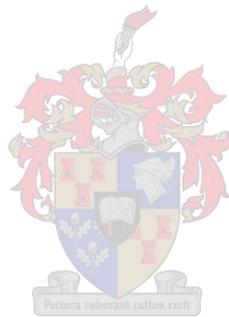


# **THE SOCIETAL VOICE IN SWAZI CHILDREN'S ORAL POETRY**

**BY**

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Arts and Social Sciences**

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**December 2017**

## **DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

Swazi children's oral poetry consists of lullabies, rhymes, games and chants, which are recited by young children at home or in school. Lullabies are sung by mothers and baby minders for the purpose of pacifying babies, yet rhymes, games and chants are recited by the children themselves when they play. All these songs consist of the beautiful and rich language of poetry as well as the non-verbal elements of oral poetry which makes the genre distinct. However, most children in Swaziland have ceased to recite their rhymes when they play. This is because of the changing times as our society is becoming modern. Lullabies have also lost their value as it is rare to witness a mother or baby sitter singing to a crying baby.

Since this genre is becoming less popular and very little research has been done on it, the study sought to collect and document the performances of some of the forgotten songs (traditional) as well as the fresh ones (modern) for future generations, so as to interpret their verbal and non verbal content. The observation method of data collection was used through requested performances from schools in which such poems were still performed. Thereafter, the structure of the poems, which constitutes the prosodic elements, was analyzed. Since the non-verbal elements of oral poetry form an integral part of this genre, these aspects were discussed: the societal values and norms, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions.

In the analyses of the poems it was obvious that indeed society, through the voices of the personas and the depiction of certain characters and their actions, praises good deeds, ridicules and condemns certain acts which are unacceptable according to the standards society has put in place to maintain order. The diction acts as vehicle through which the messages and the different subject matters are communicated, whether in an emotional, calm, playful, or satiric manner. The formal structures of the poems also beautify them physically and contribute to the flow of ideas, so are the non-verbal elements such as gestures and body movements which are revealed through performance.

Therefore the study recommends that more research be done on this genre to discover and document more of the songs, especially the long forgotten ones, for the future generations. Analyses of the songs could be geared on any direction to discover the rich diction and messages loaded in them.

## OPSOMMING

Swazi kinders se mondelinge poësie bestaan uit slaap(wiege)liedere, rympies, speletjies en dreunsang wat geresiteer word deur jong kinders tuis of by die skool. Slaap(wiege)liedere word gesing deur moeders of kinderoppassers met die doel om babas gerus te maak, terwyl rympies, speletjies en dreunsang geresiteer word deur kinders hulself wanneer hulle speel. Al hierdie liedere bestaan uit pragtige, ryk poëtiese taal, asook die nie-verbale elemente van mondelinge poësie wat dié genre eiesoortig maak. Die meeste kinders in Swaziland het egter opgehou om rympies te resiteer wanneer hulle speel. Die rede hiervoor is die veranderende tye soos die samelewing toenemend modern raak. Ook slaap(wiege)liedere het hulle waarde verloor, omdat dit raar is om 'n moeder of baba oppasser te sien wat sing vir 'n huilende baba.

Omdat die genre besig is om minder populêr te raak en min navorsing daarvoor gedoen is, het hierdie studie ten doel gehad om sommige van die vergete liedere (tradisioneel sowel as nuwer, moderne liedere) te versamel en te dokumenteer vir toekomstige generasies en hulle verbale en nie-verbale inhoud te interpreteer. Die waarnemingsmetode van dataversameling is gebruik na aanleiding van uitvoerings versoek by skole, waar sulke poësie steeds uitgevoer word. Daarna, is die struktuur van die poësie wat die prosodiese elemente vorm, ontleed. Aangesien die nie-verbale elemente van mondelinge poësie 'n integrale deel vorm van dié genre, is die volgende aspekte bespreek: die gemeenskapswaardes en norme, oortuigings, houdings en persepsies.

In die ontleding van die poësie was dit inderdaad duidelik dat die samelewing, deur die stemme van die personas en die uitbeelding van bepaalde karakters en hul aksies, goeie dade op prys stel, en bepaalde aksies bespot en veroordeel wat onaanvaarbaar is volgens die standaard wat die samelewing daargestel het om goeie orde te handhaaf. Die diksie dien as middel waardeur die boodskappe en verskillende onderwerpe gekommunikeer word, op 'n emosionele, kalm, speelse, of satiriese wyse. Die formele struktuur van die gedigte versier hulle en dra by tot die vloei van idees, soos ook die nie-verbale elemente soos gebare en liggaamsbewegings wat openbaar word in die uitvoerings.

Die studie beveel aan dat meer navorsing gedoen word oor hierdie genre ten einde meer liedere te ontdek en te dokumenteer, veral lang-vergete liedere, vir toekomstige generasies. Die analyses kan gerig word in enige rigting om die ryk diksie en boodskappe in die liedere te verken.

## SIFINYETO

Tinkondlo tebantfwana baseSwatini tifaka ekhatsi imilolotelo, tigamdlalo netilandzelo letishiwo bantfwana labancane ekhaya noma esikolweni. Imilolotelo ihlatjelwa bomake netidzandzane nabathulisa bantfwana bese tigamdlalo netilandzelo tishiwo ngibo bantfwana cobo lwabo nabatidlalela nje. Tonkhe letingoma tiveta buhle nekujula kwelulwimi lwebunkondlo kanye nabo phela buciko bemlomo lobenta kutsi lolu luhlobo lwetinkondlo lwehluke. Kepha-ke liningi lebantfwana nyalo kaNgwane alisavami kuhlabela letingoma. Loku kungenca yekuhamba kwetikhatsi njengoba live seliphucukile. Nemilolotelo nayo ayisanalo lisasasa njengoba kungasesiyo imvama kubona make noma sidzandzane sihlabelela umntfwana lokhalako.

Njengoba loluhlobo lwetinkondlo seluphelelwa ludvumo luphindze lube luncane lucwaningo lolwentiwe ngalo, lolucwaningo lolu-ke luhlose kugcogca ndzawonye leti tinkondlo lokufaka ekhatsi nati takadzeni lesetikhohlwakele kanye naleto letinsha kute kutsi titukulwane letitako titati, nekutsi-ke siphindze sikhone kuhlatiya sakhiwo sato sangekhatsi, sangephandle kanye nendlela letihlatjelwa ngayo. Kusetjentiswe indlela yekubukela bantfwana bahlabela etikolweni nakubutsiswa letingoma. Emvakwaloko kubese kuhlatiwa kuma kwato nemisindvo levakalako. Njengoba letinkondlo tiveta buciko bemlomo kubese kubukwa nanaku: emasiko nemihambo, tinkholelo kanye nendlela emaSwati labuka ngayo tintfo.

Natisahlatiwa-ke letingoma kubonakele kutsi nembala sive, ngemaphimbo alabo labahlabelako kanye netento talabo lababonakalako kuletingoma, siyakhutsata tento letinhle siphindze sihlabe leto letimbi letingemukeleki eveni kute kutsi kube nenhlalakahle. Lolulwimi lwebunkondlo lona luyindlela yekuhambisa imilayeto netingcikitsi ngendlela lekahle yekudlala noma kuhlekisa nje. Lesakhiwo sangephandle sona siveta buhle baletinkondlo nasetibhaliwe siphindze sivete kuhleleka kwemicondvo kanye nabo buciko bemlomo lobufaka ekhatsi kunyakata kwentimba lokubonakala nasekuhlatjelwa letingoma.

Ngako-ke lolucwaningo luncoma kutsi tichubeke tibe khona letinye tincwaningo kuloluhlobo lwemibhalo kute kutfolakale kuphindze kugcogcwe letinye taletingoma ikakhulu leti lesetikhohlwakele, kwentelwe titukulwane letitako. Kuhlatiwa kwaletingoma kungabhekiswa noma ngukuphi kute kubonakale lobuhle nekujula kwelulwimi lwebunkondlo kanye nemilayeto lecuketfwe.

## **DEDICATION**

To my family; my pillars, my anchors, my strength. You are the reason I wake up every morning with a smile and get ready to face new challenges.

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The Swazi National Museum, for the historical and cultural information I got from them.

I thank you all. May God richly bless you!

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Children's poetry:** Oral poetry for young children, which includes lullabies and rhymes/games.

**Diction:** The careful selection and arrangement of words in a unique order to convey meaning and rhythm in a poem. (Ebewo, 1997:19)

**Content:** The words used to communicate a message in a poem.

**Form:** The appearance, shape or coherence of a poem. (Ebewo, 1997:49)

**Linguistic devices:** The poetic devices used in a poem such as metaphor, simile, symbol, hyperbole etc.

**Para linguistic devices:** The non-verbal aspects of oral poetry which are visible during performance, such as facial expressions, gestures, body movements, voice pitch, mime etc. Others also include the culture of the people, societal values and norms.

**Prosodic elements:** These take into account the sound patterns in a poem which aid rhythm such as alliteration, consonance, assonance and any other forms of repetition.

**Oral art:** The study of the oral or traditional type of literature that involves performance and any other non-verbal elements.

**Non-verbal elements:** These are the para linguistic devices already discussed above.

**Verbal elements:** These include the diction, form, linguistic and prosodic elements already discussed.

**Society:** Large group of people who share common values, norms, customs, laws etc.

**Voice:** Opinions, feelings, wishes, hopes, dreams, fears of a particular individual or society.

**Persona:** The voice or character in a poem. (Ebewo, 1997:80)

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Swazi children's songs are a form of oral poetry. These songs are composed by the society for the society. They are mainly for the children's enjoyment as they sing and play to fight boredom, fatigue and also socialize with their friends. Lullabies are sung to babies by their grandmothers, mothers, sisters and relatives to comfort and lull them to sleep. Since Swazis believe in social support and group identity, it is therefore significant for children to be schooled at a tender age about the importance of acknowledging one's role, identity and belonging in society. This helps the children to grow up with full understanding of the expectations and responsibilities associated with each group so as to be able to adhere to them. Thus, children's poetry is one of the structures society has put in place to instill order in a non-rigid but playful way. This is where society judges, criticizes, condemns, appreciates and commends certain acts as a way of correcting, redeeming, encouraging and esteeming members of society. That is why it is not surprising to find deep subject matters and messages which are way beyond the children's level of understanding. Thus, children's poetry is a vehicle through which members of society communicate with one another in an indirect and sometimes non-verbal way.

