands industriously. Do not have these blessed hands put to work outside the church because you will lose the Holy Spirit and die of starvation (Wapitso 2008: 35).

Kebotsamang (2004: 14) conclusively claims, “The first thought that comes to mind about the Zezuru is business. They are a self-reliant community... They are great entrepreneurs, which everybody wants to emulate.” On the whole therefore, members of the community are said to be serious and dedicated craftspeople and traders.

Regarding schooling, members of the community have a reputation for not enrolling their children in formal mainstream schools: “They do not send their children to school ...” (Mphusu, 2004: 13). Unlike other communities which “rely on formal education systems to prepare their children for participation in settings involving literacy” (Heath, 1983; quoted in Collins and Blot, 2003: 42), some families in this community in Botswana first started sending children to school only within the last twenty or thirty years, with the majority of children who were enrolled withdrawing before completing four years of schooling. Despite this more recent development, it surprises, and perhaps worries local educational authorities that of the enrolled children who proceed beyond Standard Four, only a few complete primary education, with enrolment numbers drastically declining in secondary and tertiary levels of education. Kebotsamang (2004: 14) quotes one elderly member of the community as having said, “No, no, no! Our children do not go to school. We teach them vocational skills in accordance with our culture”.

Whereas other communities in Botswana regard and conceive of schooling and, by extension, reading and writing practices associated with it, as necessary in equipping learners with a “heritage no one can take away; a kind of heritage one only parts with at the event of death” (Macheng, 1990), and an “investment that will lead to a higher quality of human capacity and productivity ... and to a better quality life for everyone” (Botswana Government, 1997: 28), members of this community do not seem to agree. Their perceptions of schooling and uses of literacy tend not to compare to, but rather contrast with the dominant school literacy practices. Local literacy practices in this community are acquired through social activities in settings where they are meaningful and functional. The meanings and functions of literacy acquired in this way

are rooted in and shaped by the very people who understand their settings and whose circumstances and ideologies drive and cement what they regard as legitimate social practices.

Having given a preliminary descriptive overview of the focal community, I now identify the research question and sub-questions that I set out to answer in my research. I go on in the following chapter to outline the theoretical perspectives on literacy as situated practice in local community settings that informed my selection of the research site as well as the research question.

1.2 Research Question

The study sets to understand the situated nature of language and literacy practices⁴ of one marginal and culturally distinctive minority community in Botswana through the following research question and subsequent secondary research questions.

1.2.1 Primary Research Question

What perspectives on schooling, language and literacy does a marginal, culturally distinctive local community in Botswana hold, on what bases and with what sorts of consequences on school going children?

1.2.2 Secondary Research Questions

- i. What languages and language resources are central to the everyday life of members of the community?
- ii. How do the literacy practices of members of the community in their home setting relate to mainstream literacy practices, with what consequences for school-based learning?
- iii. What are the common activities (literacy events⁵) in the home setting in the community in which reading and writing feature, and how do these blend with other activities and communicative practices?

⁴ 'Literacy Practices': These are ways of acting and behaving that reflect power positions and structures with regard to reading and writing; or ways of reading and writing that embody folk models and beliefs (Barton, et al, 2000; and Street, 2001.)

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There could be no doubt that despite having unconventional notions of schooling and its associated reading and writing practices, members of the focal community in Botswana have certain experiences with reading and writing in their daily lives, both inside and outside of their homes. These experiences result when, within the community, unschooled people interact with other members of the same community who have attended school at some point and thus have direct experiences with school-based reading and writing. On the other hand, the members of the community interact with other people from the wider society, who are in the majority in Botswana and who form the market for and source of their produce and raw materials respectively. Consequently, members of the community might be said to live in a print-related environment, however limited or different their print-linked activities are, compared to those communities where school related activities and practices are almost a daily phenomenon. Be that as it may, not much is known concerning the community's views on schooling and everyday understandings and uses of reading and writing, and as a result these have perhaps been taken for granted or misrepresented by outsiders.

The focus of this study therefore is to investigate, describe and make sense of the understandings, experiences and attitude toward out-of-school language and literacy practices shown by members of a socially marginal and culturally distinctive minority community in Botswana, and their implications toward school-based learning.

1.4 The Purpose of the Study

The 'research purposes' (Maxwell, 1996:16) of this study can thus be summarised as follows:

- To describe one community's everyday uses and meanings of language and reading and writing practices.
- To develop an account of what members of the community think about the relationship between their language and literacy practices and schooling.

⁵ 'Literacy Events': Literacy Events are conceived as occurrences where people's interaction surrounds the use of print; literacy events can be photographed instances depicting how people interact through text (Barton, 1996; and Street, 2001)

- To refine current understandings of the social meanings and uses of reading and writing practices in school and in everyday lives in a Botswana context, through the study of situated aspects of language and literacy as socio-cultural phenomena.

1.5 The Significance of the study

One anticipated contribution of this study is that more will be known concerning the situated meanings of schooling and language and literacy practices in communities other than mainstream ones, especially in a young developing African democracy like Botswana, where little seems to be known, or is down-played, regarding the socially situated practices of language and literacy of minority communities. The research will therefore bring fresh light to this topic.

This fresh light is necessitated by the fact that related studies have mainly, though not exclusively, concentrated on non-African contexts. For example, Kendrick et al (2005) document a collection of studies concerning family, youth and community literacies in settings such as Britain, Australia, Canada, and the United States. It is encouraging however to note that this collection also included studies from South Africa and Pakistan. Also, as regards South Africa, Prinsloo and Breier (1996) document literacy practices and literacy experiences from multiple local community contexts in that country. Though commendable these and similar insightful collections are, it is nevertheless worth noting that they do not capture and represent literacy as experienced by minority communities in Botswana. This particular study will hopefully contribute to our understanding of how one amongst numerous peripheral communities in sub-Saharan Africa engages with mainstream reading, writing and schooling practices, and with what sorts of consequences.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: LITERACY AS SITUATED SOCIAL PRACTICE

This chapter covers the theoretical framework underpinning the study. It reviews the relevant literature, noting what research in the area of study has found. Literature perused thus far was authored by amongst others, a group of literacy researchers concerned with ethnographic perspectives on literacy. These included those whose work came to be known as the “classic first-generation ethnographic studies of literacy, mainly made up of Heath, 1983; Scribner and Cole, 1981; Street, 1984. The second-generation studies of literacy included, amongst others, Barton and Hamilton, 1998, Besnier, 1993; Kulick and Stroud, 1993, Prinsloo and Breier, 1996 (see Baynham, 2004: 287). In more recent times, according to Hull & Schultz, (2002: 285), the most fruitful accounts of literacy for educational purposes have come from ethnographies of out-of-school literacies. These ethnographies of out-of-school literacies were carried out by researchers identified by Baynham (2004: 287) as the third generation, concerned once again with the ethnographic study of literacy but shifting the gaze from a focus on literacy and learning as print towards the study of literacy outside the classroom that looks at the multiple semiotics of print combined with other semiotic modalities, including images, graphics, aural and kinetic modes.

2.1 A theoretical disjuncture: ‘Literacies’ in dominant institutions and in ordinary people’s everyday life

The theoretical and methodological approaches informing this study are taken from the social practices approach to literacy research that has over the years been carried out in a number of countries across the world (Heath, 1982, 1983; Street, 1984, 2005; Gee, 1990, 1996; Scribner and Cole, 1981; Prinsloo & Breier, 1996; Collins and Blot, 2003; and Purcell-Gates, 2004). This body of work is pertinent for it undertook to research literacy ethnographically; as it takes place in people’s lives, in different domains, through different languages, and for a variety of purposes, in addition to construing literacy in a new fashion in which traditionally taken-for-granted conceptualisations of literacy are challenged (Barton 1994; Kendrick, Rogers, Smythe & Anderson, 2005; Street, 2005).

2.1.1 The New Literacy Studies approach to the study of literacy

The main theory underpinning this study, as is the case with similar studies before it, is sometimes referred to as the ‘socio-cultural studies of literacy’ (e.g., Bartlett, 2008), or what Prinsloo (2005) calls the ‘social practices perspective’; also commonly known as the ‘New Literacy Studies’ (NLS) (Street, 1983, 1993, 2003; Barton, 1994; Gee, 1990, 1996). The NLS

approach could also be viewed as what Masny (2005; 171) termed “Beyond Freire”, since its emergence at least partly followed on Freire’s work and is based on the profound attentions given to the “considerable debates and chaos ... with regard to multiple meanings assigned to the term *literacy*“(emphasis in the original).

The NLS perspective, according to Barton (1994: 34) “starts from people’s uses of literacy, not from their formal learning of literacy. It also starts from everyday life and the everyday activities which people are involved in”. Similarly, Gee (1990:288) argues: “Any literacy must be defined as fluency in a given social practice, and cannot be defined in terms of ‘the ability to read and write’”, in some kind of decontextualised sense, which conceptualization Gee regards as “nonsensical” (Gee, 1990: 27) precisely because it fails to recognise the specificity of all instances of reading and writing. The NLS perspective privileges social contexts as settings in which literacy research should be done, if the overriding intent is to discover the actual meanings and uses of literacy of people concerned. Collins and Blot (2003) claim that every socio-cultural context of literacy practices is ideologically richly embedded. As a consequence, NLS researchers argue that literacy uses, functions and meanings are determined adequately when studied in context, with regard to the power dynamics and complex ideological positions that pertain both locally, as well as between local and larger contexts. In the NLS approach, local contexts should be understood as contexts where people engage with each other and with things in their daily activities, including those activities that include literacy. What pertains in such complex and diverse contexts has been explained, amongst others, by Kulick and Stroud (1993) who studied a group of villagers in Papua New Guinea. They concluded in their study that the cultural and social circumstances under which groups of people encounter specific literacies impact directly on how they take hold of those literacies, and how they incorporate them into or isolate them from their existing cultural repertoire.

2.1.2 Ideological Model

Street (1984) made a shaping contribution to the NLS through his “ideological model of literacy” which challenges the “autonomous model” (Street, 1993: 5-6). The ideological model conceptualizes literacy and literacy practices as “inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in the society and ... recognises the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts” (Street, 1993: 7). The model therefore aims to be culturally sensitive, leading to the accommodation of meanings and uses of literacy in

diverse social contexts. Indeed, the ideological model does celebrate diversity. This celebration of diversity is evident in the sense that the ideological model sees literacy in plural and multiple terms; as ‘literacies’ (Street, 2003) or as ‘multiliteracies’ (Rogers & Schofield, cited in Anderson et.al, 2005: 208; The New London Group, 2000 and Masny, 2005; 171) which are rooted in and shaped by the social, cultural, political and historical contexts of communities in which literacy has meanings and legitimate uses. In other words, the ideological model embraces a ‘situated social literacy’ perspective (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Heath, 1983; Street, 1995) which regards literacy as a complex set of social practices which are context specific: the uses to which it is put, the manner in which it is acquired or learned, and most importantly, what it means to be literate are determined by the socio-cultural contexts in which literacy occurs (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Heath, 1983; Street, 1995). Literacy and literacy practices therefore, are always embedded in ideologically shaped social practices and in socially constructed epistemological principles (Street, 2003). NLS researchers understand literacy from a perspective that recognises the diverse environments, circumstances or situations in which people live, act, interact and engage; they are concerned to examine how such perspectives are embedded in the power and ideological structures of societies. This research approach to the study of literacy, therefore, calls not for a universal, one-size-fits-all conceptualisation, researching and application of literacy, but rather for a more inclusive and more appreciative way of dealing with literacy, given the variations that ensue from it, as well as from its contested nature in specific settings. Kendrick et al (2005: 22) add: “Literacy practices are, then, aspects not just of culture but also of power structures. Viewed as such, school-sanctioned literacy ... is just one of the multiplicities of literacies (or literacy practices)”.

From the NLS perspective, and its ideological model, therefore, literacy is examined within complex networks of social practices and defined within the contexts of communities, thus strongly challenging the assumption that literacy skills and knowledge are generic and easily transferable from one context to another as some schools and other dominant institutions would normatively have us believe (Kendrick et al, 2005); but rather that these are situated and manifested in ‘situ’ (Masny, 2005: 172), and embedded in wider social structures.

2.1.3 Autonomous Model

Chu (1999: 350) regards the autonomous model of literacy (as identified and critiqued by Street, 1993; 2003), as ‘short-sighted’ because it is insensitive to variations in people’s

meanings and practices of literacy. The model conceives of literacy in singular terms that are assumed to be applicable in diverse social contexts, regardless of the meanings and uses of people concerned. Prinsloo (2006: 8) sees the model as:

Framing literacy in the context of an ideological celebration of Western constructs of modernity and progress, where literacy, regardless of context, was seen as producing particular universal characteristics and giving rise to particular good effects that coincided with Western forms of social organisation and communicative strategies.

Presented and understood in this sense, the autonomous model imposes “Western conceptions of literacy onto other cultures or within a country those of one class or cultural group onto others” (Street, 2003: 12). The autonomous model further couches literacy in binary terms, where one is either literate or ‘illiterate’, with ‘the illiterate’ normally not coming from dominant ‘civilised’ countries or social classes or social groups. Literacy is then used as a therapy or a prescription that supposedly cleanses people of the pathology that is ‘illiteracy’ (Gibson, 1996). The model is inconsistent with what actually ensues in people’s socio-cultural contexts. It is therefore not accidental that through the lenses of the autonomous model, “literacy is (regarded as) a panacea to open doors to social status and economic success” (Gibson, 1996: 460). Furthermore, according to the autonomous model, certain social consequences like “‘modernisation’, progress’, and economic rationality” (Street, cited in Prinsloo and Breier, 1996: 2) are assumed to follow from literacy, though these claims have been shown to be suspect or exaggerated.

This kind of thinking, is flawed, since it fails to recognize that “there is considerable variation in literacy practices, in the meanings ascribed to literacy, and in the ways in which literacy practices are carried out in different contexts” (Kendrick et al, 2005: 1).

2.1.4 Literacies

Masny (2005) similarly views literacy as context-specific and hence embedded in ideology, power struggle and identity construction, as well as including multiple semiotic modalities, hence multiliteracies. She sees literacies as

operationalized and actualized in situ. They take on meaning according to the way a sociocultural group appropriates them. Literacies of a social group are taken up as visual, oral, and written... that interweave with religion, gender, race, ideology, and power (Masny, 2005: 172).

Masny argues that one consequence of the socio-cultural and socio-historical nature of literacy is that literacy operates as a “social construct” (Masny, 2005:172) which is a consequence of the engagement individuals have as they ‘read the world, read the words and read themselves’ and as individuals talk, read, write, and value, thus constructing meanings within their particular contexts (Masny, 2005). Through the social construction of literacies, therefore, people also construct their identities, or participate in identity work.

In South Africa, studies have found that literacy is embedded in ideology, context specific, and multifaceted. The findings of these studies thus challenge the views held in the dominant communities and institutions like schools. McEwan and Malan’s (1996) study in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, for example, presents contrasting views, where one of the respondents observed: “Education advantages, it gives you the green light. It disadvantages, it makes you forget your tradition” (McEwan and Malan, 1996: 1), and another observed: “We are suffering and if we had studied we would not be struggling” (McEwan and Malan, 1996: 7); and, again, another respondent lamented “The kind of education I have one cannot see” (McEwan and Malan, 1996: 9). These observations emphasize both the perceived importance of school and education-based literacy practice and the dilemmas that face unschooled people, as to how they are regarded and what they can do, despite being unschooled.

2.1.5 Discourses

Gee (1990; 1996; 1999) similarly shows his social understanding of the notion of literacies through his concept of ‘Discourse’ (written with a capital ‘D’ to distinguish it from ‘discourse’ as referring simply to units of language). Pahl and Rowsell (2006: 17) describe discourses as “language in use” and Discourses as “language in use plus other stuff”. Gee describes what Pahl and Rowsell refer to as ‘other stuff’ inherent in Discourses as “ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles in specific groups of people... [And] are always and everyday social” (Gee, 1990: xix). In addition, Discourses determine who belongs to them and people do not necessarily choose which Discourses to belong to, since,

A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and ‘artifacts’, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or ‘social network’, or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful ‘role’ (Gee, 1996: 131, emphasis in the original).

Discourses determine what people mean by, and how they use literacy as well as who becomes a member of a Discourse. Gee (1990: xviii) argues that “There is no such thing as ‘reading’ or ‘writing’, only reading and writing *something* ... in a certain way with certain values, while at least appearing to think and feel in certain ways” (emphasis in the original), hence literacy is always embedded in Discourses (Gee, 1996: 41). To appreciate distinct socio-cultural contexts within which literacy is manifested is to appreciate the Discourses that shape and are shaped by literacy practices. Gee (1990: xix) further contends that because Discourses are multiple, “literacy is always multiple: there are many literacies, each of which involves control of Discourses involving print ... Discourses are not, and often do not, represent consistent and compatible values”. The latter part of the citation above calls, therefore for the acceptance of other ways of viewing literacy; as literacies for example, to include those instances where print is backgrounded but other social practices are foregrounded. Gee (1996: 41) distinguishes between what he calls ‘Primary Discourses’ and ‘Secondary Discourses’. The former are associated with a person’s early or primary socializations at home with intimate members of the family or significant caregivers from the community. The latter usually takes place after the initial socialization, in what he calls secondary institutions of non-intimates. Secondary Discourses comprise ways of being in dominant institutions like schools, the work place, government offices and the community institutions like churches, shops and so on. Secondary Discourses, according to Gee (1996: 41) “build on, and extend, the uses of language and the values, attitudes and beliefs we acquired as part of our Primary Discourses”. Discourses thus always embed literacy and language. Most importantly, how literacy is conceptualised, ‘taken-hold’ of (Kulick and Stroud, 2003) and contested depend on specific Discourses, challenging the commonly falsified universality, neutrality and monolithic nature of literacy held in the autonomous model (Street, 2003; Gee, 1996; Barton, et al, 2000).

In light of the foregoing, it is important to note problems emanating from privileging some Discourses over others since Discourses ought to and do complement each other. Gee, (1996: 141) agrees:

A person’s primary Discourse serves as a ‘framework’ or ‘base’ for their acquisition of other Discourses later in life. It also shapes, in part, the form this acquisition and learning will take and the final result... Discourses acquired later in life can influence a person’s primary Discourse, having various effects on it, (re) shaping it in various ways... These mutual influences among Discourses underlie the process of historical change of Discourses.

The influence one Discourse has on the other should seem to be mutual and not imposed to avoid rejections and frustrations or what Gee (1996: 146) calls “tensions and conflicts” or a clash of Discourses (Gee, 1996). This mutual influence is important since people produce texts (meanings) throughout their entire lives. People construct meaning symbolically and not only through reading or writing but also through oral speech, visual images and gestures amongst others, as they believe, value, think, and behave (Gee, 1990; 1996). This, then, has serious implications for Gee’s description of literacy as the “*mastery of a secondary Discourse*” (Gee, 1996: 143, emphasis in the original) if such secondary Discourses are tied only to print. Viewed as ‘mastery of a secondary Discourse’ literacy practices in dominant social institutions like schools then act or are made to act as ‘*gates*’ Gee (1996: 146, emphasis in the original) to keep away those whose primary Discourse do not match those of the said institutions. Thus, tensions and marginalisation are perpetuated. Gee, (1996: 146) elaborates:

Very often dominant groups in a society apply constant tests of the fluency of the dominant Discourses in which their power is symbolized; these tests become both tests of natives or, ... fluent users of the Discourse, and *gates* to exclude non-natives – people whose very conflicts with dominant Discourses show they were not, in fact, ‘born’ to them and who can often show this even when they have full mastery of a dominant Discourse on most occasions of use. The sorts of tension and conflict ... are particularly acute ... between one’s primary Discourse and a dominant secondary Discourse, since one’s primary Discourse defines one’s ‘home’ identity and that of people with whom one is intimate and intimately connected.

It can be seen from the foregoing citation that Gee sees Discourses as being instrumental in the processes of identity construction and that they always have a potential to act as ‘Gate-keeping’ resources that restrict access for those who are outside them, or whose ‘ways of knowing’ are incompatible with particular secondary Discourses; that some children’s primary Discourses are compatible with school-based Discourses, while other children’s primary Discourses are not. This is consequential in that children arrive at school with quite differing resources and experiences, including those involving print. Gee (2008: 145-6) uses the descriptors “well-precured” and “poorly-precured” to describe the match and mismatches that normally ensue when Discourses interface, thus pointedly expressing the fact that homes and families, as sites for initial socialization into people’s primary Discourses are precursors for and determine the secondary Discourses associated with the communication of non-intimates in institutional settings.

Gee argues that the flow from one Discourse to the other should be a natural extension, where the primary Discourses of children contain elements, values, attitudes, practices, and so forth that link to the school-based Discourses, thus advantaging children who possess them since such children's primary Discourses serve as precursors for the school domain (Gee, 1990 and 2008). In contrast, secondary Discourses could prove to be a site of conflict if the child's primary Discourse does not match, but conflicts with the school-based ones.

Gee, (2008:140) sheds more light on his notion of Discourses and expands on it through his discussion of what he calls 'semiotic domains', and their 'design grammars, and 'affinity groups'. A 'semiotic domain' recruits one or more modalities such as oral or written language, images, equations, symbols, sounds, gestures, graphs, artefacts, etc to communicate distinctive types of messages. Semiotic domains are complex, diverse, and characterized by a grouping of people who have cognitive and social interests in common as well as a set of standards and norms that hold the group together, as associates of some sort. Examples of semiotic domains that Gee gives include cellular biology, postmodern literary criticism, first-person-shooter video games, advertisements, Roman Catholic theology, modernist painting and midwifery (Gee, 2008: 141). Communicative practices within domains are organised in terms of a 'design grammar', which is a set of principles or patterns in terms of which materials in the domain are combined to communicate complex meanings (Gee, 2008). Mastering a semiotic domain means joining an affinity group, usually as a beginner or an 'apprentice' who, over time, becomes a 'fluent' member. Gee (2008) asserts that people are immersed over time into semiotic domains, through historical trajectories shaped by shared 'specialized representations, modalities, knowledge, and practices' which determine whether people later join institutionalized semiotic domains as 'well precursed', 'poorly precursed', or 'middle precursed' (Gee, 2008: 145-6). While the first two categories point to a binary context, the last category suggests, rather a continuum. Dominant Discourses, unfortunately, at least until recently, have histories of failing to realize that, according to Gee (2008: 145-6),

(m)ore and more domains outside of school ... are important for mastery of important domains later in life... a process that short-circuits the importance of schooling, especially public schools and schools that restrict their curriculum to the basics and traditional subjects traditionally taught.

As a result of identity construction and power struggles inherent in Discourses and/or semiotic domains, including the quest for the attainment of "fluent control over secondary

Discourses...” (Gee, 1990: 153) or because of “conflict and tension between Discourses and within individuals when they operate within certain Discourses” (Gee, 1996: 145), people have been known to devise means through which they intend to get by despite being ‘not at home’ within the constraints of particular Discourses. Again, people have been known to hold on to their self-contracts, despite such identities being belittled or inconsistent with dominant Discourses because, as Gee (1996: 146) argues, “there happens to be an advantage to failing to master fully mainstream Discourses” and apparently some “domains outside of school” for example have the potential to ... “short-circuit the importance of schooling” (Gee, 2008: 145-6). One technique of getting by under the constraints of dominant Discourses is what Gee (1996: 145) refers to as “mushfake” which is to “make do with something less when the real thing is not available” leading to “partial acquisition coupled with meta-knowledge and strategies to ‘make do’”. The other strategy is called ‘filtering’ which Gee (1996: 164) describes as, “a process whereby aspects of the language, attitudes, values and other elements of certain types of secondary Discourses... are filtered into primary Discourse” or outside school domains. In conclusion, it is worth noting that Gee’s (cf. 1990; 1996; 2008) notion of Discourses provides a frame for understanding the connection among literacy, culture, identity, and power. Hull & Schultz (2002: 361) conclude that “Gee draws attention away from a solitary focus on learning and literacy use in school settings and argues for an understanding of learning, literacy, and identity construction in and out of schools and across the life span.”

2.1.6 Apprenticeship and Teaching

Gee (1990) contends that the focus of literacy studies cannot be, and ought not to be on language, or even literacy itself as has traditionally been the case. Rather the focus must be on social practices (Gee, 1990:46) so that human activity is described in specific contexts for specific purposes and specific meanings. Gee, (1996: 144) further strongly argues that, “non-literate cultures have secondary Discourses which, while they do not involve print, involve a great many of the same skills, behaviours, and ways of thinking that we associate with literacy”. In the light of Gee’s assertions, it is notable that unschooled people are sometimes described as having developed ways of acting and communicating around print such that the lack of reading and writing skills do not appear as a problem for them. Thus, McEwan and Malan (1996: 105) point out: “Ethnographic studies have indicated that a lack of schooled literacy may in practice be less of an impediment than has been assumed”. This is so because particular reading and writing abilities and activities are sometimes realized through

processes of ‘apprenticeship and mediation’ (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996: 26) in out-of-school contexts. I deal with mediation later and now go on to examine ideas around apprenticeship as learning and teaching strategies.

Apprenticeship involves the “acquisition of literacy and numeracy through informal learning from peers, relatives or other persons who display and deploy” literate skills (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996: 26). Expert members within a particular social domain or site of practice frequently apprentice novices in those domains to the Discourses and social practices with which they function. Since people are apprenticed as they are socialized into Discourses, people have ways of learning from their immediate social environment: through apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship links well with what Bruner (cited in Gregory, 2005: 23) calls scaffolding in which adults or persons with expertise provide a scaffold to assist the young or the novice gain competence in a task or a skill. This concept of apprenticeship or scaffolding is further extended by way of Vygotsky’s concept of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) (Dixon-Krause, 2000) which is described as the space between what a child is capable of doing alone and what the child can do now with adults’ assistance or what the child is capable of doing alone ‘tomorrow’. ZPD can also be viewed as a child’s or adult’s engagement in an instructional or social activity that is too difficult for her/him to perform independently or the child’s /adult’s performance supported by an adult or capable peer (Dixon-Krause (2000: 15).

People acquire and learn differently, through apprenticeship and overt teaching, respectively (Gee, 1990). Gee (1990) distinguishes between learning and acquisition, and argues that Discourses are not “mastered by overt instruction... but by enculturation (‘apprenticeship’) into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse” (Gee, 1990: 146 –147). In short, Gee sees the major difference between primary and secondary Discourses as closely related to learning and acquisition because, whereas primary Discourses are acquired or learnt almost unconsciously, secondary Discourses are acquired and learnt in institutional practice or taught at school (Gee, 1990: 146). Some people “value acquisition and so tend to expose children to adults modelling some activity and eventually the child picks it up...as a gestalt” (Gee, 1996: 138), while other cultures “value teaching and thus break down what is to be mastered into sequential steps and analytical parts” (Gee, 1996: 139). Gee, (1996: 139) contends that while

acquisition is a good form of learning for being able to perform, learning is good for meta-level knowledge, and that “acquisition must precede learning; apprenticeship must precede overt teaching”. In summary, acquisition and learning can be described as follows:

Acquisition is a process of acquiring something by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching. It happens in natural settings, which are meaningful and functional in the sense that acquirers know that they need to acquire the thing they are exposed to in order to function and they in fact want to so function. This is how most people come to control their first language (Gee, 1990: 146).

Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection. This teaching or reflection involves explanation and analysis... It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter (Gee, 1990: 146).

2.1.7 Mediation and 'guiding' lights'

Mediation in literacy practices refers to the practice whereby 'insiders' help novices or 'outsiders' with specific literacy activities, which might include coding and decoding of print but will also usually include situated understandings or specialist knowledge as to how such print related activities have effect (Gee, 1996.) Mediation is shown in instances where:

Literacy tasks are jointly achieved within peer groups or social networks; the use of written communication is therefore not fully or always dependent on individual ability to read or write in a particular format...various forms of socially specific skills operate in these social networks. The 'illiterate' have access to institutions, which require written interaction (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996: 27).

Gregory (2005: 23) uses Baynham's (1995) frame of mediators of literacy to refer to “siblings close in age” who do not only offer literacy skills, but initiate younger members of the family into whole new Discourses (Gee, 1996), comprising ways of behaving, valuing, and expressing new opinions, beliefs, and views. In this sense, a mediator becomes “a person who makes his or her skills available to others, on a formal or informal basis, for them to accomplish specific literacy purposes” Gregory (2005: 23). Gregory (2005: 23) also borrows Padmore's concept of 'guiding lights' to refer to special mediators like grandparents, aunts, or friends, who mediate, scaffold or provide support and guidance in literacy matters. Though the concept of 'guiding lights' has often been used in relationships where adults are normally the ones who provide guidance, the reverse is also possible since children can also mediate or provide similar guidance to adults, as was the case in relation to individuals described in

studies carried out in South Africa (McEwan and Malan, 1996) where some people utilised the services of other people to read the Bible and write letters respectively, since they could not read themselves despite being people of authority and seniority in their social contexts. Through their study, McEwan and Malan (1996) found that mediation was an important aspect in people's literacy practices. They show in one case, how situated linguistic, literacy and "cultural resources are far more significant than the schooled literacy that one Mr Manyala lacks" (McEwan and Malan, 1996: 15). They observe:

Mr Manyala says that he does not need to read the Bible during a service because there will be someone else to do this. Reading serves a functional purpose here; even though Mr Manyala does not do the reading himself, he is still recognised as the one who interprets and reveals the meaning of the words (McEwan and Malan, 1996: 15)

Similarly, Mpoyiya and Prinsloo (1996: 184-185) show how a certain minister ("Mxolisi") in a local Zion church did not need reading and writing skills to perform both his private and ministerial duties: "Whether he [Mxolisi] writes the letters himself or uses someone else to do the writing is not the issue here ...". Similarly, because of the 'shared literacy skills in social networks', Mxolisi

... participates authoritatively in the literacy practices of his church without directly decoding the words of the Bible, because the structuring of the church rituals does not direct him towards literal production of text, but rather towards creative use of the discursive resources of the Bible, drawing on his skills in oral narrative construction (Mpoyiya and Prinsloo 1996: 185).