#### **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

So far there have been few attempts to collect and document Swazi children's poems and there are a few detailed analyses of these, mainly by authors such as Kamera (2001:69-73) who did an introduction and made a list of most of such poems and lullabies. Mamba (2008:5, 56, 64, and 67) in a module compiled for university students analysed a few lullabies, rhymes and chants. Other authors such as Vilakati et al. (1997:39-41) and Dlamini *et al.* (2006:99-108) only have snippets of information on lullabies and rhymes as well as few collections. Since this type of poetry is on the verge of becoming extinct, as it is rare to hear nannies and mothers singing lullabies to their babies or come across children playing and reciting their native poems, hence the need and urgency

to collect, document and make a detailed analysis of these beautiful, yet slowly forgotten songs which are part of the Swazi nation's heritage and pride.

### **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to collect, document and record children's lullabies, rhymes, chants and games of pre- and primary school going age so as to critically analyse the diction in terms of content and form, as well as examine the non-verbal elements of oral poetry embedded in them. The role and significance of this kind of poetry in Swazi society will also be discussed.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

- Identify and discuss the role of the persona in children's poetry
- Identify and discuss the significance of the different characters portrayed
- Critically analyze the subject matters, themes and messages contained in the songs
- Discuss the linguistic devices and the prosodic elements used
- Examine the manner of performances, context for use and the role of the audience
- Recognize the societal voice, attitudes, perceptions, values norms and beliefs

### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What is the significance of children's poetry in Swazi society?
- What is its contribution towards portraying, upholding and even challenging certain norms, attitudes, perceptions, belief systems and cultural practices?
- What is the role and identity of the persona as well as the other characters portrayed in the songs?
- What are the subject matters, themes and messages, and how are they conveyed?
- What is the effect of the linguistic devices and the prosodic elements used?
- What is the significance of the manner of performances, context for use and the role of the audience?

## 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in the sense that literature students, teachers and lecturers whether Swazi or non-Swazi, as well as the society at large, shall be exposed to:

- The beauty of the siSwati language
- The distinct language of oral poetry
- The culture of the Swazi people as well as their values, beliefs and norms
- The roles of children and parents in Swazi society
- The various messages contained in children's poetry

## 1.7 METHODOLOGY

Since the nature of the study was analytical, the researcher adopted the qualitative research methodology which led to the selection of the case study research design, whereby the observation instrument was used. This involved data collection through field work, on conveniently selected research sites where reliable and willing participants were randomly sampled. Thereafter, the data was critically analysed by applying the principles and theories of oral poetry. As Maykut and Morehouse (1994:46) quote, “the data of qualitative inquiry is most often people's words and action and thus requires methods that allow the researcher to capture language and behavior.”

Therefore, the observation method was suitable in this study because it involved minors who would not be capable of answering a series of questions since they have short concentration spans. Another reason was that since the study entailed oral art in which performance was essential, the researcher had to witness the performances of the songs so as to be able to analyse their poetic content. Thus, the researcher chose the controlled, unconcealed, participant type of observation as discussed by Sekaran and Bougie (2013:116). The reason for choosing the controlled observation was the fact that it is becoming rare to see children playing and reciting their siSwati rhymes in natural settings due to the changing times. That also explained the choice of the unconcealed type of observation which caused the researcher to arrange performances on specific dates. The participant type of observation was largely influenced by the manner of the performances which caused the observer to react to the performances as they rekindled old memories.

Another instrument that was used in the data analysis was informal, unstructured and conversational interviews. This involved engaging colleagues and other knowledgeable persons in the field of oral art so as to gather more information with regard to the formal and thematic structure of the songs. The reason for choosing this method was “to capture subjective comments and evaluate them” (Edmunds, 1999:3, as quoted by Jacko 2004:71) because oral art encompasses a variety of aspects, such as culture and history. Thus, no one particular person can ever know everything. Swazis also believe that wisdom is acquired through age, knowledge and experience, so one has to consult those that have gone before him or her on any endeavour. The convenience sampling method was also adopted in the study because it gave the researcher freedom to choose convenient research sites and participants who were reliable and within reach. Though the samples were small, they represent a larger population.

## **1.8 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

### **1.8.1 Primary data**

The researcher collected first hand information while observing performances made by young children as well as video recording them for a period of about four weeks. The period was flexible enough to avoid fatigue and attention problems, as the researcher allowed for some rest days in between recordings. The environment was made as calm and as less forceful as possible by the researcher’s encouraging words and smiles before the start of each recording as well as showing keen interest by singing along during the oral performances. Due to the unpopularity of children’s poetry nowadays, the researcher requested performances in schools that taught pupils some of the songs as part of the siSwati syllabi. After numerous phone calls, the researcher selected two convenient schools in the Hhohho region of Swaziland, where she resided. The schools consisted of one primary school in the outskirts of town and one high school in an urban area. The targeted population in the primary school was the lower grades where children’s poetry was learnt. Sampling was done on about forty pupils aged around seven, in a first grade class.

The older children (at high school) consisted of about ten students who volunteered to perform for the researcher as they proclaimed they still remembered some of the old rhymes and games which they grew up singing. These ranged from sixteen to eighteen years of age. The reason for involving

older children was for the purpose of improvisation since the younger children were not familiar with the old songs. Moreover, the researcher's eighteen year old relative who grew up in the rural areas, where she was exposed to children's poetry, also volunteered to perform some of the forgotten songs. The whole exercise was done for the purpose of observing the manner of the performances which take into account the non-verbal aspects of oral poetry, such as facial expressions, body movements, voice pitches, the melody and rhythm of the songs, so as to understand and interpret their verbal content and form.

The researcher's five colleagues who are educators in the Languages and Arts departments, as well as two other knowledgeable professionals in the field of oral literature, were consulted for translations, clarifications and additional information with regard to the content analysis. This was done through pre-arranged private meetings with informants at their work places, as well as informal group discussions with colleagues, at times convenient for all of them. The researcher would come with some questions prepared in advance but allowed for the natural flow of conversations whilst taking down notes. Each session lasted no more than an hour. These occasional meetings went on until the researcher was satisfied with the information gathered.

Ethics, privacy and confidentiality of the participants were observed as individuals participated on their free will and personal information was concealed. Written permission from the schools authorities where recordings took place was granted before carrying out the research. Parental consent forms were also distributed before the commencement of the exercise and were signed by the parents of minors. The researcher declared, in writing, that access to raw data would be restricted and data stored securely.

### **1.8.2 Secondary data**

Through this approach the researcher collected data from the internet, books from libraries, newspapers, journals, articles and national archives, so as to find out how much research had been done in the field of oral art and perhaps identify any gaps. The researcher examined the status of oral art in African societies and amongst scholars nowadays then reviewed other researches, especially on children's poetry, so as to make them stepping stones in the study. History, Siswati and Geography books were read extensively to gather facts and background information on the

content of some of the songs. The Swazi National Meuseum was also visited to gain more cultural and historical insight.

## **1.9 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION**

The study focused on approximately fifteen to twenty popular modern and traditional lullabies, rhymes and games of pre- and primary school going children. The researcher would have liked to collect and analyse more children's poems, but due to time constraints and the nature of oral art which is mainly unwritten, this has caused some difficulties in interpreting data as it also involved field work as well as regular meetings with resource persons, which was costly and time consuming. Another reason was that since the genre is becoming unpopular, most children were unfamiliar with it so it was challenging to observe natural performances. The requested performances might be slightly biased due to the reactivity of the children.

## **1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study shall be organized into five chapters which are arranged as follows:

1. Chapter 1: will be the introduction, which encompasses the problem statement, aim, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, methodology, data collection techniques as well as scope and delimitation
2. Chapter 2: will be the literature review on oral art and its problems, as well as the role and significance of children's poetry in general.
3. Chapter 3: will be an analysis of the content and form, of about fifteen traditional and modern children's lullabies.
4. Chapter 4: will also be an analysis of the content and form, of about twenty traditional and modern children's rhymes and games.
5. Chapter 5: will be the summary and conclusion of the findings as well as the recommendations.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

The chapter presented the introduction to the study and highlighted the problem statement, the aim, objectives and the research questions. The methodology and data collection techniques used were also discussed in detail. The organization of the study was also enlisted as a guide. The following chapter seeks to review literature on the insights of other authors concerning the issues of oral literature as well as the significance of children's poetry.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives a review of literature on oral literature. It is where different views about oral literature are discussed. In order to achieve this, the chapter will concentrate on the following aspects; definition of oral literature, characteristics of oral literature, problems of oral literature, as well as the role and significance of children's poetry.

#### **2.2 DEFINITION OF ORAL LITERATURE**

Some scholars have found it difficult to explain or define oral literature because of its nature, which is mainly unwritten. Kamera (2001:2) tries to define or explain the complexity of oral literature. He states that oral literature refers to fictional texts which are composed, kept alive and passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. He explains that oral literature covers all traditional verbal utterances which are spoken, sung, chanted or recited because traditionally they are composed, transmitted and preserved orally. He then quotes examples such as prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, dramas and myths, riddles, proverbs and idioms which evolve and are concerned with speaking, singing, listening and acting, and which depend on a living culture, retentive memory and skillful tradition bearers who take pride in transmitting the various forms of this art to their children and grandchildren.

Vilakati and Sibanda (1997:31) define oral literature similarly with Kamera. They also state that this form of literature is mainly unwritten and is passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. It encompasses past events, histories, and important utterances. However, they mention that nowadays oral texts are written to be preserved for other generations to come. They then give a brief discussion on the types of oral literary texts such as songs, lullabies, rhymes, praise poems and names, oral narratives, proverbs and idioms as well as riddles.

Kashim (1999:18) as quoted by Sone (2016:3) states that oral literature in traditional Swaziland as elsewhere, serves as an instrument for the examination of individual experience in relation to the normative order of society. Thus, he mentions that oral literature is used in Swaziland to comment on how the individual adheres to or deviates from the community's norms or behavior. He further remarks that the individual expresses through language his joys and his sorrows, his expectations and his disappointments, his plans and his achievements, his judgements on things physical or philosophical, temporal or eternal. His expressions are temporary or heightened; simple or difficult, pitiful or aphoristic, diffused or discursive, poetic or dramatic, exaggerated, and easily forgotten or memorable. This is evident in most Swazi songs as Swazis believe that another way of communicating is through song.

Narasimhaiah and Emenyonu (1988:1) state that oral literature is as old as man in Africa, because it portrays a lived experience of a people who have evolved over the millennia a homogenous culture, and it has been the foundation of modern African literature which is a serious intellectual and cultural activity.