The above research from South Africa as elsewhere in the world indicate that the binary and polarising assumptions around the concepts of 'literate' and 'illiterate' is not accurate in that people without schooling can mobilise local forms of knowledge and resources and thereby accomplish the literacy-linked tasks that are part of their lives. They do so through learning limited, localised and context-specific reading and writing practices themselves, or through making use of the specialist skills of others. It is in this light therefore that the 'illiterate' stereotype is inaccurate since people are not socially marginal, cognitively or economically restricted simply because they lack 'literacy', narrowly understood as that which is learnt in school.

I go on, in the next chapter to describe the work of preparing my research, in terms of methodological considerations and concrete research plans and procedures. The discussion

presented in this chapter has provided the conceptual framework that frames these research considerations.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology that shapes this study, dealing with such aspects as the main research approach, the kind of tools used to collect data and how and why the setting and the subjects of the study were selected. Finally, yet importantly, the analytic process and its significance in this particular study is examined. The chapter closes with issues of research ethics, detailing the undertakings I made, amongst others, to protect the rights of the research subjects in the research process. The limitations of the study, in which the weaknesses and shortcomings experienced during the research process and their perceived implications are not discussed here but are described in the final chapter, at the end of the thesis.

3.1 Research Methodology

I undertook to carry out a qualitative research study that enquired what the community's home-based uses and meanings of language and literacy were and how these contrasted with the schooling practices encountered by children from this community.

Based on the overriding aim of the study, couched primarily in questions like "What is happening, what does it look like, how does it work?" (Purcell-Gates, 2004: 95), this study generally employed the resources of the 'ethnographic method' in the collection and analysis of data. Ethnography is a method in the qualitative research paradigm "rooted in the concept of culture" (Purcell-Gate, 2004: 93), and suitable "for those researchers who are truly wondering, seeking, and curious about some aspect of literacy as it occurs naturally in socio-cultural contexts" (Purcell-Gate, 2004: 93).

Since this study sought to understand the language and literacy practices of a specific minority community, I used an ethnographic-style approach to seek explanations of how people think, believe, and behave when situated in specific local time and space and when faced with 'instantiations' of dominant literacy practices (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999, and Purcell-Gates, 2004). Ethnographers usually spend many years in social settings studying people's ways of life (Purcell-Gates, 2004) and "ethnographic studies typically examine larger entities or units" (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 279). My study is more modest and particular in focus than these larger ethnographic approaches, however. I used what might best be called ethnographic-style research (Prinsloo, 2007) rather than fully-fledged ethnography. Ethnographic-style research draws on the methods and concerns of ethnography

but takes a narrower focus, for example, on literacy amongst a group of people, rather than on the ‘way of life’ in general, of that same group. This narrower focus gave me an opportunity to engage with participants and collect data in a relatively shorter period of time as well as to act as a researcher who is interested in “a more clearly delineated entity” (Babbie and Mouton, (2001: 279), namely literacy and schooling. I selected and used ethnographic research instruments such as interviews and observation for purposes of triangulation and validity, to attempt to “understand a way of life from the participants’ perspective” (Sprandley, 1979: 3). I was myself the primary instrument of data collection in that I engaged with the research subjects, attempted to interact and set up cordial and productive relations with them, as well as adjusting my questions, topics of discussion and wider research strategies in the face of emerging data.

3.2 Instrumentation

As an ethnographic-style researcher and as a primary data collector, I employed interviews, observation and made use of an audio recorder to collect and record data. While qualitative research gathers data from a “*range* of sources... observation and relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones” in ethnography (Graddol, Maybin and Sherer, 1993: 2, emphasis in the original). The kind of observation used in this study was essentially that of unobtrusive overt participant observation (Babbie and Mouton, 2001) in which I entered the field site and gathered data while trying not to manipulate the subjects as regards what I intended to observe (Graddol, et al, 1993). Unstructured interviews were preferred and used for they tend to yield rich data. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 289) see this kind of interview as:

Characterised by interaction between an interviewer and respondents in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions ... a conversation in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondents.

I therefore had several ‘conversations’ and subsequent follow ups of these, to solicit and capture the respondents’ experiences, understandings, and uses regarding schooling as well as community literacy and linguistic practices. Interviews were two-fold. First of all there were the interviews between individual respondents and myself. Secondly, there were group-focused interviews that involved ‘conversations’ with several respondents and myself. Both types of interview lasted one or more hours. Group-focused interviews were mainly intended to provide respondents with opportunities to respond to claims others made, thus providing

immediate feedback. The audio recorder helped me to capture data that otherwise might be lost during the interview processes.

3.3 Sampling Procedures

I selected the subjects of the study through judgemental or purposive sampling procedures. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 167) describe judgemental sampling as empowering researchers to select units based on their own judgement or purpose of the study. Purcell-Gates (2004: 100) adds, “Ethnographies of literacy have for the most part involved sampling that could be described as convenience samples that fit the research focus or question”. I decided to limit my focus to one extended family as my focus group. This focus on one family grouping enabled me to examine in depth the collective history and experiences that shaped their perspectives and also to get a view that went across generations in the same group. The family unit I studied was selected based on my judgement of which family would best supply the information that I sought.

3.4 Site

The study was based in Mochudi; a peri-urban village in Botswana, located approximately thirty-four kilometres north of the capital city Gaborone. The site was purposively selected (Babbie & Mouton, 2001) firstly; because it is my village of residence, thus making access and travel to the research site easier for me. Secondly, the community under study have resided in this village for a period lasting several decades, interacting with other communities and families, including that of my own kin, and hence easing access to them. The study took place at the homestead of the selected family. The homestead consists of a big house in the middle of the yard in which resides Mr Sengalo⁶ and his senior wife (Main House), and four houses partly surrounding the main house occupied by Mr Sengalo’s second wife (House A), his third wife (House B) and older children (Houses C and D). Behind the main house is a workshop with a big but old working/carpentry table. Between the main house and the workshop and towards the front fence is a bare place where a vegetable garden used to be. Adjacent to Mr Sengalo’s homestead is the homestead where Khalose, one of Mr Sengalo’s five sons stays; the other four do not stay in this village. (See appendices section for the diagram of the homestead)

⁶ This is not his real name. All names have been changed to protect the identity of the research subjects.

3.5 The Analysis Process

I analysed my data guided by the theory that views literacy as a social practice, through its tools of literacy practices and literacy events (Barton, 1994, Heath, 1983 and Purcell-Gates, 2004). Literacy practices relate to what people do with literacy and have been defined as the basic unit of the social theory of literacy. These are literate social processes; shared cognition, ideologies and social identities that connect people together. Analysis in ethnography is interpretive (Purcell-Gates, 2004: 107) and depends on the researcher's learnt frames of interpretation or their "interactionist or phenomenologist quest" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 8-9). The analysis in this study was therefore of an iterative nature; was ongoing, from data collection, to coding and creating categories, to returning to the literature, to locating patterns and themes, to crosschecking the data gathered with the respondents and to the final stages of analysis leading to the write-up.

These processes necessitated analytic strategies that would facilitate an easy but robust way of handling data, especially by a person like me who is not well versed in qualitative analysis, particularly of an ethnographic nature. I thus employed analytical approaches similar to those used in most ethnographies of literacy (Purcell-Gates, 2004; Heath, 1983) which allowed for analysis and interpretation subjected to 'informant checking' resulting in the 'evolving interpretations of the data' shared with participants to gain their perspectives (Purcell-Gates, 2004: 107). This necessitated that I undertook a number of shuttle trips between my place of residence during much period of the research process (Cape Town) and the site of the study (Mochudi, Botswana).

During the early stages of the data collection, and continuously afterwards, I engaged in the processes of coding, developing of categories, and identification of patterns and themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I made concerted effort to identify nuances and variations in the data, including "negative evidence, instances of ambivalence, evidence of doubts, conflicting evidence", with a view to identifying "disconfirming evidence" from the data and to addressing issues of researcher "bias and intersubjectivity" (Purcell-Gates, 2004: 107). Intersubjectivity in analysis is a common threat to research validity. It results from the researchers epistemological, theoretical, and cultural backgrounds and to take account of it and to address it, I adopted Dobbert's suggestion (cited in Purcell-Gates 2004: 107): "Ethnographers admit to, and use, the fact that research data and analysis is always affected by the researcher", especially given the fallacy that themes "reside in the data...". "If themes

‘reside’ anywhere, they reside in our heads from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them” (Taylor and Ussher 2001: 245).

I analysed the data both ‘inductively’ and ‘deductively’ (Purcell-Gates, 2004). The former is driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytical interest in the area and is thus more analyst driven (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The latter involves coding the data without trying to fit it to any pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher’s analytical preconceptions, thus making the analysis more data driven (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.6 Ethical considerations

As I set to undertake this study, I was cognisant of “an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informants” (Creswell, 1994: 165). I therefore observed the guidelines contained in the Faculty of Humanities ‘Guide to Research Ethics’ (2006) on research involving human subjects, and the University of Cape Town’s Humanities Faculty’s Research Ethic Committee. I sought permission to enter and study the site and informants, both in writing and orally from the local authorities and elders of the family concerned, respectively. The respondents were given letters of permission written by my supervisor and myself. I explained clearly the purposes of my research and I asked respondents to sign consent forms before the study commenced. The subjects were adequately informed about the aims of the study, all data gathering devices and all fieldwork activities. I also undertook to keep the subjects’ names and identities confidential and to avoid linking them to any potentially damaging observations about themselves or the wider society in which they found themselves.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: ‘LOCAL’⁷ STORY: “WE DO NOT DO THAT IN OUR CULTURE.”

In this chapter, I present a descriptive account of the perspectives on language, literacy and schooling of people in the focal community. I call what I present here a ‘*story*’ for two justifiable but personal reasons. First, it is a story for the simple reason that it is an account, a narrative given by the people themselves, who I argue are essentially positioned, more than anybody else, to ‘tell it as is’, to paint a true picture about themselves. Second, it is a story because the descriptive accounts given, episode by episode, though including observational occurrences, are largely dependent on and dominated by interview narratives of a conversational nature (Purcell-Gates, 2004). While I made efforts to collect data in multiple ways, the strongest source of data was by way of interviews. It has been recommended that data collection and research data be triangulated by way of multiple forms of data collection in ethnographic research, including participant observation, interviews and conversations of various kinds and by way of artefact collection or study, for purposes of addressing issues around research validity (cf. Purcell-Gates, 2004 and Prinsloo, 2007). Extended participant observation was not easy to set up and maintain, however, in this local community and I thus ended up with more interview-based data of relevance and less data gained by way of participant observation than might be optimal for ethnographic-style research. However, my extended conversations with community members were rich and productive sources of data, even though there were language difficulties as regards my ability to fluently understand the Shona dialect spoken by the family members. Artefacts, such as copies of letters written and received were also good sources of data for my purposes. But in the end it was the stories told; the narratives that counted in my research.

4.1 The Subjects’ Profile

I begin by presenting the demographic and educational profile (Table 1 below) of the subjects of the study. All the names used are pseudonyms intended to conceal and protect the identity of the subjects, in terms of the undertaking made to the family members at the beginning of my study. The demographic information in Table 1 below illustrates individual people’s profiles and their relationships with, uses and meanings of local literacy experiences. The

⁷‘Local’ suggests native, indigenous, vernacular, situated, ideological ways vis-à-vis ‘distant’, dominant, Western, universalistic, autonomous, ‘Global’ ones (e.g. Street, 1996; Barton; 1983; Heath, 1983; Gee, 1996; Breier & Prinsloo, 1996; Hull & Schultz, 2002.)

educational information gives an overview of trajectories taken by people within the family community regarding their personal histories of school-based learning.

Altogether, nine people formed the subjects of this study. I was a visitor amongst these people for a period lasting about five months in 2007, during which I had numerous conversations with them, and also carried out observations. I later made subsequent sporadic follow up visits during 2008 to early 2010 in order to understand further and to fill up gaps in the data. All the nine people were blood relatives who lived in the same homestead. I say *almost* because all of them except Khalose, Portia, Josephine and Rosemary stayed within Mr Sengalo's homestead, in several houses within the homestead.

Mr Sengalo was the oldest member of the family and was the head of the family. He had three wives (Beatrice, Georgina, and Francisca, in order of seniority) all staying in separate households in a large homestead of which he was the legal owner. Beatrice was the senior wife and stayed with him in the main house of the family, situated towards the centre of the homestead. The other person who stayed in this house was her daughter, Gladys. Georgina and Francisca are Mr Sengalo's second and third wives respectively. Each of them stayed with their infant children in separate houses within the periphery of the homestead. Khalose stayed with his wife Portia and their children, Josephine and Rosemary in a house adjacent to Mr. Sengalo's. Khalose and his family members feature because of their daily presence in the main homestead. They thus make up part of the extended family of the Sengalo homestead.

4.2 School-going across generations

Table 1 below shows that all these nine people had attended formal schooling at one or other point in their lifetime (two young girls were still attending during the period of data collection in 2007). Although Khalose is the only one with no formal education, when asked he categorically maintained that he too had attended school because he had spent some time in a home version of school, in the school his father once ran in his homestead, where Khalose learnt to "write his name and count numbers". Although I did not observe anything that suggested that such a school ever existed, save to be shown a tree by the gate of the homestead that used to act as a classroom, its past existence was corroborated by those in the neighbourhood who had been settled in the area at that earlier point. This corroboration also surfaced in the interviews and those who talked about it did so with fondness and enthusiasm, as they insisted on its value, as exemplified below:

I and my elder siblings, as well as some of my cousins were taught by my father right here at home... we were mainly taught how to write our names and how to use numbers. I learnt a lot in our school... It was a good school because we were not beaten like school children are beaten these days... We did not mix with children from other ethnic groups like is the case in government schools.

Table 1: Subjects' Biographic and Educational Profile (2007)

NAME	SEX		AGE BRACKET				FORMAL EDUCATION ATTAINMENT					
	M	F	50+	30+	20+	20-	NON	LOWER PRIM	MID PRIM	UPPER PRIM	JUNIOR SEC	PLACE
Sengalo	√		√								√FORM 3	ZIM
Beatrice		√	√						√STD 5			ZIM
Georgina		√	√							√STD 6		ZIM
Francisca		√		√				√STD 3				BOT-S/P
Khalose	√			√			√HS					-
Portia		√		√				√STD 3				BOT-MOC
Gladys		√			√						√FORM 1	BOT-MOC
Josephine		√				√					√FORM 2	BOT-MOC
Rosemary		√				√					√FORM 2	BOT-MOC

The main reason given by interviewees for the starting of a family-based school was for children in the homestead/community to be able to write their own names and carry out basic mathematical calculations. The distance the children had to walk to the nearest school then⁸ (4 to 5 kilometres) was another impediment that prompted the opening of the home-based version of school. To show how deep-rooted the practice of introducing children to print literacy is within the family group, Gladys talked of how she sometimes offered her assistance, teaching children at home:

Yes I teach them (young children) letters of the alphabet and how to write their names... because I feel it is important for them to write their names so that by the time they go to school at least they already are able to write their names... teachers will be happy to realise that children from our community could write too.

Whatever the reasons, it is apparent that the quest for attainment of at least basic school-related print literacy by children in the community has long been fore-grounded, mainly for

⁸ It was a common practice across the country for Zezuru-speaking community members to be allocated land a few kilometres on the periphery of the villages (mainstream villagers) where they sought to settle, only to be joined by neighbours from across ethnic groupings years later as the villages expanded. Today people from other ethnic groupings now surround those who settled two or so decades ago.

preparing them for future encounters with print at school, in contrast to stereotypes in the wider community about an anti-schooling ideology amongst Zezuru-speakers.

Table 1 further indicates two extremes. First, of the only two male subjects, the youngest (Khalose) has no formal education at all. In contrast, the oldest (Mr Sengalo) has so far been the only one in the family to reach Grade 10 (equivalent of Form 3), though it later surfaced that he did not complete the grade but, under pressure of cultural expectations, had to leave school to start his own family. Secondly, the reverse of the first case emerges in that the three youngest in the group of females (Gladys, Josephine and Rosemary) reached secondary education while the older females only did primary education. In fact, Gladys dropped out of Form 1, while Josephine and Rosemary were a year shy of attaining the highest level of education so far achieved in the family (Form 3). Regarding the older females, it is important to capture the fact that the two oldest, who were born in Zimbabwe, dropped out from upper and middle primary, respectively, while those between in the 30-year bracket attained lower primary education.

What one discerns from the above is that amongst the adults, those who were born in Zimbabwe tended to stay at school longer, reaching higher levels of formal education (from middle primary to secondary school), perhaps suggesting that back then, educating family members was a less interrupted and less culturally and linguistically challenging process. In contrast, the adult cohort that was born in Botswana attained the lowest level of formal education (lower primary), or, in the case of Khalose, did not attend formal schooling at all. It is worth noting that the political tensions of the period may have influenced these dynamics. As recounted by the older family members, the late 1960s to early 1970s was the period in which members were settling in Botswana due to the liberation wars fought in Zimbabwe. Other factors are possible causes, however. For example, they point to the fact that in Zimbabwe, the language of instruction at school was their home language (Shona) while in Botswana their second or third languages (Setswana and English respectively) became the media of instruction. Today however, the family seems to be returning to the attendance levels of the Zimbabwean days, with current school-going children a year shy from achieving the highest level of education ever in the family. This current increased persistence at school makes sense if one considers the fact that the current cohort of children were born and bred in Botswana, and more adjusted to the cultural and linguistic features of schooling which were a problem for the immigrant generation.

Notwithstanding this recent increase in school attendance in the current generation, there remains an historically entrenched trend towards not completing schooling within the Zezuru community under study here - a trend which Gladys pointed to in one of the conversations we had: "I only hope they (her brother's school-going children) stay in school until they complete... although it is rare in the family". The conclusion one could draw from the pattern of school attendance amongst the extended Zezuru-speaking family is that there is no established hostility towards formal schooling per se, while there are historical, pragmatic and cultural dynamics which lead to many members not schooling for long.

4.3 Language dynamics

In this part of the thesis I examine more closely the intertwining of language and school dynamics under the multilingual conditions that characterise the contemporary lives of the group that is being studied here. The broad language categories involved here are those of Zezuru (as the home language), Setswana (as a second language and the lingua franca of Botswana) and English (as the status language and medium of learning in secondary education). I examine both spoken and written language practices, and in examining the range of linguistic resources being used under varying conditions, I pay attention to such things as frequency, fluency and proficiency of articulation (Li, 2001), as well as the contexts of use. Frequency refers to the regularity of language use, proficiency to the skill and aptitude of language use, while fluency refers to the ease and confidence with which people use particular language resources for particular purposes.

4.3.1 Schooling and language

The home language, Zezuru, is the main language of communication amongst all members of the family. Apart from its use by and between adult members of the family, it is also a language used to communicate with toddlers as young as two to six years of age. Through fieldwork, it became clear that the home language was frequently, fluently and proficiently spoken. It is the language through which orders are given and duties assigned, through which discipline is enacted and acceptable behaviour moulded, the language used by mothers and significant others (older siblings, close relatives, parents etc) for the socialization of infants into the culture of the family, and the language through which cultural festivities like weddings, funerals, church services and initiation of youth into adulthood are conducted. People in the family use Zezuru as a spoken language mostly, and have almost no experience of it as a written language, with the exception of Mr Sengalo and, to a lesser

extent, his two senior wives. These last three people had attended school in Zimbabwe where they used Shona/Zezuru as medium of instruction, acquiring its orthography in the process. Gladys too claims to have learnt some of written Zezuru through her interaction with her father during his Bible reading sessions. Thus, in response to the question as to whether they read or wrote in Zezuru, Gladys said:

Apart from the old man... my father, we do not write or read in Shona. We have not been taught... However, at least I can read a little bit of Shona because most of the time I am with my father when he reads his Shona Bible.

Despite this claim, however, I did not see anything much to support the claim that written Zezuru had much place, except for the Shona numerals and a few names of toddlers and younger children's that I observed, all written with paint on remnants of zinc and timber boards. However, I observed Mr Sengalo on several occasions going through the Bible written in Zezuru. On the few occasions when I observed Mr Sengalo doing this, he would beckon Gladys, or her mother, to bring him a brief case from which he would produce the Bible, some old exercise book and a pen. According to him, he used the exercise book to make notes for church services. Indeed, the Bible, the exercise book and the particular pen he used were some of the visible literacy implements Mr Sengalo regarded highly as they were usually kept in his briefcase, under lock and key. Mr Sengalo was the only one who had access to the Bible, given that he seldom, if ever, parted with the keys to the briefcase.

In addition to this Bible reading literacy practice, I found that Bible reading in Zezuru also took place at church, one of the very few sites where the language appears as part of written language practices. Those who were able to read in Zezuru were accorded special respect in the family since others relied on them for the decoding of messages written in Shona/Zezuru. Because Mr Sengalo was able to read the Bible in Zezuru, he was positioned as one who relayed and interpreted the discursive messages of the Bible; one who connected family members with God. Furthermore, because of the position he had acquired he had been made the Bishop of this congregation of the church in Mochudi. Again, the church has become a site where members of the family had the opportunity for contact with written Zezuru, thus making this particular religious practice of the family a unique occasion where they engage with Zezuru in print. Apart from this particular literacy event (Bible reading), it is uncommon for people in the family to engage with Zezuru language in its written form.

The majority of the members of the family bemoan the fact that some of them, especially school-going children cannot read or write Zezuru. While the church events allow children

some exposure to written Setswana, a lot more is needed before the new generation would be able to interact through and express themselves in the written form of their home language.

4.3.2 Language struggles in school

During my visits to the homestead, my research site, in conversations, members frequently expressed how they felt over the fact that their home language did not form part of the languages of instruction at school. Both the young and old confirmed that children at school are taught through the media of Setswana and English, and they wished it was otherwise. Members of the family revealed that as soon as their children began primary school, their language became completely unused (at school) and is replaced by Setswana and English. People in the family see this not only as painful for their children but also as an erosion of their cultural identity. The following are examples of statements made at different times which express the frustration and helplessness felt by adult members of the community:

The only thing school does is to torture children by speaking and using languages they don't understand, and failing them at the end as a result.

You know, I think the Setswana language, even the English language, is difficult for our children.

Sometimes I am tempted to think that schools in this country are only meant for children who speak Setswana and English at home... People whose mother tongue is not Setswana, those whose children do not speak Setswana at home, suffer a lot because they are forced to learn through the languages they do not speak on daily basis.

Currently in Botswana, both the national and educational language policies recognize only Setswana and English as official and national languages respectively, at the expense of other indigenous languages. The parents in the family likened this failure to use their home language as a medium of instruction at school as a completely unfair practice that not only renders the environment unsuited for learning, but also borders on human rights infringement, since their children are discriminated against. One of the conversations I had with one of the respondents captures this more profoundly:

I worry a lot but do not say I am politicking, no, I am not into politics. Look here, though schools do a good thing by teaching children... to read and write, I do not think it is still fair because they only teach them to read and write some languages and not others. You know, I would be very happy if my children could read and write their own language; unfortunately, this is not the case. So you see where the problem lies. My children fluently speak their language but struggle to speak other languages. They also read and write other languages but cannot read and write their own language. Though they are not fluent in speaking, say Setswana, at least they

can speak it with other people if necessary. I think they similarly speak English too. Now tell me, how about their own language? They speak it so fluently but other people, especially teachers, tend not to care about this. They do not read and write it and people do not seem to care either. I am not trying to be fussy but whether they read and write other languages; to me it does not matter because they can't do the same with their own language... Regardless, it does not matter if one does not fluently speak or read and write in the language that is not his/her mother tongue. Tell me, if the schools do not use the language that people understand better... their mother tongue, but instead use languages difficult for the learners, why do they expect learners to perform well? It is not fair at all.

It is apparent from the interview excerpt above that even though most members of the family do not much use the home language as a written resource, they however would have loved to see it used in schools, both as spoken and written medium of instruction.

It is therefore safe to conclude that although most members are bilingual (with some even multilingual), the fact that their own home language has been generally accorded a lower status, while 'other languages' are highly recognized is at best discouraging, and at worst a discriminating practice which at the end leads members to lament that: "it does not matter... it is not fair at all." In these perceptions they echo many other groups across Africa who struggle with the low regard shown by national and regional institutions for the 'small languages' spoken by numerous minority groupings.

4.3.3 Signs of language shift and language variation

Setswana rivals the Zezuru language in the homestead and larger village community in terms of frequency of use, even though the level of fluency and proficiency differed, with the younger the person the more the fluency and proficiency in Setswana, and the older the person, the less the proficiency. Setswana is not the home language of the Zezuru community members, rather they acquire it later. The data suggest that the age/level at which a person was initially socialized into Setswana has a role in the manner of articulation later in life. The findings show that since Mr Sengalo, Beatrice and Georgina were born in Zimbabwe where Setswana was not spoken at all and they only acquired the language later in life, their articulation of Setswana is not very fluent and proficient. On the other hand, Francisca, Khalose, Portia and Gladys were born and bred in Botswana and got exposed to the language early in life, and thus their articulation in Setswana is relatively fluent and proficient.

In listening to the community members speaking, I noticed a feature which reflected the group's history: Those members who were born in Zimbabwe used the /ta-/ syllable while

those born and bred in Botswana used /tla-/ [pronounced as in **class**] counterpart. For example, words such as **tlhapa** (bath), **tlakwano** (come here), **motlhaba** (sand), **kutlwano** (harmony), were being pronounced as such by the latter group while the former would in most cases leave out the /l-/ phoneme such that the same words become **thapa**, **takwano**, **mothaba** and **kutwano**, respectively. The reason for this phonological difference has to do with the person's initial socialization into the Setswana language. It emerged during interviews that people who were around 50-years old were born in Zimbabwe, but on arrival in Botswana had first settled in Selibi-Phikwe, in northern Botswana, among the Bangwato ethnic group where the /l-/ phoneme in the above words is omitted. The rest of the members first encountered Setswana in Mochudi in southern Botswana, among the Bakgatla, who are linguistically identified by the addition of the /l-/ phoneme in their pronunciation of words such as in the ones above. It is worth noting that even though Khalose and Francisca were born in Selebi-Phikwe too, their addition of the /l-/ phoneme in words such as the ones given is linked with the fact that they arrived in Mochudi when still very young and could easily acquire the Bakgatla version of the Setswana language (Sekgatla⁹) easily. It needs noting at this point that the Bakgatla phonological version [with /l-/ phoneme] is the one acceptable in schools in Botswana in terms of formal orthography. This suggests that in words similar to ones above, the usage of the /ta-/ syllable will require the addition of the /l-/ phoneme for it to be accepted in formal orthography. Phonologically, one may pronounce as one wishes, but orthographically one has to observe the conventions to be formally correct.

The two children's use of Setswana language matches those of the second group, with better articulation, though. This group's fluency and proficiency in Setswana, in addition to their being born and raised in Mochudi, is attributable to the fact that they played and interacted with children whose first language was Setswana (in the standard dialect) early in life, first in their neighbourhood and later at school. Despite being the most fluent and proficient in

⁹ Sekgatla: One of several Setswana dialects spoken in Botswana, particularly in Mochudi and Kgatleng District. Sekgatla is in fact the language spoken by Bakgatla of Kgafela found in Botswana and around Rustenburg area in South Africa. Bakwena, Barolong, Bangwaketse, Batawana, Balete, Batlokwa and Bangwato ethnic groups speak other prominent Setswana dialects. Initially ethnic groupings speaking these Setswana dialects were regarded as main/principal tribes and had permanent membership in the House of Chiefs (Ntlo Ya Dikgosi). Although other ethnic groups were represented in the house, their leaders did not enjoy permanent membership but were appointed after every five years, nor did they have paramount chief status, which was a privilege exclusive to eight 'principal' tribes mentioned above.

articulating Setswana in the family, Josephine and Rosemary were nonetheless faced with challenges, especially relating to formal Setswana usage, as reflected below:

Setswana is not our language. At home, we speak Shona. Yes, I agree that we sometimes speak Setswana amongst ourselves at home but that is very rare... We also speak Setswana with our neighbours... The other time we speak Setswana is when we are at school. Now at school we also do Setswana as a subject. It is here that we have more problems because we realise that the Setswana we speak with other children in and outside school is completely different from the one we are expected to use in the classroom with teachers, or as a subject.

In one example, these children explain how they have come to the conclusion that they should cease to ask help with homework/ school work from their parents. According to these children, this decision was arrived at following some homework regarding proverbs. From this particular experience, these children concluded that the kind of help they get from their parents/relatives regarding schoolwork is incongruent with the expectations of teachers. Apparently, they were required to list a number of proverbs formed from such things as animals, plants and so on. They were further required to give the meanings of the proverbs that they listed. With the knowledge that their grandparents were knowledgeable in this regard, they undertook to ask them for help. According to Rosemary, every thing seemed to have gone well and they were happy as they handed in the homework the following day. To their surprise, they were later beckoned by their angry teacher and were scolded and lashed. They were accused of formulating or creating their own proverbs. They explain thus:

The problem with the proverbs I had written was that my grandparents would say them in our language.... in Shona, and I would translate them and write them in Setswana, word for word. What I did not realise was that the kinds of proverbs used in our language are not the same as those in Setswana.... They do not directly correspond.

The foregoing is illustrative of the kind of confusion that may arise if children's language resources and language histories are not appreciated at school, where a standardised monolingualism predominantly operates, despite the multilingual resources that children bring to this institutional context. Up to this day, the children still do not believe that they deserved what was meted out to them. However, because their parents were not fluent Tswana speakers, they were not adequate resource as far as helping their children with schoolwork went. The children turned to their neighbours instead (both children and adults), for help with their homework, as I observed during my fieldwork.

Further, my research revealed that the use of Setswana both within and beyond the boundaries of the family was necessitated by the fact that it was an important medium for communication with other people in the village, especially those who bought items from the members of the family. Setswana was the ‘language of commerce’, which every member of the family needed to speak. During one of the interviews, one of the older household members pointed this out:

I do not think we have any choice but to try and speak Setswana, no matter how badly since most of our customers speak the language and we have to communicate with them. We should speak it, even if badly, since it is not our mother tongue... but for us to sell to our customers we must speak it. Again, we should not feel shy or afraid to speak because some important people in government do not speak Setswana very well too, and I think one of the reasons is that it is not their mother.