All in all, the studies cited in this section all point out, one way or the other, that oral literature is the type of literature that is transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another. It takes into account the way of life of a people in a society which includes their culture, customs, rituals, norms, values, attitudes and expectations.

### **2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF ORAL LITERATURE**

Finnegan (1970:2) as well as, Egudu and Nwoga (1971:4) discuss the characteristics of oral literature which are performance, occasion and audience. Kutin (2007:35) describes these characteristics as text (wording of narration), texture (the way in which the narration is performed) and context (the circumstances in which a narration occurs). Egudu et al. (1971:4) use these characteristics to analyse *Igbo* poetry. They argue that performance is important as the performer is expected to show expertise in the variety of expressions with which he can state, expand and deepen a single idea or thought. Finnegan (1970:2) also concurs with Egudu et al. (1971:4) as she says oral literature is dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion.

She further states that what distinguishes between oral and written literature is that oral literature is distinct in the sense that it relies mainly on performance.

Dlamini, Mamba and Dlamini (2006:vii) highlight the features or characteristics of oral literature as those discussed by Finnegan above. They mention the importance of the ‘orality’ of oral literature and the vehicle through which it is passed on, which is the mouth. They express their concerns that once the oral texts are written down they lose some of the more important oral aspects which are only evident if performed. They also talk about the varieties in the rendition of the oral texts in that since they are passed on through word of mouth it is likely that they will differ according to place, time, mood, audience and the expertise of the performer. This is evident in most Swazi songs. Dlamini et al (2006:vii) also mention the issue of *umcambi/umsunguli* “the creator or inventor” of the oral texts which is mostly unknown except in praise poetry where it is the poet. They then stress the important societal values and norms which are preserved in these oral texts.

### **2.3.1 Performance**

Khan (2009:154) defines performance in oral art as the enactment of the artistic and socio-cultural values inherent in a given performance community. He states that the oral artist’s use of verbal aesthetics or expressive media such as linguistic and extra linguistic resources and the role of the material aesthetics influence artistic variability. He also talks about the relations and interaction between the oral artist and his material, the physical setting of the performance and the belief systems or worldview of the culture in which the performance is embedded. Kutin (2007:35) defines a folklore event as a social situation in which narration occurs. He states that every folkloric event is unique and singular because it develops in an unrepeatable context of time, place, space and participants. He stresses that how a story develops is influenced by motivation, personal characteristics, the mood and behavior of all the participants and the relations between them. This is what usually unfolds in story telling events.

Likewise, Finnegan (1970:3) elaborates that performance takes into account the non-verbal elements such as facial expression, vocal expressiveness, body movements, dramatic use of pause and rhythm which the written part of literature lacks. She explains that as the performer is face to

face with his audience there is some kind of interaction between the two parties such that there is a bond which develops between the audience and the performer. This bond is realized in the fact that some aspects of the manner of performance are dictated by the common knowledge of the cultural background that the two parties bring to the occasion of performance. Such is observed in story telling events and performance of songs.

Egudu et al. (1971:4) support this view as they say that since the performer is usually in contact with his audience, he is therefore capable of interjecting references to certain issues that are outside the scope of the present performance without confusing the audience as to the trend of the main material. Thus, the performer is able to shift from one situation to another by mere change of facial expression or gesture of the hand or body. They illustrate by describing the dances in Igbo culture. They point out that these are accompanied by the enlargement of the eyes, a tortured twisting of the mouth, the pressing forward of the chest as well as the syncopated rhythm of the drumming. This is also observed during the *umtsimba* (traditional wedding ceremony) where the bride, as she dances to the songs, has liberty to cite her in laws' unbecoming behavior and even call out their names as a way of exposing their evil deeds in front of the whole society.

Abubakar (2009:176) compares modern performance with oral art performance to identify the distinction between these two forms. He concludes that a story in traditional folktales is narrated by the actor and the audience with a high level of interaction occurring through spontaneous exclamations, questions, echoing of words, emotional reaction and chorusing of songs. This shows the connection between the performer and the audience. He also observes that indeed the oral art performance is distinct in that the performer acts several roles in the course of his narration and thus expresses all emotions that accompany all the roles. Therefore, the constant change from one mood to the other to match these roles cannot make any dull moment persist for long as to affect the audience nor can the performer be identified with any of these roles or its corresponding emotion. The performer also enjoys the liberty of re-creating a story to suit different purposes by emphasizing or de-emphasizing particular segments of the story to satisfy specific contexts or audience which is not common in modern art.

Okpewho (1979:135) concurs with the above authors as he discusses form and structure in songs. He talks about the moment of performance which includes music, histrionic resources and emotional relationship between singer and audience. He stresses that each performance is the

product of one specific moment or context and is never exactly repeated because there can be no fixed pattern to the context in which a song is performed since some of the peculiar features of a performance are due to a variety of circumstances. Thus, the results of any performance depend mainly on the particular audience, mood and atmosphere.

Mamba (1997:63) talks about the significance of group identity in Swazi oral art. She mentions that in the performance of songs the voice of the speaker represents the experiences of a particular group of people in a society. She states that even if singular forms of address are used the person talking is always viewed as a representative of his or her group and the words within the poem point to certain cultural practices which pertain to particular sections of society. She says sometimes the words are not from the speaker's point of view but they represent perceptions of the group by society. For instance, the songs of women usually portray their experiences as a whole and society's perception of them. That is why their outcry which include amongst others, the abuse by their husbands and society's blatant attitude towards such issues is evident in most of their songs. Mamba (1997:64) also observes that poems or songs about women and children are generally stative as they merely inform about their positions and activities in society and sometimes sound like an obedient response to the orders of traditional society.

However, Mamba (1997:64) stresses that praise poems such as those directed to kings and queens, have a slight deviation from this view point because the praises sometimes single out attributes that are peculiar to the individual being praised such as character traits, body features and matters of genealogy. They also address representatives of certain animal species. Mamba (1997:65) further stresses that when the individuals being praised are kings some of the things said about the king are deliberately and deceptively addressed in the singular just to appear on the surface only, yet they say something that touches on the whole nation as a group or something pertaining to kingship as an institution. She also makes an observation that in the poems where the group identified is men, the ideas expressed come out forcefully with a forward looking, positive outlook. So we are able to deduce some expressiveness from the part of the men being talked about which is showing a freedom to do things or a push or desire to excel in doing things. Mamba points out that this forcefulness is greater when the group identified has something to do with the Regimental system and the institution of kingship as well as the concept of nation.

### 2.3.2 Occasion/context

According to the Oxford dictionary (9<sup>th</sup> edition) the occasion refers to a particular time when something happens or a special event, ceremony or celebration. It could also refer to a reason or cause to do something. Thus, before any performance can be done there must be an occasion. Finnegan (1970:5) also adds that the occasion directly affects the detailed content and form of the piece being performed. She argues that some oral poetry is designed for particular situations and reasons such as funerals, weddings and celebrations of victory. Egudu et al. (1971:4) recall one incident when the Igbo group refused to perform one of the most popular satirical songs because according to them the dance was ‘not yet properly cooked.’ By this they mean that the dance had not yet reached the right pitches of excitement which would liberate their spirit and body to perform it correctly.

Khan (2009:143) discusses the aesthetics of setting, drama and contextualization amongst the Themne (Mande speaking group of West Africa) oral performances. He states that the aesthetic setting of Themne story telling around a fire or under moonlight keys the contextualization along with the dramatic and artistic resources for the performance as a creative art. He states that the choice of the story telling material by Themne story tellers responds to the demands imposed by social aesthetic considerations for story telling performances which are influenced by the choice of stories, the thematic content or subject matter and the method and time of delivery. He further states that in some parts of Themneland telling stories during the day is taboo and this belief is common in rural areas where superstition is widespread. He states that the belief is that a family member or community member may die so adults discourage children from telling stories during the day.

Similarly, in Swazi society it is taboo to tell stories during the day and the belief is that whoever does that may grow horns. The underlying factor around these beliefs is that in both societies, as Khan (2009:143) has observed amongst the Themne, it is idle and unsociable for children to indulge in daylight story telling. Thus, this practice is reserved for bedtime hours or the evening which is an opportunity to while away time, socialize and prepare the children for bed.

Nonetheless, Khan (2009:150) concludes that there is an inconsistency in this belief in that it was evident in Themneland that during the rainy seasons which made it difficult to have moonlight and

wood fires, stories were told during the day. Again in Swazi society, in cases of boredom, idleness and schools curriculum, story-telling can be done during the day, but the people partaking in this activity have to poke sticks on their heads as way of preventing the growth of horns. This consistency makes Khan (2009:150) to draw conclusions so as to say that practicalities can override beliefs and that social aesthetics and the socializing function of story-telling may also play a critical role in the sanction against daylight story telling for the community.

Khan (2009:152) elaborates on the issue of contextualization in oral art. He states that this may take the form of similes, riddles and proverbs that employ metaphors evoked by or associated with the aesthetic setting of the performance. He quotes Mohammed (1995) who argues that socio-cultural factors like the physical environment provide a situation that is conducive to creativity and responsible for the artist's drive. Khan (2009:152) elaborates by touching on the role played by cultural beliefs and world view of the Themne story teller's artistry. He concludes by saying that the contribution to the artistry and aesthetic integrity of the performance by the man made bonfires setting, combined with the natural environment of moonlight and nocturnal wildlife activities facilitate the performance as a socially collective art form.

The significance of the occasion is also cited by Kamera (2001:2) as he discusses Swazi poetic genres. He states that the songs of *emaSwati* (Swazis) make up the bulk of oral poetry as they accompany occasions of joy and sorrow. He stresses that Swazis have songs for every occasion and these songs are directed towards a criticism of life as they allude to and comment on human vices. They express individual and group identity as they are performed by groups or individuals against definite personal or collective circumstances; sometimes it could be as a result of a recollection of an experience or circumstance in the past. He says these are also rigid in verbal organization and demand repeatable accuracy. Some songs exhibit a leader or a solo and a chorus structure. The leader sings the solo while the chorus is sung by the group or the audience.

Kamera (1999:11) also highlights the importance of the occasion or context as he analyses *tinanatelo*, "Swazi family praises," which he defines as heroic recitations or poetic boasts which encapsulate and validate the mythologies of origin, religious beliefs and practices, legal, ritual and social standing of the clan. He states that these are good examples of oral poetry as they provide instances of stylized content and conduct. He stresses that the content and style of presentation are conventional and particular to the genre and to the culture in that the aesthetics and folklore are

brought together, values asserted and prescribed behavior is upheld. He further states that *tinanatelo* are speech acts which are tied up with the ceremonial functions of the society and they are heard in all fields of social discourse. Indeed this particular genre is part and parcel of the Swazi way of life because mostly it does not even need a specific occasion since it is common amongst Swazis *kunanatela* (sing praises) as they chat to show appreciation, agreement, respect and identity of each of the individuals.

### **2.3.3 Audience**

The audience is one of the key factors in oral art as the success of the performance relies mainly on the active participation of the audience. Just as Kutin (2007:35) states, the development of the story in a folklore event is influenced by motivation, personal characteristics, the mood and behavior of all the participants and the relations between them. These are important because they determine how relaxed and effective the event is. Kutin (2007:35) continues to say that the participants who act as recipients respond to the story by listening, watching, commenting asking questions, calling and producing emotional reactions.

Kutin (2007:36) further divides and discusses the roles of the audience on the basis of forms or functions of active intervention in the course of narration. These are (1) motivator, (2) assistant, (3) inquirer, (4) yea-sayer or nay-sayer, (5) complementor, (6) commentator. He emphasizes that individual recipients may engage in several of these roles and they all influence how the story teller tells his or her story. All these roles are evident during a story telling event in Swazi society and they show unity and the tight the bond that develops between the performer and his audience.

Abubakar (2009:174) compares modern and traditional audiences and concludes that while both rely on performance the African audience is active, resourceful and uncompromising. He states that no boring moment is allowed to linger on in the traditional African theater because prompt reactions nullify dull moments whilst these qualities were not allowed to manifest in modern theatre. He agrees with Kutin (2007:36) that the audience does not just sit back but co-performs with the narrator or performer by singing along, asking questions or making comments to remove vagueness, playing roles in the enactment of parts of the story and taking over the tale from a failing narrator. He stresses that this level of audience involvement in a performance surely makes

it central to the performance yet this freedom is far-fetched in conventional theater due to its formal disposition such as single authorship, acting with other actors on stage, pre-determined dialogue forms and movements, restricted time and space. This shows how carefree and liberated the performer and performers are in any given traditional setting.

Abubakar (2009:175) concurs that it is common knowledge to the oral narrative audience that meaning in such stories is encoded and its task is to decode it, hence the question and answer session at the end. The opening formula assists the audience to remember and distinguish between the reality and the imaginary and on the other hand, to equally find a link between the imaginary and its own condition and aspirations. This is also very important in Swazi oral narratives as it stirs anticipation, excitement and draws the audience's attention and involvement. It is some kind of announcement that it is now time to relax and enjoy the moment yet at the same time it draws attention to the story's main character and perhaps the theme. For example, the narrator would start by saying, "*Kwesukasukela!*" (Long, long ago!) The audience would then respond and say "*Coyi!*" (Continue!) Then the narrator would immediately state the main character and say, for instance, "*Bekukhona umfana*" (There was a boy) to indicate to the audience that the story is now starting.

Khan (2009:144) also talks about the importance of the audience in oral performances by the Mande speaking group of West Africa. He states that since the society is getting exposed to audio visual mass media forms of entertainment this then puts pressure on the performers to deliver attractive material to their clientele, especially the younger generation which is most likely to lose interest in traditional folklore practices. So to draw the audiences' attention and interest the performers use multi-media paraphernalia such as musical instruments and costumes which help to support the social aesthetics and recreational value of the performance.

Kuper (1944:233) highlights the issue of a non-visible audience during the sacred *iNcwala* ritual in Swaziland. He also observes that the manner of performance and as well as the audience in this ritual is very unusual. He reports that there is style and uniformity during the performance and the dress code is distinct. There are also rhythmic movements and consistent repetitions which go along with the dance. However, there is no visible audience or spectators as everyone is a performer and each performs with an audience in mind. This, however, does not mean that the performance can be taken lightly as there are rehearsals even before the main day to show how

important the occasion is. The absence of the audience is significant in that it shows that the event is for the entire nation's involvement thus everyone is welcome to participate in it since it unifies the king with his people. Surprisingly, even foreigners or tourists are expected to dance and not be mere spectators because traditionally there should be no audience at all during this performance.

## **2.4 PROBLEMS OF ORAL LITERATURE**

The unwritten nature of oral literature and other factors such as colonialism have made some oral art forms to suffer extinction in most African societies. This has also caused a lot of problems for early researchers as information was scarce. Finnegan (1977:2) argues that oral literature has often been ignored both in literary study and in the sociology of literature and assumed to be merely marginal interest. She confirms that speciality, methods, time, languages and techniques are hindrances to African creative traditions to emerge as independent entities with clear roles in their contexts and manners.

Egudu et al. (1971:5) talk about the moonlight square or play as an important cultural feature in Africa that drew adults as well as children for singing, dancing, reciting of riddles, tongue-twisters and jocular and satirical poems. They further state that one vital aspect of the moonlight play was its atmosphere of freedom as the singers were free to satirize social malpractices irrespective of the personages involved; obscene references were made where the need arose; children who were otherwise shy and retreating came out of their shells and for once exercised their power of expression. He stresses, in disappointment, that with the intrusion of civilization, adults seeking employment in urban areas and children attending schools, this aspect of Igbo culture is slowly diminishing.

This is also the case in Swaziland, as observed by Sone (2008:90) who discusses the threats towards the existence of Swazi oral literature. He mentions that globalization and the westernization of the population is seriously affecting the situation of oral literature as most Swazis are migrating from the rural areas which are homogenous and form the natural setting for oral literature compared to the urban areas which offer other forms of entertainment such as newspapers, radio, television internet, cinema etc. He argues that these do not only compete with oral literature but dominate it. He makes recommendations that in order to ensure the survival and

preservation of oral literature in siSwati, the educational system has to be indigenized and the performance and study of oral literature should begin at the earliest stage of education. This could be very effective as most pre- and primary schools in Swaziland no longer teach pupils Siswati poetry but opt for English rhymes, which is a threat to the children's cultural heritage and identity.

Sone (2008:90) also discusses the role played by the media in the promotion, dissemination and preservation of Swazi oral literature and suggests that space must be provided for these to be aired as a way of promotion so as to sensitize the public on Swazi norms, values, ideas and thoughts. He also suggests using technology to advantage by creating a dynamic web server and database to host the collection of different forms of oral literature as well as formats for archiving Swazi oral literature such as videos or audio and these collections should be freely accessible to everyone. Indeed, some of these are already available on the internet but it is scanty, which means that more work still needs to be done and uploaded on the internet.

The Mande speaking group of West Africa as observed by Khan (2009:143) is one of the African societies which are exposed to audio visual multi-media forms of entertainment and oral art performers are trying to make their material attractive to their audiences especially the younger generation. However, the repetitive nature of oral art makes it monotonous and thus causes lack of interest on the same audiences. So oral art performers have a greater challenge of varying their material and make it more captivating and marketable to their audiences. This, therefore, calls for a high level of expertise on the part of the performers to keep changing and adapting their performances to stay relevant.

Akinyemi (2012:27) supports Sone (2008:90) as he asserts that oral literature such as songs can be manipulated by contemporary performers to deal with current issues whether political, cultural or social by being presented on radios or television. He states that apart from giving the audience the much needed relaxation and entertainment, it dwells on certain aspects of morality and education. He says these songs can also be used to draw attention to political leaders to certain faults in their governance which they have to deal with or correct, getting or obtaining that information through the embedded message in the song. The songs can also be used as public proclamation or protest of a nation over their marginalization and such issues as low wages, lack of jobs, economic decline, political upheavals etc.

Indeed, in Swaziland, there are now various kinds of programmes on radio and television which promote oral traditions and important ceremonies such as *Umhlanga*, (reed dance) *Lusekwane* (cutting of sacred shrub by boys) *iNcwala*, (first fruits ceremony) *Buganu*, (marula festival) *Butimba* (hunting festival). Traditional folklorewas also introduced in the siSwati High School Syllabus in 2006, even though most teachers struggled with the subject matter and had to be work shopped continuously. Furthermore, the siSwati Chief inspector of schools, Make Celiwe Mohamed, has recently enforced all schools to stop blocking siSwati with other languages such as French, as well as stop punishing students for speaking siSwati in a bid to preserve the nation's heritage.

Ighile (2016:7) concurs that the teaching of oral literature has generated a lot of uneasiness among teachers and researchers since a number of African languages do not have published documentation of oral literature thus, giving the impression that there is no material. He further states that some important traditional information or knowledge is not available in the classrooms and books but imbedded in the hearts, minds and mouths of oral artists, traditional healers and community leaders waiting to be collected.

Sone (2016:13) confirms that there is still more work to be done in terms of improving the status of oral literature in Swaziland. However, he gives hope that in spite of all the challenges Swazi oral literature is facing it has not become extinct as it transforms itself into new forms in defense of its existence and adaptability. Its setting is no longer limited to the village but has now extended to the city to show that its audience has increased. It has also influenced the literary works of contemporary Swazi and African writers both in form and in substance. This is observed in most Swazi songs composed nowadays which have been adapted and modified to suit current issues and lifestyles.

Wasamba (2015:10) also concurs that Africans should not mourn the death of oral literature as it is a resilient genre. He emphasizes that those who lament the death of the genre fail to appreciate the 'fluid nature' of it in transition. He advises that scholars should stop looking for it in the distant past but also locate it in contemporary society and watch out for adaptability and resilience. He argues that indeed the genre is traditional but it is dynamic at the same time, as what each generation inherits, it modifies based on the pertinent issues of the day, quality of oral artists, nature of audience and technological support available. This is also applicable in Swazi children's

poetry which has since become less popular but it is still thriving in its smallest possible ways and this study will reveal the modifications and adaptations that have been implemented in some of the songs.

Leach (1962:335), Finnegan (1992:73), Sone (2016:4), Bidu (2013:2) Bodunde (1979:1) all discuss the problems of oral literature research in Africa and advise researchers on how to collect and interpret data. Leach affirms that a collector must be a scholar and a historian; bringing a broad knowledge of the culture he is collecting and must be a public relations man, able to soothe those who might think he is planning to put their songs and stories on radio or record and make millions for himself. He must be able to use the equipment and include pertinent material and collect and present it as oral literature. Thus, all this can make his work substantial and authentic.