It became apparent during fieldwork that older members of the family struggled with Setswana, in terms of fluency and proficiency. It also became clear that once they leave their homestead on daily selling expeditions, these people use their imperfect Setswana to communicate with people in the wider community, the majority of whom have Setswana as their home language. They talk to Tswana speakers to exchange greetings; they loudly chant out to advertise the merchandise on sale, they ask for and give directions, and they speak the language as they sell to their customers. Since their Setswana is not perfect, some of the people they communicate with mock them, while the majority of others seem to have accepted the way they articulate the language and as such regard them not different from other foreigners who speak ‘Sekwerekwere.’¹⁰

4.3.4 Speaking English

English is seldom spoken in the home setting. It is also not spoken at all by some community members. On those rare occasions when it is spoken, English is mostly spoken by Mr Sengalo and Gladys, (and the school going children) all of whom have attended school up to secondary level. During data collection, it became apparent that those who speak English do so mostly when participating in literacy events; where its written form is involved; when they have to read, decipher the message and share with whoever is concerned. For instance, during

¹⁰ Sekwerekwere is a derogatory term used mainly in Southern Africa by some ethnic groups to refer to indigenous African languages foreign to their own. It is a term that suggests the language consists of nonsensical, repetitive and awkward sounds that cannot be intellectually deciphered by non-native speakers of concerned languages.

my first visit to the homestead of the family, I gave Mr Sengalo letters from both my supervisor and I, requesting permission to undertake the study. These letters were read loudly by a visiting relative from Zimbabwe to the gathering summoned by Mr Sengalo. He later translated it into Shona/Zezuru language. Prior to this communal reading of the letters led by the Zimbabwean visitor, Mr Sengalo had opened them and silently 'read' them. I say 'read' because once he was through he used my first name, Cornelious and asked me about Cape Town; why I decided to attend school so far away, in addition to why I decided to study their particular family and community and not others. Gladys also claimed during interviews to always read and write letters for her parents. The practice thus (through fieldwork) proved to be common within the family. One of several incidences in which I observed letter-reading events unfolded as follows:

Gladys unstapled and unfolded the letter from the local private clinic about influenza immunization. She then silently read the letter and then told the parents the summarised message, first in her local language-Zezuru, then in Setswana. She did not include the address, the date on which the letter was written, nor the signature of the author, save to say the name local people use to refer to the surgeon at the clinic. She then handed her father the letter, which he too unfolded and took a few minutes looking at it before he started talking about its contents with his wives.

When I later asked her why she did not read the letter in English first, and why she did not include the things she omitted, she said there was no need, that the message is what should be communicated to the elders. When I asked her why she had to translate it into Setswana she replied that because I was present she thought I should hear what was written too, in case I wanted to contribute something.

Similarly, school-going children were on several occasions observed loudly reading letters they brought from school to their father and mother, before offering a Shona/Zezuru translation. One of the children summarises this as follows in one of the interviews:

I read in English, when I understand, I explain in our language. When the teachers have written ... maybe something related to P.T.A²¹¹, say inviting parents for a meeting... or anything else... If we children...or anybody who can read so is required to do so...and when what is written concerns the parents, we read either in

¹¹ P.T.A: 'Parents and Teachers Association' whose membership consists of parents and teachers. P.T.As have a mandate of overseeing children's academic and social development and general schools' developmental imperatives.

English or Setswana, depending on the language used, then explain to parents in our language.

It must be noted however that, this practice also involved letters or any important text written in the medium of Setswana language. These children, like Gladys, also chose to read texts written in English silently and those written in Setswana loudly. The practice of reading loudly when the text is written in Setswana, and silently when written in English has been attributed to two main factors. First, on rare occasions where Gladys read loudly in English, it became clear that she struggled with the pronunciation of most words. Her reading speed and confidence also decreased compared to when she reads in Setswana. Secondly, when reading text written in Setswana, people who formed part of the audience equally participated in the reading event in that they were always ready to offer better pronunciation whenever necessary, hence the need to read loudly.

The data therefore shows that actual speaking of the English language, where members have a face-to-face conversation through the medium of English, was a very rare occurrence, if not non-existent. Written text became the basic occasion of interaction where English featured and only members of the family who had been in school beyond primary level acted as facilitators in such interactions. English use during these particular literacy events required mediators who not only ensured that other members benefited where English was a medium of communication, thus rendering lack of the knowledge of English an impediment, on the one hand. On the other hand, these mediators acquire a particular and special standing in the family; a status and identity, which others not only respected but envied as well.

4.4 Greeting and deference at home and school

Members of the family observed certain procedures and practices in greetings and other communicative occasions and these were sometimes discordant with school 'ways of being', with consequences, sometimes painful for school-going children. It is further evident from my data that these practices were not generalised forms of linguistic and embodied exchange, but rather specific to the context of the people concerned, as regards their status and station: Both younger and female members of the family were expected to bow as they greeted or addressed the elders and/or their male counterparts respectively. The young and female members began the greetings, awaited the responses from the elder, and bowed as they made monotone responses, which did not include inquiring after the elder's health. This practice was consistently accorded the heads of the families, Mr Sengalo and Khalose, and was less

consistently used towards the rest of the adult members of the family, though once noticed, such omissions would normally invite rebuke.

In the morning and as they return from school or selling expeditions, younger and female members of the family would first go to where Mr Sengalo is sited, bow and kneel down as they greet him. Younger members of the family would do the same to their mothers and elder siblings. Both younger and female members of the family accorded me the same respect during my visits to the family homestead.

Schoolchildren shared their experiences relating to their linguistic or communicative behaviours, at times result in problematic situations at school because authorities fail to recognise, understand or acknowledge their primary Discourses/cultural resources. One of the children explained the confusion and subsequent frustration she once endured at school when sent to ask for pieces of coloured chalk by her class teacher, captured during the interview as follows.

That day... I was doing Standard Seven then. That day I was sent to a Standard 4 class to ask for pieces of coloured chalk. The deputy schoolteacher taught that class. First, I was made to wait at the door not told to enter even if the door was wide open and I was sure she could see me. Later when I was allowed in and said what I have been sent to ask, she asked me if we never greet at home and when I told her that I did greet, she told me that bowing down was not the best way of greeting... teachers at school. She then made one of the pupils in her class to show me how to greet, which she made me to repeat several times. That child did not say anything I did not know except to say 'Good morning madam' a bit loudly and without bowing as I had done. Next, she made me loudly repeat what I had already told her so that all in the class could hear me. I innocently did as I was told but to my surprise, the whole class burst into laughter... She then said that people like us are really useless no matter the standard they were doing because there is no language we could speak properly. To my dismay she then told me to loudly say several times: "My class teacher is asking for pieces of coloured chalk".

Moreover, both the young and female members of the family are discouraged from speaking loudly amongst themselves, and it is not uncommon for such linguistic/verbal behaviour to be thwarted with adult or male reprimanding utterances such as calling the perpetrators' name or a strong shaking of the head, if not by verbal imperatives such as (Regedza!) 'Stop that!'; (Nyarara!) 'Keep quite!'; (Enda Kure) 'Go away!'; or a strong summoning like (Huya pano!) 'Come here!'; and verbal rebuke of the culprit concerned, such as (Ndichakunvera izvozvo) 'I shall beat you for that'. Likewise, younger and female members of the family are not to spend much time talking to strangers in the absence of the elders or male members of the family, respectively. Again, when addressing the elders, younger members of the family are neither

expected to give prolonged and elaborate talk or responses but rather short and precise ones, nor are they to respond in a form of a complaint when reprimanded. At best, they could bow and nod their heads in agreement, at worst they could keep quite or politely shake their heads to signal disagreement. The interview data also reveal that adult female members of the family are not expected to act assertively in public, hence they rarely visits schools. This is a male domain. An adult female explains in one of the interview bouts:

You know... it is like this. We are not supposed to confront and quarrel with people in public. Our culture does not permit that. So, because most of the time he [Mr Sengalo] goes to school to complain about the treatment meted against children... it is his duty. However, if he is not around, any male person... an uncle or a brother, can go on his behalf. So even when there is a meeting at school, we never bother to go because we can't voice our displeasures in public. That is why most of the time Mr Sengalo, or any male relative, attends these meetings on behalf of the family.

The data above suggest that women and girls, as well as young children are positioned differently from their male and adult counterparts. According to the culture, females and younger members are not permitted to execute certain things on their own but need the permission or presence of their male and adult counterparts.

4.5 “A person can lead a good life with little ... reading and writing.”

Members of the family encountered reading and writing in their everyday lives. This interaction with print goes back a long way, starting from the time the oldest family member, Mr Sengalo, was still a child, up to the researched moment. At the time of the fieldwork, every member of the family was exposed to print, albeit in ways that sometimes were in contrast with other communities' 'ways with words' (Heath, 1983). Unlike in homes where print was foregrounded and clearly visible, characterised by the evidence of written and writing materials as well as reading and writing activities of all sorts on a daily basis, what ensued from the homestead of the subjects under study points to a different picture. Through the utilization of and engagement in reading and writing activities, members of the family engaged in literacy practices that both matched those of others around them and also were different in particular ways.

Firstly, days might pass by without family members engaging in any significant reading or writing activity, especially during school holidays when schoolchildren have no homework to do. This became obvious during the schools' short winter vacations in July and longer school holidays in August, while I was engaged in fieldwork. Two factors may explain this development. Firstly, it became clear that during school term, the main literacy activity that

occurred almost on a daily basis was school homework, characterized mostly by a little reading and lots of writing by school children, at times with the involvement of other members of the family or the neighbours. Secondly, it was apparent that the family did not engage in literacy activity as a leisure activity, but for specific, necessary purposes. Adult members of the family sometimes used old exercise books and children's pencils or pens to write up lists of items for sale as well as the names of customers who had bought on credit.

Secondly, although members of the family interacted with print to undertake some of their social activities, most believed that much reading and writing was unnecessary, but rather that what was needed was "a little bit of reading and writing." Perhaps this also explains why children seldom completed schooling, as mentioned earlier. An older adult explained:

I believe that a person can lead a good life with little amount of reading and writing. If a person spends years at school and later finds it difficult to get a job, what then is the importance of schooling? (Cough) My children did not spend many years in school but they survive through the jobs we taught them, they write their names, and could complete forms if necessary. All of them fend for themselves, and they do not work for anybody but are self-employed.

Lastly, my discussions with family members indicated a division of opinion within the family on the way time is used regarding schoolwork and any activity associated with school-linked reading and writing. Though children in the family generally participated substantially in the carrying out of home chores and family business practices, it is notable that parents criticised their 'school ways' and were not always sympathetic over their children's need to work on their school work, given the pressure they were under at school. The children thus found themselves faced with a frustrating dilemma, as one of them noted:

Well, I do not normally like to talk about my parents like this, but I hope they will not hear about it because I do not want to be in trouble. Jose was busy listening to the radio in the house while she was being called outside. This made my father so angry that he said school was making us disrespect him. I do not know what school had to do with it To tell the truth, let me just say most of our elders, but especially my grandfather and our father, like to disturb us when we are doing schoolwork. I know they have told us not to mix home chores with reading and writing, but sometimes they have to understand that we need to do homework while there is still time, to prepare ourselves for tests and exams by reading notes and writing some practice exercises and homework.

The elders also sometimes associated the home-based reading and writing of their children with rudeness or laziness. Gladys and her mother- Beatrice respectively expressed this conflict:

Gladys: We read newspapers, magazines and schoolbooks, both the ones we used when I was still at school and those children going to school use today. I read them sometimes only, not everyday, because most of the time I am busy. I also do not want my father to be angry with me because he does not want us to read when there are things to do. He tells us that reading is for lazy people and that lazy people like doing easy things instead of working hard for their livelihood.

Beatrice: Children must know when to do school work, when to engage in their reading and writing and should not mix these with work. Some things could be done during spare time and not be done in the middle of work. Even [Mr Sengalo] reads his Bible at night or when he is not involved in his craft business. He does this to show everyone how things must be done. He is being exemplary and I understand why he does not take kindly to a child who mixes reading with work.

These instances above show that within the family, literacy activities did not mirror standard assumptions around family literacy practices and that there were differences across the generations as to what was valuable and important and what was not.

4.6 Work and marriage: Routes out of school into local 'ways of being'

As I have described it, most people in the extended family have dropped out of school before completion, though at differing stages, and they have all been immediately absorbed into the particular approaches to work and marriage of this distinctive marginal cultural group. In the following section I detail aspects of work, first, and then marriage practices.

4.6.1 Moving from school into work

Members of the family regarded their business practices highly. As a result, members could drop out from school with no qualms or anxiety because they were certain to earn a living, despite not finishing school. Most family members said that they would prefer to work in the family business rather than prolong their stay in school. For instance, after Gladys left school in Form One, she immediately began to work with her relatives. The same goes for Khalose, who left 'school' shortly before the school his father was operating closed and he commenced to work with the members of his extended family, as he said:

Since we have been trained by our parents to make and sell things, so after leaving school I seriously engaged in the manufacturing and selling business, unlike before when I was still attending school when we could only help the parents.

It (his father's school) was closed after a few years in operation... However, I for one was no longer attending when it closed. By that time I was fully engaged in the manufacturing trade, manufacturing things to sell. I was a grown-up boy then who was supposed to fend for himself... No brother, I realized that I was grown up so I had to work for my family so that it does not suffer.

In fact, this practice of early withdrawal from school in order to earn a living through family work dates back at least to the time Mr Sengalo and his first wife, Beatrice, as evident from Beatrice's comment:

When I had to leave school, I was more worried by the fact that I was getting married and leaving my family than I was at the thought of leaving school. You see, I could not be worried about leaving school because I knew Mr Sengalo would look after me and that I would be able to earn a living too by manufacturing and selling things. So you see, in that way I did not worry about leaving school. My future would depend on how much we concentrated on business, and not on how long I stayed at school. You see, all of us Mr Sengalo's wives, we sell things, all of us, and make sure we cater for our husband and children.

Yes sir. I joined the family businesses so I could fend for the children. You can see for yourself how engaged with business my sons are. They do this for the family and their children. Did you say you attend school in South Africa? (Laughter) When you are there who looks after your wife and children?

4.6.2 Marrying young

Marriage is a distinctive practice in the extended family. The first notable feature, besides the fact that polygamous marriage is the norm, is the early age at which family members got married. The majority of those interviewed pointed to the fact that they were married while still young or that some of their children got married while still young. The following comment from an older family member is illustrative:

Ehe! I attended school my child. I went to a primary school a long time back in Rhodesia... what you call Zimbabwe today. I then went to a secondary school in Masvingo for a few years...up to Form 3. However, I did not complete my Form 3. You see! I left school before I completed... I was supposed to marry, to get myself a wife. You know what? In our culture we marry when we are still youthful. By the time I left school, parents had already identified a woman for me so I was supposed to get married. I got married and left school for that reason. You see, I was now faced with the responsibility of fending for my wife and children. ... Here I always see men growing up until they age before getting married. No, we do not do that; we marry while we still have the youthful energy to fend for our families.