Bodunde (1979:3) suggests that the collector should first do an archival and library search before engaging in field trips. When recording performances Bodunde advises the collector to join in the performances if he or she has the skill to establish the rapport between him and the ever suspicious performers and informants. He stresses that in participating in the performance, the collector is enlisted as a person who identifies with the significant elements in the people's aesthetics rather than someone prying into the secret of the people, but this should not distract him from the significant investigative duty of attentive observation.

The ideas above are supported by Finnegan (1992:73) who stresses that getting well along with non-performers and participants beforehand facilitates recording. For instance, Swazis treat foreigners or visitors with care so if the researcher is non Swazi and he displays good manners, he can get the help he needs. Bodunde (1979:3) continues and states that the interviews should also be done in the local language and arranged to allow informants to have freedom to elaborate on special interest. The material should also be transcribed with the knowledge of the phonological and syntactic patterns of the language of the people. So if the collector is not fluent in the language he should engage the services of an interpreter.

Bidu (2013:3) elaborates on the above ideas as he states that oral poetry suffers from erroneous perceptions and poor methods, skills and experiences. He argues that performance demands inquisitive personalities and precise tools to catch on spot as it never gives more chances to open ways to oral poetry as the totality of performance events enriches understandings, changes

perceptions and portrays powers and intentions of poets, audiences' reactions, meanings and identities of the oral poetic genre and the cultures. This is important in occasions which are rare such as the Swazi popular *iNcwala* and *Umhlanga* ceremonies, where the performances can never be repeated or duplicated. So catching them spot on and seasonally can be advantageous to the researcher.

However, Babalola (1982:13) maintains that translating *Ijala* is not an easy task so the quality of some words is lost with the translation. For example, he states that Yoruba poetry has neither 'rhyme nor regular meter.' So he cautions that another problem with the research could be the lack of informants themselves especially on issues relating to the secret elements of the oral art as cited by Okanlawon (1983:75). This is also true in Swazi society where most information regarding royalty and politics is treated as highly confidential, which makes it difficult to get hold of. Even so, one may find oneself in trouble in case he or she is found in possession of it.

Ighile (2016:7) challenges and motivates all African scholars as he asserts that the more we record, study, and learn our oral literature, the more we understand ourselves and less we are likely to recklessly ape foreign cultures. This just shows how valuable and significant oral art is to all Africans. Moreover, in spite of all the challenges oral literature faces, research still has to continue. Early researchers who have paved the way are commended for a job well done, but a long road still lies ahead. For example, there is very little research done on Swazi children's poetry. In fact this genre is slowly slipping out of the nation's fingers. Thus, this study will perhaps be an eye opener and throw some light as well as challenge literature students, teachers and lecturers to do more research in this field so as to convince curriculum designers to incorporate this aspect back into pre- and primary school levels. Emenyonu (2015:3) also suggests the following:

*"Parents need to recognize the age-old importance of reading for young infants and story-telling that are part of the nurturing of the spirit of the child...Educators should restore (where not in place yet) the scheduling of 'the story hour' in the school curriculum. Publishers should see the production and circulation of children's books as their essential contribution towards the improvement of social and moral development of African people from infancy through adult life. Teachers should take interest in ensuring that children's literature is taught with full commitment and dedication like any other subject in the curriculum."*

## 2.5 THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILDREN'S POETRY

Children's poetry, in Swazi society, dates back to pre-colonial times as it was an interesting component in the Swazi way of life. It was an aspect which occurred concurrently with storytelling and focused mainly on issues around women and children as well as the society at large. These two aspects were very important in the upbringing of a child and Emenyonu (2015:3) calls for the return of the tried and tested practices in the use of literature to achieve purpose-driven and morality-laden lives from infancy through adulthood.

Kamera (2001:66) defines Swazi children's poetry as a group of traditional poems such as song rhymes and lullabies which are characterized by refrains repeated in regular intervals for poetic beauty. He states that they encapsulate interesting stories and anecdotes which are delightful and humorous as well as indirect comments, requests or protests by baby sitters in the case of lullabies. This is what makes this genre distinct from all others.

Bidu (2013:3) states that oral poems provoke remembrance and are quoted for generations who chant and sing them. He further states that they soothe, mitigate, ignite, incite and reinforce feelings, emotions and philosophy events or life challenges, exhibits artistic qualities rendering happiness, pleasure and adequacy to human mind, but also beauty, maturity and universality showing importance to life and human culture. He stresses that the language is an immediate tool, expression of ideas and full of style as it is endowed with metaphors, imagery, allusions and symbols. He continues to say that daily speeches are stylized to fit motives and purposes and arranged to have rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetitions and meter. Therefore, all these linguistic devices beautify these poems and make them exciting to both performers and audiences.

Mamba (1997:65) discusses the role of the focus group in Swazi children's lullabies which is that of young girls of about ten years old or below. She mentions that their experiences and major activity consisted of looking after their baby sister or brother while their mothers were at work out in the fields all day long, engaged in food production activities, either weeding or harvesting. She points out that a close relationship used to develop between the baby and the nurse girl such that she would even refer to him or her as her own child. This is evident in one lullaby she analyses, which goes with the title, "*Thula mntfwanami!*" (Hush my child!) She emphasizes that this lullaby

depicts the cultural education in Swazi traditional society in that a female child is trained to be a mother right from the onset. She stresses that this was also exhibited in the village playground where girls would meet and play and they would come with their babies. Fights would erupt and the girl would protect her baby like a mother would do whilst her opponent would aim for it, knowing well that it is the quickest way to defeat her.

Mamba (1997:65) goes further to emphasize the performance of lullabies which she says is always within the context of a crying baby or infant. She highlights that the crying child is expected to be pacified with the verbal content of the poetic piece, in addition to being captivated by the rhythm which is always accompanied with the dancing motions of the baby minder. She stresses that the child does not understand the message but it is the work of the baby sitter to dramatize the message and perform to the child. This makes the child stop crying because his or her attention is drawn to the gesticulation of her care taker. This proves just how effective performance is to any audience, as observed earlier, no matter how young or inexperienced that audience can be.

Finnegan (1970:300) elaborates on the idea of indirect comments as mentioned by Kamera (2001:66). She reports:

*“Nyoro nurses would in fact seem to be, not primarily the lulling of the child at all, but an indirect comment on their own position for they were afraid of making direct requests to their masters and therefore expressed what they wanted in lullabies.”*

She further states that though the tone and purpose may vary, some songs show the mother's delight in playing with her child than the desire to soothe it. Some reflect her attitude, detachment, comments on her own feelings and on her expectations of the attitudes of others. This is also evident in most Swazi lullabies in which women issues and societal expectations of them are portrayed.

Finnegan (1970:300) further discusses, though briefly, some children's poems from various parts of Africa. These are lullabies, other songs designed for children but transmitted by adults, and songs which tend to be for a slightly older group and are regarded as belonging to the children themselves in their own play. She says these are mostly nonsense songs, singing games (such as hide and seek, ring or circle games) catch rhymes, follow up or progressive rhymes and others based on imitation of certain animals etc. She then makes general conclusions on the content and

form of the above mentioned games in that, most encompass lots of rhythm, liquid vowel sounds, soothing repetitive sounds, amusing combinations of clicks to teach children the correct pronunciation, verbal parallelism, nonsense syllables and tongue twisters.

Dlamini, Mamba & Dlamini (2006:100) also point out that the diction in Swazi children's poetry is distinct in the sense that it contains lots of repetitions, rhythm that is light and playful for easy memorization of words and verses, figures of speech and images, as well as manipulation of certain words and ideas. They further state that the content in these usually conveys children's preferences and dislikes, the mother as a key person, playfulness as well as cultural values and norms.

Kamera (2001:66) also concurs with the above authors, as he proves that children's poetry is part of traditional oral poetry in that it clearly calls for a singer or a reciter and an audience. He further states that when the poem is recited in the presence of an audience it is interesting to see that they join in without being asked to do so and this proves Bidu's (2013:3) statement earlier that "oral poems provoke remembrance and are quoted for generations who chant and sing them." This also reveals the relationship between the audience and the performer as indicated by Finnegan (1970:2) earlier.

Kamera (2001:66) and Finnegan (1970:303) also mention the familiarity of the reciters with the rhymes, which indicates the regularity and frequency of performance. Finnegan also highlights on the manner of the performance as she states that the children's dances within the Southern Sudanese are played on a moonlit night in the dry season and the singing is led by one of the boys and mostly accompanied by hand clapping, foot thumping or the action of the game. However, Swazi rhymes and games have no specific occasion as they can be performed anywhere and anytime, depending on the moods and interests of the children.

Nyoni (2013:233) also discusses the content and form of children's poetry in Shona. He argues that the role of children's poetry is significant in that the content is 'loaded.' He continues by saying:

*"...they are actually a silent but powerful vehicle for the inculcation of certain values and attitudes that influence the children's own lives later whether positively or negatively, at home or away from their comfort zones in the global village...the various forms they take also allows children to simulate real life situations and*

*learn adult roles vicariously and thus prepare them for the challenges life proffers not as shadows of other people but as proud beings who can cast their own shadows on the kaleidoscopic cultural terrain.”*

Nyoni (2013:233) also highlights that children’s poetry, like all literature, does teach and delight, as they move the children by appealing to both their understanding and feelings. These feelings could be excitement and fear. He goes further and says these are a legacy which touches on all aspects of life in the context in which they are done. He points out that the major role of children’s poetry is primary socialization which allows for building of self-confidence. These are crucial aspects in the development of a child and Swazis value it highly because they believe in group identity as observed by Mamba (1997:63). That is why each individual should know which *libutfo* (regiment) he or she belongs to.

Thompson (2001:189) also states that children’s poetry and games stimulate children to learn and help them develop fast in their mother tongue by providing an opportunity for them to use their language. In that case their language is preserved as it is a rich source of cultural heritage, traditions and moral values. However, most African societies, including Swaziland, are slowly losing their cultural heritage and identity since children are no longer exposed to such games in their mother languages. Instead, they recite English verses and are made to speak English at pre- and primary school levels. This shows that a lot of work still needs to be done towards educating and empowering African societies about the value and importance of oral art in children’s development. Emenyonu (2015:1) also observes that most adults tend to take this genre less seriously yet it used to be valuable and relevant in our societies. He states that writers of children’s stories have exposed and condemned anti social behaviors such as child abuse, wars, child trafficking, child marriages, gender inequalities and many more. He further states that what is lacking now is the teaching and reading of these works to achieve the traditional purposes and functions which made folk tales and other oral performances part of the upbringing of children. He suggests that scholars and critics must pay adequate attention to the genre through research and presentations at conferences.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

The above studies have proved that oral literature is about the life of a people, their experiences, struggles, hopes and dreams. The characteristics of oral literature were discussed extensively and all the authors agreed that performance, audience and the context in which performance occurs are all key aspects in oral art. The problems that oral art faces makes it susceptible to being extinct but still it thrives in the smallest possible ways. The studies have also proved that children's poetry is also an element of oral art in that, in spite of the pleasures and excitement it invokes, it also demonstrates oral traditions through its diction in which societal concerns are heard through criticism of certain acts. The emotions and welfare of the speaker and that of the baby in the case of lullabies are dramatized, so is the role of the mother and the problems she faces. Children's poetry also portrays the challenges or situation in the home and educates children about the environment.

Linguistic or poetic devices such as repetition, rhythm, metaphors and symbols are also prominent in children's poetry which makes it beautiful, distinct and enjoyable to both children and adults as they are reminded of their early days and the loss of their innocence. However, since children's poetry runs the risk of being extinct, hence the urgency to document and preserve it for future generations. Therefore, the following chapter is a critical analysis of selected modern and traditional lullabies in terms of content and form.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **TRADITIONAL AND MODERN LULLABIES**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter shall be a critical analysis of selected traditional and modern lullabies. Traditional ones are those that were composed before colonial times and the modern ones are those that occurred during the colonial era and thereafter, in which the influence of modernity and the aspects associated with it such as education, religion, industrialization and migration (amongst others) were becoming popular in Swaziland. The analysis will dwell on the formal and thematic structures of the songs. The non-verbal aspects of oral poetry which take into account the oral performance of the songs, the audience(s) they are directed to, and the context in which they are composed, shall also be considered. The pronoun ‘he’ shall be used neutrally to refer to a baby except in songs where the gender is specific.

#### **3.2 ANALYSIS OF THE LULLABIES**

According to Dlamini, Mamba & Dlamini (2006:100) lullabies are songs composed and sung by those who look after babies. The purpose of lullabies is to pacify a crying baby or entertain him so that he falls asleep. Another purpose is just to play with the baby so as to entertain him. The persona can compose a lullaby to get a chance to voice out her feelings, opinions about the treatment she gets in the home. Dlamini *et al.* (2006:100) continue to say that most lullabies reveal the mother as a very important person in the life of the baby. Sometimes they also show the relationship between the baby and his caretaker as well as the society’s values, norms and belief systems. They also state that lullabies are structured in such a way that they contain different forms of repetitions, light sing song rhythm, figures of speech and images, unusual words and twisted ideas. All these features are evident in the following lullabies and they will be discussed in detail.

<b>3.2.1</b>	<b><i>Uyawukhal'ukhal'udzinwe</i></b>	<b>You will cry and cry till you get tired</b>
	<i>Uyawukhal'ukhal'udzinwe</i>	You will cry and cry till you get tired
	<i>Unyoko ngob'akalimanga</i>	Because your mother did not cultivate
	<i>Watitjalel'ematsanga</i>	She sowed pumpkins
	<i>Wahlal'esicelwini</i>	She basked in the sun
5	<i>Welukana nemacansi</i>	She preferred to make grass mats
	<i>Echobana netintfwala</i>	She crushed lice
	<i>Tintfwala esidvwabeni</i>	Lice on her leather skirt
	<i>Ephotsana nemiyeko</i>	She twisted her dreads
	<i>Eyigcoba nemafutsa,</i>	Oilingthem
10	<i>Yabats'iyamvus'inyoni</i>	The bird kept on singing
	<i>Itsi: etikwemkhono</i>	Saying go and work
	<i>Isho ihlet'esidvulini</i>	Whilst seated on an anthill
	<i>Watinabel'emtfuntini,</i>	She relaxed under the shade
	<i>Watinabel'ebaleni,</i>	She relaxed in the yard
15	<i>Watibuk'esitfuntini,</i>	She watched her shadow
	<i>Etilungisela sicholo,</i>	Fixing her hairstyle
	<i>Lamuhl 'uyatiphonsa nje,</i>	Today she is staggering
	<i>Nak'indlal'ibhokile,</i>	Now we are starving
	<i>Likati lilal'etiko,</i>	There is no food
20	<i>Silala ngemanti,</i>	We have nothing to eat
	<i>Ungatihluphi ngekukhala,</i>	Donot dare cry
	<i>Utibangela sibibitfwane,</i>	You will have a hiccup
	<i>Utawukhal'ukhal'udzinwe.</i>	You will cry and cry till you get tired
	(Mbabane, 2006)	

The above lullaby could be sung by the baby's sister (*sidzandzane*) or his grandmother. The persona is critical of the baby's mother's lazy actions. This is because of the societal expectations of women and thus, the persona's voice sounds like the voice of the whole society. As she sings to the crying baby, she reveals the situation in the home which has come as consequence of the mother's bad actions. There is no food in the house and the baby sitter has nothing to give to the

crying baby. So the context calls for her to act fast and as a result she is frustrated and angry, not at the baby but the situation itself.

In the first two lines the persona tells the baby that he will cry until he gets tired because his mother did not plough or cultivate. This shows that the baby could be crying due to hunger hence the baby minder's frustration. Swazi cultural norms and values are also portrayed through the word *kulima* (cultivating). This shows that Swazis value farming as a source of nourishment, sustenance and livelihood. Swazis cultivate mostly maize which is a staple food, and other crops such as sorghum, tobacco, sunflower, beans, peanuts, sweet potatoes, potatoes, vegetables and a lot more. They also rear animals such as cows, goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys and many more.

All the family members in a home are expected to take part in cultivating and each one has a role to play. Men and boys plough using oxen, ploughs and other tools, whilst women sow with hoes and thereafter everyone takes part in weeding and harvesting. However, in this song the woman is blamed for not cultivating because culturally women are expected to take the lead in all the chores. She is expected to remind, encourage, motivate and even persuade all the family members to do their tasks. This shows her significance and role in the home as it is believed women are the pillars of homes. Thus, the strength or weakness of the woman will equal the success or failure of her home. If a man fails to sustain the family or he dies the woman takes charge and bridges the gap, hence the Swazi saying, '*intsandzane lenhle ngumakhofwa ngunina*' meaning a single orphan who has a mother is better than the one without a mother.

The negative portrayal of the woman's laziness reveals the societal attitudes towards laziness. It is not encouraged at all in Swazi culture. This woman preferred to sow pumpkins (*ematsanga*) which is an easy task and then basked in the sun, '*wahlal'esicelwini*' (line three and four.) The word *kuhlala* (sitting down) denotes relaxation and signifies or connotes laziness so is basking in the sun. Culturally, a woman is discouraged from sitting down most of the time as she is expected to be always busy fending for her children and husband.

In line five the woman is said to be making mats and this job requires a woman to sit and stretch her legs so as to be able to do this task well, which shows that the woman in the poem prefers easy tasks which give her a lot of rest. The verb *welukana* suggests that the action was continuous since a simple verb in the past tense could be *weluka*, which means that the woman kept on doing this

act instead of ploughing, which shows that she fails to prioritize things and always opts for the easy way out. Other actions which signify boredom, idleness and laziness as indicated in the song are revealed in line six to nine as follows:

*Echobana netintfwala*

*Tintfwala esidvwabeni*

*Ephotsana nemiyeke*

*Eyigcoba nemafutsa*

She was busy squashing fleas

On her traditional skirt

She was twisting her hair

Smearing it with oil

The fleas found in a woman's traditional leather skirt (*sidvwaba*) are so tiny and rarely noticeable so for one to actually search for these indicates that she has all the time in the world. Fleas are also a sign of untidiness and poor hygiene which are also associated with lazy people. *Sidvwaba* is a cultural symbol for womanhood. It is worn by married women or those who feel they are ready for marriage such as *tingcungce*. A young girl can also wear it on her wedding day as she leaves her parental home with her *umtsimba* (traditional entourage or bridal party). The following day at dawn during the process of *kutekwa* (a bride lamenting her freedom in the kraal) she is also given *sidvwaba* and a spear to seal her union with her husband.

According to Dlamini (2006:115) the process of making the traditional skirt is long and has different stages. This is usually a man's job so it could be made by the woman's husband out of a cow's skin. He makes it with love for his wife, taking his time to do the process of *kuphala* which is a tedious process of removing the fur to soften the skin and thereafter dip it in water for a few days. Then oil made of milk and *emalahle* (coal from burnt firewood out of a tree called *umhlonhlo*) is then smeared to it to make it look shiny and black. The long process could symbolize the process of preparing both man and woman into becoming husband and wife. This is the parents' and the community's duty to raise responsible and strong people.

The traditional skirt is also a sign that a woman has entered into a very challenging stage where she is expected to behave accordingly as well as exercise patience and perseverance. That is why

it is heavy, greasy and smelly and long ago women would wear it daily without complaining. However, the woman talked about in this song does not have all these qualities. Culturally, such a woman would be sent back to her parental home (*aboshelwe umtfwalo*) to be straightened out and reminded of her duties. This is a harsh punishment which also shames her parents as the whole community would see that they have failed to raise her well.

Another sign of boredom is shown in the act of '*kuphotsa imiyeko*' in line eight. *Imiyeko* refers to a *sangoma's* (traditional healer) hairstyle. For a woman it is the short leftover hair (also called *umcancatfo*) underneath *sicholo* (woman's traditional hairstyle) on a woman's head. Long ago married women had *ticholo* which were made by tying and styling the hair to make a big black ball all round the head. Then one or two white strings would be tied all around the head where the *sicholo* starts taking shape. These white strings symbolize womanhood and the number is also significant. The two strings show that the woman is a 'full' wife meaning that all the logistics regarding a Swazi traditional wedding have been performed or observed, such as *umtsimba*, *kutekwa* and *emalobolo*. The short leftover hair under the *sicholo* would be styled as dreads using water and a green leafy plant known as *ludvonca* (sesame), not oil as in the song. The oil is used on *sicholo* to make it look shiny and black. In this case it shows the woman is either out of her mind or just untidy for using oil on her dreads. Only the *sangoma's* dreads would look shiny and brown or reddish.