Second, the marrying parties normally do not decide when to marry, but rather such decision rests with the elders, who determine the right time for such occasions, and who their children are to marry. Moreover, such practice affects everybody equally, irrespective of gender, since both boys and girls quit school before getting married. One of the main reason leading to such early marriages, particularly regarding the male members of the community, it emerges, is that, as Mr Sengalo states, "we marry while we still have the youthful energy to fend for our families and do not wait to age before getting married, as is the practice else where".

Moreover, the data show that most of the respondents, especially women, get married at an earlier age. Beatrice, Mr Sengalo's senior wife, got married at the age of 16 and Georgina, his second wife, was married at 17 years. Other women members of the community, including some of the respondents' own daughters were married before they reached 18 years of age. The female members of the community tend to get married young because, according to Beatrice, they would have "become women, matured enough to be wives". Three examples of comments by different female family members give further evidence of this approach to marriage:

When I was 16, my parents decided I was old enough to be married... I think they were right because I had already become a woman. Therefore, I got married just like that, which meant I had to drop from school. ... I have seen this happening to young girls both before and after I got married. Some of our daughters... have been married when they were still young, just like us..

She is right. When my husband came to ask for my hand in marriage; when Mai-Maria and other elders came, I was almost 17 and although I cried for days, especially because I was being asked to marry an older man I did not at all know, and who was already married, I at last gave up and got married to him. I got married in 1967.

With us it is very clear. You see, we do not like children who become parents before they are married. It is our culture. A family needs two adults, and to get involved in adult things means that one is big enough to be a parent, even if s/he was still attending school. Besides, to have a child who does not have a father and out of wedlock is embarrassing.

Whereas in mainstream communities in the region, a child would remain a child, and would be regarded as such as long as s/he was still attending school, adult members of the Zezuru community take into account the behavioural, biological and physical development of children to decide when they have become "women mature enough to be wives". Given that in Botswana the minimum average age for beginning primary school is 7 years, it is possible that most girl-children in the community would be thought mature enough to be married during their junior secondary school years, and even earlier for those who start primary school a little later than 7 years of age.

4.7 Ambivalent attitudes to schooling

What emerges from the data is a strong impression that schooling will remain important as long as it adds to the improvement of the family members' lives. It further emerges from the data that family members' views regarding schooling are over-shadowed with ambivalence. Despite the importance of schooling and the family's relatively strong record of school

attendance, the majority of the participants believe that some of the things taught in schools do not harmonise well with their expectations but rather lead to cultural discord.

Mr. Sengalo: We should not lose our culture just by copying other people's cultures. We should not just keep quiet when teachers and the government do wrong things only because we want education. That is not education. That is why many children who have received it roam the streets and are juvenile delinquents. I will rather have my children outside school than allow my culture to be disrespected and eroded.

Beatrice: I would be happy if schools concentrated more on teaching children handiwork, because even if they do not complete or fail at the end, they will be able to earn a living. They must be taught more about producing things for themselves so that they employ themselves as they produce things for people to use.

Regarding pre primary education, the Zezuru community members studied do not enrol children below the school-commencement age of seven in the pre-schools which are a common sight these days, especially in mainstream communities. On every weekday during school terms, school buses collecting children enrolled in pre-schools across the village are a common sight in the neighbourhood. And children who attend these pre-schools play with the children from the focal group. One of the many games they play is 'school' in which what is taught at school is repeated.

It is obvious that some of these children would have loved to be part of the children picked for pre-school, but adults will not budge on this point. Reasons advanced for not enrolling children into pre-schools is the need by parents to protect their young ones from the harsh realities that their children encounter in schools, on the one hand. On the other hand, parents are of the view that their children should first be fully orientated to the values of the family before they are exposed to 'other cultures'. Within the family, schools are viewed as key places for such cultures. Gladys and Mr. Sengalo, respectively explain:

These ones are still young to start going to school. Again, they can't go to crèche because we don't go to crèche. Teachers there will beat them like I was beaten in Standard One. No, my father cannot allow this. To tell the truth, I have never seen any child here going to crèche.

The fact is that most of my grand- children go to school. What I have not seen happening amongst our people is sending children to crèche like every body seems to be doing nowadays. You see, we cannot risk our young children with schools because by the time they are 10 years old or so, they would have acquired other cultures and we cannot allow this to happen.

Similarly, the extended family members have no relationships with institutions such as non-formal education programs¹² and Brigades. Rather, they believe that these institutions are not intended for them, coupled with the attitude that “only children should attend schools, while adults engage in things that are most relevant, things that earn them a living so as to fend for their families”. Again, since the family does not have a history of enrolling in adult literacy or non-formal education programs, members tend to regard them as not suitable for them. The male elders illustrate:

Brigades are just okay. Their main problem is that they only enrol older children... those who have completed secondary school. By that time, our children are already manufacturing things to sell to earn a living. Can you see that boy (pointing to a boy chasing a hen, aged about 10 years), he is still very young but already he manufactures and sells things. Therefore, we will be wasting time if we were to wait for our children to complete secondary school so they could go to Brigades.

I do not like schools for older people... I know about them; I have heard about them, but I have outgrown attending school. Besides, these schools are meant for Botswana. I have never seen any of our people attending such schools. Again, maybe such school are for old people who cannot read and write. Though I am not educated, I do know how to read and write. I try my brother.

In summary, it is obvious from the findings that members of the family are faced with a dilemma regarding schooling, a dilemma with far reaching ramifications for their school-going children, especially since nothing seems to be done by the Botswana government to alter the situation which produces such ambivalent attitudes towards schooling and further education in this community. Perhaps these attitudes towards schooling would shift if improvements were effected. If these challenges are not attended to, these attitudes on the part of the Zezuru community are likely to endure.

¹² Non-formal education programs are literacy programs for the Ministry of education and Skills Development aimed at providing literacy classes for adults who had not benefitted from school-based literacy instructions

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I summarise the conclusions drawn from the ethnographic details and ‘thick description’ that I presented in the previous chapter. I provide interpretations and explanation of episodes presented in that account, as seen through the lens of a socio-cultural perspective on the social practices and attitudes described. I offer possible implications of my analysis for questions of social development with regard to minority communities and minority language groups in Botswana, and elsewhere in Africa.

5.1 Socio-culturally framed literacies

I predicate the discussion that follows on three underlying assumptions that are intrinsic to a social practices perspective on language, literacy and attitudes to schooling. I argue that people selectively take up appropriate aspects of schooling and literacy practices that make sense to them and suit their purposes. Secondly, people who are themselves strongly culturally situated in terms of their identities and activities draw on their own situated values and practices to resist aspects of dominant Discourses that are imbued with assimilationist overtures. Lastly, people make trade-offs in their engagements with dominant institutions, schooling in particular in this case, where ambivalent relationships with these institutions are very evident. I intersperse the discussion of the three points above with attention to issues around identity processes and questions about power dynamics under these conditions. I end by postulating that whereas powerful people and institutions still unwaveringly hold onto the type of education and literacy practices that elevate their own tastes, these practices serve gate keeping functions which have far-reaching consequences in that they stifle efforts and preferences of the less powerful, non-mainstream communities. In the end, what results is the perpetuation of politically, socially and economically polarized sectors in the society that, while co-existing, consistently look at each other askance.

5.2. Appropriation of literacies for ‘specific local purposes’.

The people I studied have experiences with school-based education and literacy. They also pride themselves on their informally acquired education and literacy experiences. Experiences with schooling and literacy vary for members both within the family and between families in the focal community mainly because, as Gee (1996) pointed out, Discourses do not represent consistent

and compatible values. Because of experiences with schooling, the focal group becomes both influenced by and distinct from mainstream communities, contrary to generally held views about the people in the focal community, which see them simply as resistant outsiders. For example, the literature that I quoted at the beginning of this study (Mpushu, 2004 and Kebotsamang, 2004), identified the Zezuru-speakers as a community whose children do not go to school at all, a claim that the data presented here profoundly debunked.

The motivation for attending school on the part of any group might be considered to be twofold: to acquire knowledge that will stand one in good stead in the future, and, secondly, to be seen as one who has knowledge and is therefore seen as being worthwhile, a person of standing. In Botswana, basic formal education consists of ten years of schooling, involving pre-primary, primary and early secondary school attendance (Botswana Government, 1977 and 1994). Basic education provides for inter-alia basic literacy. Basic literacy can be defined as written communications and simple computations skills needed by people in their daily lives to effectively contribute to the needs of their families, their communities and their nation (Youngman, 2000, Gibson, 1996; Mpofu and Youngman, 2001). This view on literacy/knowledge tallies well with what people in the study group have and aspire to have. However, schooling also provides students with another kind of identity, one who is 'literate' and 'educated', a category which requires that others be seen as 'illiterate' (see Chu, 1999; and Street's (1983) concept of the autonomous model of literacy). The designation of people as illiterates is a context free designation which can have little relation to what people can actually do (Gibson, 1996).

For the focal group however, basic literacy entails both the realm of skills described by Youngman (2000) and others above, interspersed with anything that specifically works for them as a group, including activities and skills that do not involve print at all, such as those needed in the manufacturing of wooden and metal merchandise which is routine for familial economic needs. One of the people in the family (Khalose) who has no experiences with what in dominant Discourses count as formal schooling exemplifies this. Most interestingly, he does not regard himself (and by others close to him) as deficient in any way because, as head of the family, he effectively and adequately discharges his daily responsibilities, key to which is providing for the family's needs. In return, like everybody in the family who passes the 'responsibility tests', he is

deferred to and respected by all. His familial standing as a man, brother, husband, head of the family etc, is not undermined due to lack of formal schooling. Instead, Khalose is proud of himself and his place in the group, despite the fact that he remains the only one in his immediate family who has no formal schooling. This in itself is telling, especially in these times where participation in formal schooling and its related literacy practices are regarded as an “investment that lead to higher quality of human capacity and production... and to a better quality life for everybody” (Botswana Government, 1997: 28). He too benefits from the locally devised ways that people in his community engage with and take limited benefits from school related learning. The group’s relationships with schooling has to do with purposeful attainment of particular targeted benefits, such as basic reading and writing and Tswana language skills, and has very little to do with responding to policy imperatives such as compulsory participation in national educational programs. The group’s attitude to schooling points to the notion of ‘literacy learning as appropriation’ (Hull and Schultz, 2002: 287.), which suggests that people sieve and appropriate those aspects of literacy that are suitable for them. The latter is linked with typical imposition tactics of ‘outsider literacies’ that are ‘autonomous’ of local practices (Hull and Schultz, 2002:587.) In contrast, societal responses to national programmes normally equate with acts of *tokenism*; “the act of doing something only in order to satisfy particular group of people, not in a way that is really sincere”, and often at your own expense (Chu, 1999: 340). Through these kinds of programmes however, the assimilation (acculturation) and marginalization of most minority communities have been achieved and sustained (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008; Chu, 1999.) The group under study have stood apart from such initiatives.

For this group, school-based literacy is only relevant if it serves their already constructed purposes. In their worldview, they need to appropriate literacy on their own terms, for their own purposes, and these are usually inconsistent with the perceived positive outcomes that are said to ensue from schooling and literacy practices linked with dominant institutions. For this group of people, literacy and learning are situated in specific contexts. It has been established that communities the world over are known to prefer participation in activities that are useful and meaningful to them (cf. Street, 1983, 2000; Barton, 1983; Gee, 1999, 2000). The notion of targeting specific literacy skills from dominant institutions is also known as filtering of Discourses (Gee, 1996) or ‘literacy learning as appropriation’ (Hull and Schultz, 2002: 287.). The targeted literacy skills normally lead to functional literacy (Barton, 1983; and Purcell-Gates,

et al, 2004). Purcell-Gates et al (2004: 94) define functional literacy as “any use of print for real-life communicative purposes... as contrasted to reading and writing conducted as part of the function of learning to read and write.” For people in the study, literacy serves ‘instrumental functions’ such as appending signatures, filling forms, writing stock and grocery lists, etc. (Purcell-Gates et al, 2004: 94).

The case of Khalose lays bare the inaccuracies of the notion that ‘lack of literacy’ is an impediment, per se, to people’s social mobility and a pathological weakening of people’s capacity for ‘full’ participation in social practices (Gibson, 1996). On the one hand, Khalose’s experiences with home-based versions of school (and his non-attendance of formal schooling) are of no significance in the perspective of dominant institutions which define literacy in technical terms (Street, 1983). For this powerful group of people, Khalose will remain ‘illiterate’ until he acquires formal, school-based literacy provided for by their dominant institutions (Gee, 1996). Disproving the reification of the autonomous model of literacy, Street (1991: 143) cautions, “Non school literacies have come to be seen as inferior attempts at the real thing, to be compensated for by enhanced schooling.”

On the other hand, for his family members and those advocating a social practices perspective on literacy, Khalose is far from being inflicted with the ‘illiteracy’ pathology (Gibson, 1996; McEwan and Malan, 1996). His literacy challenges are readily provided for within familial (and communal) networks that mediate literacy (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996). Chu (1999: 346) emphasises that “adults with literacy difficulties develop networks and strategies to cope with their reading and writing demands.” In this light, Khalose’s children, sister, and other relatives construct interactive networks in which they act as mediators of literacy or guiding lights (Baynham, 1995 and Gregory, 2005), not only for Khalose, but also for other family members in similar situations. As a result, guiding lights make literacy services available to those experiencing difficulties with it, thus tackling the would-be impediment of literacy.

Name writing is a literacy practice in the focal group that plays an important role in their identity construction. Bloodgood (1999: 342) holds that personal names are the first words that “young children encounter meaningfully in print” stressing that “first words must have an intense meaning ... the written name may serve as a tool to construct literacy”. Like some of the people in the studied community, Bloodgood (1999) and others found that on their own, names reflect

the child's historical and cultural wealth. Being able to produce them in print brings to the fore this wealth. Name writing, especially being able to append one's own signature in broader literacy practices (e.g. form filling, witnessing for others) by people in this particular community is a "*social accomplishment*" leading to identity construction (Bloodgood, 1999: 342, emphasis in the original). Once people are able to write down their names, especially those without schooling, they have made an accomplishment, an enhancement to their social standing. Name writing serves as reinforcement to people's literate, personal, familial and communal identity, because by being able to write their names, people no longer despise them. With this achievement, chances are that once children are able to write their names, they will enter school relatively well precursed (Gee, 1999). It goes without saying that this has been one of the roles that pre-schools, kindergarten, crèches etc, have so effectively played. To people in the focal group, the kind of literacy event adults and children interact through, unlike in some mainstream cultures, has not been 'bedtime stories' (cf. Heath, 1983) but what matter most to them (e.g. name writing, reading letters of the alphabet, counting numbers, basic calculation). These will ensure that as these children enter school, teachers and other children do not mock them, as Gladys feared. As Barton (1994: 34) argued, literacy "starts from people's uses of literacy, not from their formal learning of literacy. It also starts from everyday life and the everyday activities which people are involved in". Khalose is thus proud of his 'literate' identity and the way it has positioned him in relation to both his family and the larger community. He has achieved this new befitting identity without formal schooling and its technical literacy practices.