Another idea revealed in this lullaby is that the baby's mother is stubborn and has no sense of urgency. The following lines indicate that she ignored a significant bird which was sending a very important warning to the whole society:

*Yab'isats'iyamvus'inyoni*

*Itsi: 'etikwemkhono'*

*Isho ihlet'esidvulini*

The bird kept on singing

Saying: 'go and work'

As it was sitting on an anthill

There was just no way that the woman would not have heard the bird because it was sitting on an ant hill (*esidvulini*) and singing loudly for everyone to hear. The verb *yabasatse* shows that the

bird kept singing without tiring. The bird is known as *phezukomkhono* (red chested cuckoo) and it is a cultural symbol of time or change of seasons. One should note that Swazis are people who observe nature, interpret it and thereby act accordingly. Thus, when everyone was paying attention to the changing times and seasons instead, the woman in the lullaby chose to be adamant and relax in the yard under the shade. The act of relaxing as suggested by the word *kwenaba* (sitting with legs stretched) in line thirteen has been repeated for emphasis on the woman's laziness. This way of sitting is not encouraged amongst girls and women as it connotes laziness. Elders always insist girls and women should sit with their legs folded (*bafinyele*) so that it is easy to stand up and continue with their chores. This shows the society's distaste towards laziness.

In line fifteen, the woman continues with her laziness, uncaring attitude and entertains her boredom by further concentrating on unimportant things such as watching her shadow (*watibuk'esitfuntini*). Now she is also affected by her actions as indicated by the word *kutiphonsa* in line seventeen, which suggests dragging or throwing oneself. It looks like her pride is gone as she no longer walks like a normal person but staggers. This could be a result of hunger and lack of energy. So the choice of the word which describes her actions also depicts the situation in the home. This shows her selfish actions are affecting not just the baby and her family but even herself. There is nothing she can do now as she cannot reverse seasons. She could only try *kwenzela* which is going around begging for handouts from neighbours and friends and this could subject her to criticism and ridicule. Begging from her family, which is usually far away, could also shame her husband who could be in serious trouble for failing to provide for his family. She can also try to help other people harvest their crops so as to get aid. This should be a wakeup call for her.

The last three lines act as a climax of the song and portray a visual image of the dire situation in the home. All the three lines are different in terms of syntax but have the same meaning. They all refer to hunger or starvation:

*Nak'indlala ibhokile*

*Likati ulala etiko*

*Silala ngemanti*

Now we are starving

There is nothing to eat

We go to bed hungry

The use of the proverbial expressions above exaggerates the dire situation in the home. *Indlala* (hunger) has been personified to show its intensity. The proverb '*Likati lilala etiko*' depicts cultural images. *Likati* (cat) and *etiko* (hearth) portray a vivid picture of what the persona is protesting about. A lot of days have passed since there has been some cooking in the home hence the cold hearth. The cat has found a comfortable place to sleep on the hearth because of the cold ash yet when cooking is done regularly the hearth stays warm and no domestic animal dares to come close. The proverb also indicates that Swazis share their space with domestic animals such as cats, dogs, chickens, cows, sheep, goats, donkeys etc. However, only clean animals like cats are allowed in and the rest stay outside.

All in all, the baby in this lullaby is not only crying because he misses his mother and breastmilk but also because of hunger as there is starvation in the home. Babies back in the day were given *inembe* (very thin porridge) as early as three months then at six months they would be introduced to cow's milk. So since there is no maize in this home, which is the staple food in Swaziland, then the baby and everyone else is starving. The child minder herself sounds weak and impatient with the baby because she is also hungry and has no energy to calm or soothe the baby. That is why she tells the baby not to cry because there is no food. Thus, the baby will cry until she gets a hiccup and eventually get tired.

Moreover, the diction of the lullaby reveals the tone and mood of the song which is very sad. The society's attitude towards the economical role of women is also portrayed, so are the norms and values. Society is exposing the acts of the woman and the consequences as a way of preaching to its members that laziness does not pay, in a bid to shape a responsible and hardworking nation.

The absence of the father in the lullaby and many others also reveals the societal perceptions and expectations towards women. It is interesting to note that the woman is blamed for not cultivating when this is an activity that should be done by all members of the family. This can be debatable nowadays but culturally women are expected to do an act called *kukhwetela* which is begging, encouraging, and motivating all the family members on such issues. These involve patience and perseverance. So even if the woman has a lazy and irresponsible husband such as a drunkard or polygamist, the wife is expected to work around that to achieve her dreams so that society does not blame her if her home crumbles. She has to be strong and work extra hard for the wellbeing of her children despite what the husband does. Raising children is also a woman's job that is why

young girls are groomed to take care of babies. So if a child cries the first question everyone asks is ‘where is the mother?’

In terms of form, the song is long but has a consistent number of syllables varying from seven to nine in each line. In all the lines there is a long vowel just before the final syllable. This is common in lullabies as it elongates the song and produces an effective rhythm that will induce sleep. One example of this is shown as follows:

*Uyawukha 'ukhal'udzi:nwe*  
*Unyoko ngob'akalima:nga*  
 You will cry and cry till you get tired  
 Because your mother did not cultivate

The voice pitch is usually high at the beginning of each line to depict the context of a crying baby thereby getting softer and sometimes bolder towards the end as the baby gets calmer and sleepy. The sounds or consonants used are also soft to resemble the calming effect of lullabies. There is also ellipsis in most of the lines which is for the purpose of rhythm and to show the immediacy of context in lullabies, as discussed by Mamba (1997:65).

The repetition of words has various purposes. One is to create parallelism, which is common in most Swazi songs and the other is rhythm and enjoyment. Another purpose is to show the soothing effect the words have on the baby. Parallelism is noted mostly as different types of linking as well as initial, mid and end rhyme. Oblique linking is evident in line six and seven where the word *tintfwala* is repeated to exaggerate the lazy act of the woman, as follows:

*Echobana netintfwala*  
*Tintfwala esidvwabeni*  
 She was busy crushing lice  
 Lice on her leather skirt

Initial linking is also observed in lines thirteen and fourteen, as follows;

*Watinabel'emfuntini*  
*Watinabel'ebaleni*  
 She relaxed under the shade

She relaxed in the yard

Initial rhyming is also common in this lullaby, which features through the use of subject concords as a way of addressing the baby and also referring to his mother. Examples of initial rhyme are evident in lines three to four, eight and nine and twenty one to twenty three as follows:

<i>Watitjalel...</i>	<i>Ephotsana...</i>	<i>Ungatihluphi...</i>
<i>Wahlal...</i>	<i>Eyigcoba...</i>	<i>Utibangela...</i>
She sowed...	She twisted...	Do not dare...
She basked...	She oiled...	You will have...

End rhyming is visual in line twelve to fifteen, in which, locatives that demonstrate where the action described happens, are evident:

*...esidvulini*  
*...emtfuntini*  
*...ebaleni*  
*...esitfuntini*  
 ...on an anthill  
 ...under the shade  
 ...in the yard  
 ...at her shadow

Therefore the form of the song is closely connected to its content and its performance. This means that as the baby is being pacified with the verbal content of the song, he is also captivated by the entertaining rhythm which is always accompanied with the dancing motions of the baby minder. The baby, who is an immediate audience, does not understand the meaning of the words but is drawn by the performance of the baby minder and the rhythm of the song and eventually falls asleep or calms down.

Another lullaby which has a similar subject matter as the one above follows.

**3.2.2 Thula mntfwan'ami****Hush my child**

	<i>Thula mntfwa'nami</i>	Hush my child
	<i>Unyok'akalimanga</i>	Your mother did not cultivate
	<i>Walibala kulala</i>	She kept sleeping
	<i>Dzim!Fahla!</i>	Thud, rattle!
5	<i>Sewuyabuya</i>	She is on her way
	<i>Nang'esigodzini.</i>	There up the valley.
	(Mamba, 1997:65)	

This lullaby is also critical of the baby's mother's actions of laziness. The first line shows the strong bond that has developed between the baby and his care taker who could be his sister (*sidzandzane*) or his grandmother. The word '*mntfwanami*' (my child) shows that the baby minder treats the child as if he is hers. This sense of ownership shows the level of commitment the baby minder has towards this responsibility. She is fully committed to this task. This also depicts the societal expectations towards this person. That is, the young girl is being groomed to be a good and caring mother in the future. Grandmothers, on the other hand are naturally sweet and more like mothers to their grand children. That is why if a child loses one or both parents the grandmother instantly assumes the role of the mother.

In the second line the persona shifts the attention from the baby to his mother. She is comforting the baby as if asking him to stop crying because his mother did not cultivate (*unyoko akalimanga*) so practically there is nothing to eat. This shows the source of nourishment for the Swazi people as observed earlier that Swazi people depend mainly on farming for sustenance and livelihood. Everybody is expected to take part in this activity and the elders in the home such as the mother, father and grandparents have to take the lead. However, the mother of the baby has failed to do her part in this activity which is part of Swazi culture. Therefore, she does not qualify to be a good *makoti* (wife) because she is lazy to perform her duties. The negative image portrayed by the word '*unyoko*' shows the baby sitter's feelings towards the lazy woman. The word has negative connotations because Swazis mostly use it when they are angry as a form of insult.

What is even more surprising is that the woman in the song preferred to sleep when people were busy waking up early to plough. This is indicated in the following line:

*Walibala kulala*

She kept sleeping

The verb phrase *kulibala* denotes a continuous action which is done repeatedly. This paints a bad picture of the woman and shows how society condemns such behavior because its consequences are serious in that they do not affect her alone but the rest of the family. Even the persona's tone is sad because she is hungry too. This reveals the society's concern about the welfare of children in that they are innocent and therefore should not be exposed to such horrendous treatment.

In spite of the bad situation in the house, the baby sitter tries as hard as possible to comfort the baby by dramatizing to him in order to catch his attention so that he stops crying. The ideophones *dzim* and *fahla* mimic the sound made by the heavy load of firewood as the woman drops it on the ground. The baby minder performs for the baby when she says these words by jumping to mimic the sound made by the firewood. This explains why the mother of the baby has been away. She may have also been busy going around the community asking for some handouts. This is called *kwenzela* and it is allowed in Swazi culture, but it cannot be used as an excuse for laziness. Even as the neighbours would be helping her out of pity, they would be telling her the truth and others would offer her some chores in exchange for food as a way of teaching her a lesson. All this just reveals how closely knit Swazi society was back in the day, that no matter how wrong someone could be he or she still needs to be helped out and since there are children involved, the people just feel for them. This is called *buntfu* (acts of humanity.)