Similarly, we have seen how through the Bible and Bible reading, Mr Sengalo is positioned as the sole possessor of written Shona, while others are beholden to him for its access. Since the "language question is all about power" (Brock-Utne, 2001: 118) and reflects the speakers' identity and their socio-economic standing, the Bible-written Zezuru dichotomy defines the power relationships within the family. According to Street, cited in Hull and Schultz (2001: 587), literacy practices, are tied to "ways of behaving and acting that reflect power positions and structures" within and between individuals in the family and community. It goes without saying therefore that the literate identity that Mr Sengalo has acquired (and a few others who have access to written Zezuru), not only reinforce his position as the head of the family, but also and most importantly accords him power (as a Bishop) that no one else in the family has.

In the people's story, language also serves differential functions, both beneficial and detrimental to the socio-cultural practices and development of the focal community. Firstly, language use is beneficial for it thrusts and fosters their social position as individual members of the family, as well as a community surrounded by many other communities, especially mainstream ones. Bagwasi (2006: 338) holds that "Language is a reflection of its speakers' identity, and economic and social standing." The people's identities and socio-economic standing manifest through the role language plays as a natural transmission and embodiment of people's knowledge, wisdom, and experiences (Bagwasi, 2006.) It is also essential economic capital for people's livelihood. The indigenous language is the primary means through which the people who are the focus of this study are socialized into their primary Discourses (Gee, 1996). They draw on this resource as they interact with the young to give orders, assign chores, enforce discipline, mould acceptable character, and generally to espouse cultural festivities such as weddings, funerals, religious services and the initiation of youth into adulthood. The home language is thus language that identifies members culturally, marking those who speak it as an ethnic community on its right, distinct from other ethnic groupings in the village of Mochudi. Through their language, people's individual, familial, and communal identities have been amplified.

The people concerned regard their indigenous language very highly, irrespective of the fact that it is not used by people other than a small number of community members. However, it cannot be read and written by most people in the family; it is not a language of official discourse, and it is generally of low status compared to other languages within the linguistic local environment. Despite being disdained in mainstream cultures, the indigenous language remains true to the view that "mother tongue is a person's natural means of self-expression..." (Bagwasi, 2006: 337). As such, it has resisted attempts by powerful Discourses to render it obsolete. It has thus retained and sustained its role as a repertoire of the people's socio-cultural resources. Language therefore becomes a linguistic benefit to its speakers and their identity both as individuals and as a community.

On the other hand, language becomes a serious impediment to a people's growth when, as a resource, it is not acceptable in national social domains that are also important to the people concerned, especially if they are denied access to social resources and language acts as a tool for exclusion. Language is sometimes used for control of access as Bagwasi (2006: 339) asserts:

language “determines who has access to power and economic resources.” People whose languages are so affected have elsewhere been described as linguistic-minorities¹³ (Chu, 1999.) However, people are known to devise means through which they resist dominant Western and other hegemonic influences that are imbued with assimilationist tendencies (Bagwasi, 2006; Nyathi-Ramahobo, 2008; and Brock-Utne, 2001.) Even if it is generally believed that the “language question is all about power” (Brock-Utne, 2001: 118), and even though dominant cultures undertake to stifle lower-status, minority languages, issues of identity often act as fortresses resisting languages used for social acculturation or assimilation purposes (Anderson et al, 2005; Nyathi-Ramahobo, 2008; and Brock-Utne, 2001).

Language is also an essential vehicle for people’s economic livelihood. That is to say, people drive and meet their economic challenges through language. For example, the focal group in this study reach out to their commercial market primarily through language. I should hasten to point out that even if the indigenous language has shortcomings as far as fully facilitating access to the market, language is still a natural vehicle for the same. ‘Natural’ suggests that people have inherent ways of manoeuvring linguistic impediments, one of which is the readiness by communities to forgo their language for ‘other’ languages with readily available functional properties in particular linguistic environments. Bagwasi (2006: 339) conceives of language as “the primary medium of social control and power... determines who has access to power and economic resources.” It is well known that people are always prepared to learn and use languages other than their indigenous ones for specific, self-rewarding, self-sustaining purposes. In the case of the focal people, Setswana¹⁴ has taken up the status of a functional language and people use it for functional purposes (cf. Hull and Schultz, 2002; Purcell-Gates et al, 2004; Chu, 1999). Setswana is ‘taken-hold’ of for people’s predetermined purposes. As such, the people concerned are always prepared to embrace diversity for purposes of appropriating functional languages like Setswana, to the extent that they speak it amongst themselves even.

¹³ Linguistic minorities are people or communities whose languages are not the dominant or official ones in society, and thus normally forced to take upon dominant languages for social mobility (Chu, 1999: 340.)

¹⁴ Setswana is one of the two languages of powerful dominant cultures in Botswana, has historically been imposed onto minority groups, assimilating them in the guise of national unity (cf. Botswana Government, 1977; Bagwasi, 2006; Mpofu and Youngman, 2001 and Nyathi-Ramahobo, 2008),

In the final analysis, the Setswana language becomes an essential spoken and written linguistic resource that members use to meet their specific needs. Quite intriguing is the fact that the problems they encounter in Setswana, including language conflicts, are often overshadowed by their quest to be successful business people. Entrepreneurial success means that people in the group will provide for their family's needs, and Setswana, the language they acquired specifically for such purposes, has not failed them. Although it is not an indigenous language for the group Setswana use should not be thought as an imposed Discourse (Gee, 1996), as happens, in contrast, at school, where children are forced to adopt and adapt to the dictates of dominant Discourses. In contrast, Setswana language resources have stood the group members in good stead, and more so I that it was not, simply, an imposed social resource. Through trade-offs, they have appropriated this particular resource (Setswana) in ways that suit their demands. They have also resorted to substituting indigenous language in specific contexts with one through which they can access their customers who are very instrumental in their livelihood.

5.3 Local response to 'acculturation' overtures

Notwithstanding their willingness to engage flexibly with dominant languages in the region, people in the study hope for a time when their language will be used for instructions in schools. Bagwasi (2006) has accordingly supported this ambition, emphasizing that "a critical need is to develop one's power of self-expression to the full" (Bagwasi, 2006: 337). Setswana is used in powerful domains such as schools, other educational institutions, and in local government. Setswana is taught as a subject in schools and used as a medium of instruction in the first two years of primary education (Government of Botswana, 1997; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008). Botswana has adopted a policy of education that uses Setswana and English as national and official languages respectively. Therefore, of the more than twenty languages spoken in the country (Republic of Botswana, 1994; Bagwasi, 2006: 335; and Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008), only two are officially recognized, while the rest are accorded minority language status, by default (Chu, 1991).

Indeed, the people forming the focus of this study are marginal in that their indigenous language, itself "an embodiment of a community's knowledge, wisdom, and experiences" (Bagwasi, 2006: 336), is not recognized in dominant institutions, in spite of arguments for the protection of the smaller languages (Bagwasi, 2006; Brock-Utne, 2001; Stutnabb-Kangas &

Phillipson, 1996). The fact that the home language is one of the resources that identify people culturally, marking those who speak it, in the case of this study, as a community distinct from other ethnic groupings in the village of Mochudi takes on extra significance when their language has no standing beyond their homes. As a marginal group, the community is then classified under what is referred to as 'linguistic minorities' (Chu, 1999: 340). Nation-building discourses respond to these specialised local linguistic resources by ignoring them. For example, Mpofo and Youngman (2001: 580) describe the Botswana National Literacy Programme of 1981 as being aimed at enabling "'illiterate' men, women and youth to become literate in Setswana". Such aims are "exclusionist and assimilationist since they fail to take into account the languages and cultural knowledge of the linguistic minorities" (Chu, 1999: 344.)

It is therefore neither surprising nor uncommon that linguistic minorities are deemed poor achievers or non-performers educationally. Interestingly, known causes are factors attributable to "alien institutional culture rather than any lack of innate intelligence, ingenuity or problem solving skills on the part of students" (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005: 100). Educational policies like the one faced by the focal family that foregrounds languages that are not familiar to people, that are non-home languages have been known to negatively affect the enthusiasm needed for continued school attendance, (Bagwasi, 2006; Brock-Utne, 2001; and Stutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1996). In most cases, as exemplified in the details of this study, alien institutional culture inherent in dominant Discourses normally results in a clash (Gee, 2000); when people begin to lose a sense of worth; when they begin to feel threats to their personal, familial and communal identity because the experiences associated with their primary Discourses are not appreciated. One consequence of such a clash tends to be withdrawal from school, as exemplified by the progressive and cumulative manner of school dropout by almost all subjects of this study. In conclusion, it should be noted that the 'conditions in which people in the focal group exist could be self-or institutionally imposed and reflect both their readiness to embark on a path of literacy' (Chu, 1999: 350.) English is rarely used and those few who use it are accorded a superior status, not as masters but as superior in the sense that other family members are beholden to them for assistance when they encounter the language. However, the usage of English within the focal group, suits what Gee (1996: 145) refers to as "mushfake". He partly defines mushfaking as "partial acquisition coupled with meta-knowledge and strategies to 'make

do’.” Such is the status of English use in the family, which however has so far served them fairly well.

5.4 Formal educational interventions: On whose terms?

Successive ‘generations’ of ethnographies of literacies (Baynham, 2004) since the 1980s, have shown that groups of people who are usually thought to be ‘illiterate’ in dominant cultures have proved to be socially successful or to have a cultural/economic niche, despite their lack of schooling. They have informally acquired and successfully used complex language resources associated with dominant groups; they have succeeded in their roles as parents, mothers, fathers; homemakers; they have established networks that mediate literacy; they have worked productively in multinational industries; and they have been, and continue to be entrusted with the onerous task of voting for political representations (Prinsloo and Breier, 1996). These realities undermine the claims of the ‘illiteracy’ myth, showing it to be misplaced and those subscribing to it as being short-sighted.

The group under study, in spite of the contemptuous judgement passed on it by powerful forces, continue to reject acculturation. They continue to be selective and centred in choosing what works for them and what does not. For example, the focal group demonstrates the readiness to fight on by refusing to utilize services offered in facilities such as crèches, Brigades and non-formal education. The fact that they enrol children in public primary and early secondary schools does not mean that the same follows as regards other institutions. The reasons given for their ambivalence about mainstream institutions are detailed. For example, they shun crèches on the basis of the need to properly socialize children into their primary Discourse. They see a need for their young children to develop a strong group cultural identity and to be protected from harsh mainstream cultural practices as long as possible, mainly because public schools and teachers are seen as, often insensitive, gatekeepers and representatives of the dominant culture, who offer literacy induction as a form of assimilation and coercion. The second reason relates to Chu’s (1999: 350) postulation that; “Linguistic minorities are extraordinary at coping without dominant languages and literacy.” This assertion holds true in this case and is clearly illuminated in the socio-cultural details presented in this study. After all, people tend to have more important things to do than waste time and energy on things that, according to them, will not add value to their lives. These important things that get their attention, such as training their children for productive

work, add to people's self-determination and self-sustenance. For these people therefore, the need to take care of family responsibilities takes preference over the national call for the improvement of literacy deficiencies, through bodies such as the Brigades and non-formal classes for adults. Similarly, the promotion of communal culture through marriage and religion also take preference over public interventions that supposedly yield generically useful outcomes to those involved in them, irrespective of social context and circumstances.

The 'details presented here about the focal group demonstrate in many ways the nature of a 'socially contextualized literacy', which amongst others recognizes the need for the involvement of groups other than mainstream ones in defining, developing and using 'appropriate literacy services' (Chu, 1999:354) that make sense to them.

5.5 Limitations

I encountered a number of challenges during the entire process of the research, which have the potential to impact negatively on the validity of the findings of the study. Chief amongst these was using research methods (ethnography; participant observation, unstructured interviews) that were not only unfamiliar to me, but tended to be minimally used/understood by most of those I consulted, especially in Botswana. Effective ethnographic research requires more time and more intensive preparation than is available for a minor dissertation. Occasionally during 2009-2010, I, on a number of times, had to temporarily shelf the study, due to work demands and health problems. This created memory and continuity gaps normally avoided in research.

I worked with subjects whose 'ways of knowing' are not well documented. I found no existing in-depth research on this particular community that I could draw on. The research subjects' first language is neither Setswana nor English, but is rather a Shona dialect which I hardly understand and can't speak. Time constraints meant that I could not start to learn about the respondents ways of life before embarking on the study, although it is common for ethnographers to learn the language and "local customs and norms" of their research subjects (Purcell-Gates, 2004: 99) before research can commence in earnest. Consequently, data was collected predominately through Setswana and some English where possible. The transcripts of Setswana speech were translated into English for the purposes of this study.

Because I could not speak their language, I had an agreement with the respondents to use Setswana as a medium of communication, though as might be expected, their own language found its way into the recorded data. To address threats to validity, I relied on one of the informants for both translations of the native language where it surfaced.

Since the study was set in a particular home, investigating the ways people ‘make’ and ‘take’ meaning from their situated literacy practices (Heath, 1983; Barton, 1983; and Li, 2001), I guess I was often perceived as an intruder. Similarly, I could not readily gain access to some of the houses, nor be comfortable enough to sit alone with some of the respondents, particularly the female ones, mainly due to entrenched familial behaviour regarding interaction. My presence thus became not only a barrier, preventing normal day-to-day activities from happening but also affected the natural behaviour of some of the research subjects. This raises the possibility that I may have missed some relevant data.

Lastly, I had a serious limitation regarding financial resources. Given the distance I had to travel between Cape Town and Botswana to collect data and to consult with my supervisor and colleagues, I indeed needed far much more finances than my sponsor was prepared to offer. As a major hiccup, limited finances meant that I could not employ services of people to assist administratively on such things as transcriptions of interviews and typing of the research report, amongst others. That alone made the research process an arduous and demanding experience.

5.6 Conclusion

The accounts that I have given here of a group of people’s local perspectives on schooling, language, and literacy are telling in that they depict the power of rich, indigenous forms of knowledge, experiences, and understandings to resist assimilation of sub-cultural groups in one national setting, and how language and literacy are ‘taken-hold of’ (Street, 1984) by people to suit their specific purpose. Also demonstrated here was the fact that, despite their marginalization, organised communities know what directions schooling, language, and literacy should take, going forward. I have drawn attention to issues of resistance, appropriation and trade-off with regard to aspects of schooling, language and literacy and how people employ these as strategies of social development.

The perspective on literacy developed in this study shows that the time for a ‘heavily policed’ (Hull & Schultz, 2002: 327) literacy has not elapsed, despite the amount of time spent, and the amount of work covered since the earlier insights produced by ethnographies of literacy (cf. Chabanne, Nyati-Ramahobo, and Youngman, 2000; Nyati-Ramahobo, 2008; Stutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1996; Brock-Utne, 2001; Freire, 1988). A case has been made, now and before, for the recognition of and adherence to the reconceptualization of literacy that accommodates ‘literacies’ and fully acknowledges the social contexts of literacy players. Strides have been made, and continue to be made, in terms of an awakening to ‘literacies’ instead of to the concept of a solitary, ‘neutral’ literacy. Romero-Little (2006:399) put it succinctly:

For centuries Indigenous peoples have had their own distinct understandings, forms, and processes of literacy that provided children with many rich and meaningful daily opportunities to acquire the cultural symbols and intelligent traditions of their local communities. Today Indigenous people worldwide are deconstructing Western paradigms, including the classic constructs of literacy connected to alphabet systems, and articulating and constructing their own distinct paradigms based on indigenous epistemologies and rooted in self-determination and social justice.

As things stand now, and as reflected in this study, it is apparent, on the one hand, that despite the effort made by people to prepare their children for school-based learning, including their eagerness to enrol these children into schools, and despite the richness of cultural knowledge that these children carry from their home contexts, schooling is likely to remain a difficult, painful terrain for the focal community, at least for the near future. Unless policy and practice shift, children in the family, as well as others in similar situations will continue to be inadequately catered for and harshly treated by the education system in Botswana. On the other hand, despite the ways in which hegemonic power is distributed through literacy, language and schooling, by way of forceful impositions upon minority communities, no amount of these powerful forces have yet produced assimilation of the group under study, largely because cultural identity processes are harnessed in strategic ways to resist these pressures.

5.7 Recommendations

I make suggestions based on this particular study and for future related research. I recommend that:

- Given the non-homogeneity of the experiences narrated, further research is required to gain deeper insights into how these understandings are socially and culturally produced, within families and across communities;
- Comparative ethnographic studies should be undertaken covering cases of individual children from similarly marginalized communities;
- Student ethnographers should collect data from areas with close proximity to their universities of registration, where possible, given the amount of time needed for ethnographic studies and the need to retain institutional contact while such work is under way. Alternatively, effective channels for sustained communication with research supervisors need to be developed and maintained over a distance.
- Government of Botswana and educationists alike should consider involving ‘linguistic minority’ communities in the formulation of school curricula with the view to mitigate and cater for their linguistic concerns.
- School curricula formulation should consider indigenous epistemologies, knowledge, experiences to promote self-determination and social justice for all, especially now when issues of identity form the epicentre of emerging global scholarly discourse and debates.

6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, J., Kendrick, M., Rogers, T., and Smythe, S. (Eds). (2005) *Portraits of Literacy, Across Families, Communities and Schools: Intersections and Tensions*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Auerbach, E. (2005) *Connecting the Local and the Global: A Pedagogy of Not-Literacy*. In: J. Anderson et al P.P 363-379.
- Babbie, E., and Mouton, J., (2001) (S.A. Ed.) *The Practice of Social research*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press
- Bagwasi, M (2006). The Role of Language in Adult Education and Poverty Reduction in Botswana. *International Review of Education*, Vol. 52, No. 3, Education and Poverty Reduction (May. 2006), pp. 333-341. Springer. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737084>. Accessed: 20/05/2010
- Barnhardt, R., and Kawagley, A. O., (2005) Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Alaska Native Ways of Knowing. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*; Vol.36, No. 1 (March 2005), pp. 8-23. ProQuest Education Journals.
- Barton, D. (1994) *Literacy: An Introduction to the ecology of Written Language*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Barton, D. and Hamilton, M. (1998) *Local Literacies: Reading and Writing in one Community* . London and New York: Routledge.
- Barton, D., Hamilton, M. & Ivanic, R. (2000). *Situated Literacies: Reading and writing in Context*. London & New York: Routledge
- Baynham, M (1995). *Literacy Practices: Investigating Literacy in social contexts*. London & New York: Longman.
- Baynham, M. (2004) Ethnography of Literacy: Introduction. *Language and Education*. Vol. 18, No. 4, 2004. pp 285-290.

- Bloodgood, J. W, (1999) What's in a Name? Children's Name Writing and Literacy Acquisition. *Reading Research Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No.3 (July- August- September, 1999), pp. 342-367. International Reading Association.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/748067>. Accessed: 20/05/2010
- Botswana Government (1994) *Revised National Policy on Education*. Gaborone: Government Printers
- Botswana Government, (1997) Vision 2016: Long Term Vision for Botswana. *Towards Prosperity for All*. Gaborone: Government Printer
- Botswana Government, (1977) *The National Policy on Education: Kagosano*. Gaborone: Government Printer
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 2006; 3: 77-101. Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd.
www.QualResearchPsych.com: Visited: 23 August 2008 11:54 AM.
- Brock-Utne, B. (2001) Education for All: In Whose Language? *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol. 27. No. 1 (Mar., 2001), pp. 115-134. Taylor 7 Francis, Ltd.
<http://www.lstor.org/stable/1050997>. Accessed: 20/05/2010
- Chabanne, A; Nyati-Ramahobo, L, and Youngman, F. (2000) Adult Literacy and Cultural Diversity in Botswana. Paper presented at the Fifth Botswana Annual National Literacy Forum, June. Gaborone.
- Chu, C.M. (1999) Literacy Practices of Linguistic Minorities: Sociolinguistic Issues and Implications for Literacy services. *The Literacy Quarterly*. Vol.69, No. 3 (July, 1999), pp.339-359. The University of Chicago Press. <http://www.joster.org/stable/4309338>. Accessed: 20/05/2010

- Creswell, J. W (1994) *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: sage Publications
- Collins, J & Blot, R.K. (2003). *Literacy & Literatures: Texts, Power, and Identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dixon-Krause, L. (2000). Vygotsky's Sociohistorical Perspective on Learning and Its Application to Western Literacy Instructions (Chapter 1). In. M. Inglis, C. Thomson and M. Macdonald (eds.) *Language in Learning and Teaching (LILT)*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press
- Duff, P. (2005) Thinking Globally about English and New Literacies: Multilingual Socialization at Work. In: J. Anderson et al p.p 341-362, in: J. Anderson, M. Kendrick, T. Rogers, and S. Smythe, (eds), (2005) *Portraits of Literacy, Across Families, Communities and Schools: Intersections and Tensions*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Faculty of Humanities (2006) "Guide to Research Ethics: Research on Human Subjects" Graduate School in Humanities. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Freire, P. "The Adult Literacy Process as Cultural Action for Freedom and Education and Conscientizacao." In: *Perspectives on Literacy*, (Eds) E. R. Kintgen, B. M. Kroll, and M. Rose, pp. 398-409. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.
- Gee, J. (1990) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourse*. London: Taylor and Francis
- Gee, J. P. (1996). *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. (2nd ed). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Gee, J. P. (2008) Learning in Semiotic Domains: A Social and Situated Account. In: *Literacies, Local and Global*, (eds) M. Prinsloo and M. Baynham. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's, 137- 150.

- Gibson, D (1996) *Literacy, Knowledge, Gender and Power on Three Farms in the Western Cape*. Cape Town: CACE/ UCT Report Series.
- Gradol, Maybin & Sherer (1993). *Researching Language and Literacy in Social Context*. Clevedon: Multilingual matters & Open University Press.
- Gregory, E. (2005) Guiding Lights: Siblings as Literacy Teachers in a Multilingual Community. In: J. Anderson, M. Kendrick, T. Rogers, and S. Smythe (eds.) *Portraits of Literacy Across Families, Communities, and Schools: Intersections and Tensions*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heath, A. W. (1997). The proposal in Qualitative Research: *The qualitative report*, Vol. 3, No. 1. March 1997. (<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-1/heath.html>)
- Heath S. B. (2001). What No Bedtime Story Means: Narrative Skills at Home and school. In A. Duranti *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 318-342. First printed in *Language in Society*, (1982) 11, 1, 49-76.
- Hull, G. and Schultz, K. (2002) *School's Out: Bridging Out-of-school literacies with classroom Practice*. New York: Teacher College.
- Kulick, D. and C. Stroud (1993) 'Conceptions and Uses of Literacy in a Papua-New Guinea Village'. In B. Street (ed) *Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 33-61.
- LeCompte, M. D., and Schensul, J.J. (1999) *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press
- Li, G. (2001) Literacy as Situated Practice. *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2001), pp. 57-75. Canadian Society for the Study of Education.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1602145>. Accessed: 20/05/2010

- Luke, A. (1997) Learning through Difference: Cultural Practices in Early Childhood Language Socialization. In: E. Gregory (ed) (1997) One Child, Many Worlds: Early Learning in Multicultural Communities. London: Fulton Publishers.
<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/ed270/Luke/gregory.html>. Accessed: 12/10/2008
- Kebotsamang, M. (2004) “*Enigmatic Bazezuru*”. In: Mphusu, B. (2004) (Ed) Mutual Understanding/Kutlwano. Gaborone; Department of Information Services. September. 2004: P. 13-15
- Kendrick, M., Rogers, T., Smythe, S., & Anderson, J. (2005) Portraits of literacy Across Families, Communities, and Schools: Introduction, in: J. Anderson, M. Kendrick, T. Rogers, and S. Smythe, (eds), (2005) Portraits of Literacy, Across Families, Communities and Schools: Intersections and Tensions. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Macheng, P. (1990) Undocumented Talk: *The Importance of Education*. Mochudi.
- Masny, D. (2005) Multiple Literacies: An Alternative or Beyond Freire. In: Anderson, J, Kendrick, M, Rogers, T and Smythe, S. (eds.) Portraits of Literacy Across Families, Communities, and Schools: Intersections and Tensions. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Maxwell, J.A. (1996). Qualitative Research Design. London: Sage Ch1-4
- McEwan, M.J. and Malan, L. (1996) “The Kind of Education I Have, One Cannot See”: Perceptions and Uses of Literacy in Rural Eastern Cape. University of Cape Town.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook. (2nd Ed) Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publishers.
- Molosiwa, R (2000) “The Amazing Ways of the BaZezuru”. Mutual Understanding/Kutlwano. Gaborone; Department of Information Services July. 2000: P. 7-10

- Moss, G. (2001). On Literacy and the Social Organization of Knowledge Inside and Outside school. *Language and Education*, Vol. 15, No 2&3: p. 146-161.
- Mpofu, S. T. And Youngman, F. (2001) The Dominant Tradition in Adult Literacy: A Comparative Study of National Literacy Programmes in Botswana and Zimbabwe. *International Review of Education*. Vol. 47. No. 6 (Nov. 2001), pp. 573-595. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3445276>. Accessed: 20/05/2010
- Mpoyiya, P. & Prinsloo, M. (1996) Literacy, Migracy and Disrupted Domesticity: Khayelitshan Ways of Knowing. In: Prinsloo, M & Breier, M (eds) (1996) *The Social uses of Literacy: Theory and Practice in Contemporary S.A.* Bertsham: Sached Books
- Nyati-Ramahobo, L. (2008), *Indigenous Languages in Botswana*. New York. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/EGM_IL_Ramahobo.doc. Visited: October 2008.
- Ochs, E & Schieffelin, B.B (2001). *Language Acquisition and Socialization: Three Developmental Stories and Their Implications*. In A. Duranti (Ed) *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*
- Pahl, K. and Rowsell, J. (2006) *Literacy and Education: Understanding the New Literacy Studies in the Classroom*. London: PRP
- PanAfriL10n. Shona Language. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=sna) Accessed September 2008.
- Phillipson, R. (1999) *The Globalization of Dominant Languages*, in: B. Brouk-Utne & G. Garbo (eds) *Globalization=On whose Terms? Report No 5, Education in Africa* (Oslo, Institute for Education and research), pp. 199-217
- Prinsloo, M (2005) *The New Literacy as Placed Resources: Perspectives in Education*, vol 23 (4)

- Prinsloo, M & Breier, M (1996) *The Social uses of Literacy: Theory and Practice in Contemporary S.A.* Bertsham: Sached Books
- Prinsloo, M. (2007) *Lecture Notes. Research methods in Literacy Studies. Applied Language and literacy Studies.* University of Cape Town.
- Prinsloo, M. and Baynham, M. (In Press) *Draft Introduction: Theory and Research in Literacy Studies*
- Purcell-Gates, V. (2004). *Ethnographic Research.* In: Duke, N. K. and Mallette, M. H. (Eds). *Literacy Research Methodology.* London and New York: The Guilford Press
- Purcell- Gates, V., Jacobson, E., and Degerer, S. (2004) *Print Literacy and Development: Uniting Cognitive and Social Practice Theories.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Romero-Little, M.E. (2006) *Honoring Our Own: Rethinking Indigenous Languages and Literacy.* *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*: dec 2006; 37, 4; ProQuest Education Journal pg. 399-402. <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals/rights.htm>. Accessed: 20/05/2010
- Schribner, S. and Cole, M. (1981) *The Psychology of Literacy.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press
- Schultz, K (2002) *Looking across Space and Time: 'Reconceptualizing Literacy Learning in and out of School'* *Research in the Teaching of English.* Vol. 36, No. 3 (Feb 2002), pp. 356-390. National Council of Teachers of English. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/407153>. Accessed: 20/05/2010
- Sprandley, J.P. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview.* Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers
- Stephens, K. (2000) *A Critical Discussion of the 'New Literacy Studies'.* *British Journal of Educational Studies,* Vol. 48, No. 1 (May, 2000), pp. 10-23. Blackwell Publishing. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1555844>. Accessed: 20/05/2010

- Street, B.V. (2001) Literacy 'Events' and Literacy 'Practices': Theory and Practice in the 'New Literacy Studie.' In. K.Jones & M. Martin-Jones (eds), *Multilingual literacies. Comparative perspectives on research and practice* (pp. 17-35) Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Street, B. V (2003) What's "New" in New Literacy Studies? Critical Approaches to Literacy in Theory and Practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, Vol 5, No 2
- Street, B. V (1993) *Cross Cultural Approaches to Literacy*, CUP
- Street, B. V (1996) Literacy and Power? In; Open Letter: Australia Journal for Literacy Research and Practice Vol. 6, no 2: pp 7-16
- Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Street, B.V (1995) *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography and Education*. London & New York: Longman
- Street, B. V (1999) *Meanings of Culture in Development: A Case Study from Literacy*. London; King's College. In A. Little and F. Leach (Eds) *Schools, Culture and Economics in the Developing World; Tensions and Conflicts*. London: Garland Press
- Street, B. V. (2004) Future of the Ethnography of Literacy. *Multilingual Matters: Language and Education*. Vol. 18, No. 4, 2004. P.P 326-330. London
- Street, B.V. (1994) 'Struggles over the Meaning(s) of Literacy.' In. M, Hamilton, D, Barton, and R, Ivanic (Eds) *Worlds of Literacy, Multilingual Matters*. pp. 15-20. Ontario Institute for Studies in education
- Street, B.V. & Street, J. (1991) The Schooling of literacy. In D. Barton & R. Ivanoc (eds) *Literacy in the Community* (P.P. 143-166). SAGE

- Stutnabb-Kangas, T. & Phillipson, R. (1996) The Possible Role of Donors in a Language Policy for All. In: B, Brouk-Utne & T, Nagel. (Eds) The role of Aid in the Development of Education for all; Report No 8 (Oslo, Institute for Educational Research) pp. 161-202
- Taylor, G.W. and Ussher, J.M. (2001) Making Sense of S & M: A Discourse Analytical Account. *Sexualities* 4, 293-314.
- Wapitso, S (2008) The Zezuru: A Religious Community Engaged in Business.
<http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?sid=68aid=2008/September/Monday29>. Visited: September 2008.
- Weiss, R.S. (1994) Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: The Free Press.
- Youngman, F. (2000) The State, Adult Literacy Policy and Inequality in Botswana. In A. Welch (Ed) *Third World Education: Quality and Equality*. Pp. 251-278. New York: Garland
- Youngman, F. (1997) Adult Literacy and Social Development in Botswana. *Mosenodi*. Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 15-27