So the last two lines bring hope to the baby and everyone at home that perhaps the mother will come with some food as she is seen from afar. For the baby, it is breast milk, comfort, love and attention as a mother is everything to him. The word *esigodzini* denotes a low place and connotes the bad situation in the home. Usually when someone is going through troubles, Swazis normally say he or she is at the valley, '*usesigodzini* or *emgodzini*'. So as the woman moves from the low to the higher place she brings hope to the home and the situation is improved. Therefore, culturally, women have to be solution providers. That is why nothing is said about the man because women are responsible for children's wellbeing and that lullabies are centered on babies and women. This is also observed by Mamba (1997:64) as she states that poems about women, girls and children are generally stative as they inform us of their positions and activities in society, sounding like an obedient response to the orders of traditional society.

The form of the song is almost similar to the first one. The syllables in the first three lines are consistent as they range from five to seven with a disruption in line four. This disruption connects with the baby minder's actions as she tries to draw the baby's attention by mimicking the sound of firewood dropping on the ground. It also shows her anticipation as she imagines the mother coming with a solution. The vowel deletion in some lines serves to provide the soothing consistent rhythm. The exclamation marks intensify the ideophones and reveal the speaker's anticipation as well as her relief upon seeing the mother coming.

The following lullaby also has the popular line '*thula mntfwana*' but a different subject matter.

### 3.2.3 *Thula mntfwana*

### Hush child

	<i>Thula mntfwana</i>	Hush child
	<i>Thula mfana wami</i>	Hush my boy
	<i>Ematfol'aphumile</i>	The calves are out
	<i>Bafana basetsafeni</i>	The boys are in the veld
5	<i>Nabaya belusile</i>	There they are herding cows
	<i>Thula mfana wami.</i>	Hush my boy.
	<i>Thula ntfombatana yami</i>	Hush my girl
	<i>Timbita tigcwele</i>	The containers are full
	<i>Emantfomban'emfuleni</i>	The girls are at the river
10	<i>Nawaya akh'emanti</i>	There they are fetching water
	<i>Thula ntfombatana yami.</i>	Hush my girl.
	(Mbabane, 2006)	

In this lullaby the baby is made aware of the environment and the different roles each member of the family has. The baby is also shown that as the youngest member of the family he will also grow up and have his own duties. The baby boy is addressed first to show societal values and norms. Swazis value and prefer boys more than girls because they leave a legacy behind. Another reason is that men are heads of families so even the way they are groomed is different from the way girls are groomed. Thus, this baby boy is told about the other boys who are looking after cattle which he will eventually do as he gets older. This again shows the close relationship between men

and livestock. They put so much value on it such that even the traditional set up of a Swazi home proves this. The boys' hut (*lilawu*) is built closer to the cattle kraal so that they can closely monitor the cattle in case something happens at night. According to Simelane (2016:12) the life of a male used to revolve around cattle, which includes *kwelusa* (herding cattle), *kusenga* (milking cows) *kubophela* (preparing cows for ploughing) and *kuhlindza inkhomo* (skinning and portioning a cow's carcass). He states that these duties play a very important role in grooming a boy child as a male who has had an experience of herding cattle will not be the same as one who has not. This is because *kwelusa* teaches one respect, patience and shapes a person to be a responsible citizen. It also forms an integral part in acquisition of leadership skills.

The reason why Swazi men put so much value on cattle is that they are the beasts of burden. Men need cattle to pay *lobola*, (brideprice) which is every man's pride as it earns him respect from the bride's family. Cattle are also used to plough fields so the more cattle a man has, the better. The line '*ematfole aphumile*' is significant in that it gives the baby hope since the cows will be milked soon and he will get some milk. It also shows that soon he will be herding these calves in the grazing land. This shows a vivid picture of what happens early in the morning in a Swazi traditional homestead. The process going on here is called *kuphuma imphunga*. It is when the cattle graze on the wet grass in preparation for the milking stage. The calves are given a chance to breastfeed then the cows are taken away for milking. These duties are done by older boys and the younger ones watch and learn. So this crying baby will soon engage in this task too.

The girls are also seen doing their chores close by as indicated by the following lines:

*Emantfombatan'emfuleni*

*Naway'akh'emanti*

Girls in the river

There they are fetching water

Whilst the boys are busy with the cattle girls are also preparing to cook by fetching water to fill the containers. This shows just how organized Swazi traditional society was. The division of duties equaled success and reduced quarrels or arguments as each member knew his or her responsibilities.

In terms of form the song has syllables which range from six to eight, except in line one and nine which have four and nine syllables respectively. The reason for this demarcation could be that in the first line the speaker is referring to a baby in general without being specific in terms of gender but in line nine she is specifically referring to a girl and drawing the attention of the baby who could also be a girl. The full stop in line six shows the end of an idea as the persona was addressing a boy baby and in line seven she starts addressing a girl baby. There is an abundance of linking and refrains in the poem. Initial linking is observed in the first two lines as well as line six and seven, as follows:

**Line 1&2***Thula mntfwana**Thula mfana wami*

Hush child

Hush my boy

**line 6&7***Thula mfana wami**Thula ntfombatana yami*

Hush my boy

Hush my girl

Final linking is also evident in line six and seven above. The refrains are noticeable in lines two and six, seven and eleven. They serve to reinforce the importance of the boy and girl children being mentioned.

**3.2.4 *Lo lo lo lo lo mntfwana****Lo lo lo lo lo mntfwana**Nangu nabojekwa**Nangu nabontsaki**Nangu nabojikijel'inyon'emakhabeni*5 *Lol'usweti**Loludl'emazinyane.*

(Vilakati, 1997:40)

**Quiet quiet quiet quiet quiet child**

Quiet quiet quiet quiet quiet child

Here is mother of webler

Here is mother of red bill qualea

Here is mother of bird shooter

The eagle

That chows lambs.

The above lullaby is both soothing and educative. It has a happy tone too. The sounds *lo lo* are common in Swazi lullabies for their calming effect on babies. The consonants are soft, thus creating a soft, slow and sleepy rhythm which induces sleep quickly. As the baby minder says

these sounds she performs by tapping the baby's bums on her back and making up and down movements which help to pacify the baby. Other popular sounds for calming a baby are *sh sh* which are also voiceless, soft and soothing. These sounds indicate to the baby that he has to be calm and quiet.

*Jekwa* (webler) and *ntsaki* (red bill qualea) are small birds which are usually hunted or kept off the fields by young boys as indicated by the line '*jikijel'inyon'emakhabeni.*' So this baby is probably a boy and is informed that when he grows up he will do the same. Of worth noting is that the birds have been personified by the use of /*Nabo-*/ which means 'mother of' to reveal the importance of a mother to a child. Since even birds like *jekwa* and *intsaki* have mothers so does *Jikijela inyoni emakhabeni* who could be any child. This child has been named after his actions which is typical of Swazi people. Most Swazi names have history and major family occurrences embedded in them. *Emakhaba* (maize fields) also suggests that Swazis are farmers as it has been discussed at length in the previous lullabies.

The persona's voice gets deeper in the last two lines of the song as the baby's attention has been drawn and the baby is getting calmer. In these lines she sounds like she is mimicking a male voice. This is significant in that the words in the second stanza could symbolize a father's worry or concern since in Swazi culture it is the father and boys who worry about livestock. So he is worried about the big bird; *lusoti* (eagle) which chows kids or lambs and this is not a good thing because there will be no stock. This also shows that Swazis care much about young ones as they are referred to as *umliba loya embili* (the next generation or the future.) If this bird chows lambs it means there will be no stock at all and that is a threat to the livelihood of the family as well as the social and financial status of the man who is the head of the family.

The image of the eagle portrays the threat very well. Since it is a big bird which flies very high unlike *ncedze* and *jekwa*, its appearance is intimidating. This shows that it is indeed capable of killing as it can come down with force and snatch the fragile kid or lamb such that even the boy herding the flock can be left shivering in fear. So this line cautions the baby that when he gets older he should be careful of this dangerous bird and be strong enough to drive it away.

All in all, the baby in the lullaby is made aware of the different types of birds; those that are harmless and those that are problematic. In that case the baby has a challenge as he grows up

because he has to keep guard of his father's livestock and keep away the dangerous birds but hunt the small ones like the webler and red bill qualea. That is exactly what young boys' roles are; looking after lambs and kids before graduating to cows, goats and sheep when older.

In terms of form the song has lots of parallelism and refrains. The lines are repeated for enjoyment, emphasis and to lull the baby to sleep. The demonstrative pronoun '*nangu*' is repeated to emphasize the importance of the mother and it creates initial linking. Another lullaby which depicts a bird is as follows:

### 3.2.5 Heshane

*Kunyonini okuya?*  
*Okundizela phezulu*  
*Kufana noheshane*  
*Inyon'edl'izinkukhu*  
 5 *Izinkukhu zonkana*  
*Zisale ziphithiza*  
*Zibethana ngamakhanda*  
*Zithi phithi phithi*  
 (Mamba, 2008:56)

### Heshane

What bird is that?  
 Flying up in the sky?  
 It looks like a falcon  
 The bird that devours chickens  
 Chickens of all kinds  
 Left running helter skelter  
 Heads knocking  
 Running and running

This lullaby, like the one above, educates the baby on the environment. The voice of the persona sounds worried. She is asking the rhetoric question not because she is unsure of the bird she sees but because she feels uncomfortable about what it is capable of. This is because of past experience which is evident in the lines of the song. According to Mamba (2008:57) the song depicts a lived experience with the bird. She highlights that nothing much is said about it in terms of physical description except its character which is being dramatized. In siSwati this bird is called *lohheya* (falcon) and in this lullaby it has been named *heshane* after its actions. The word *heshane* has been used metaphorically and it comes from the noun or verb *hesha* which means to cut or chop off. The noun refers to the tool used to cut grass known as *hesha* or *siheshe*.

The actions of the falcon have been described vividly from the second line throughout the song. It is said to be flying high up in the sky (*phezulu*) which depicts its strength, size and cunning ways. As it flies up it watches its prey to get an opportunity to attack. After attacking it flies back up to look for a quiet spot to enjoy its meal. The verbs *ziphithiza*, *zibethana* and the ideophone *phithi* in line lines six to eight connote confusion, disorder and fear. This means that the chickens constantly live in fear of this bird as they do not know when it will strike and when it does they are overcome by shock because the falcon targets mostly chicks which are an offspring. So when the chickens try to run away or protect the young ones they knock their heads against each other in confusion. Thus, the verbs above evoke the chicken's vulnerability which makes them susceptible to victimization.

The society's emotions are also portrayed non-verbally in this song. The people live in fear of losing their stock as chickens are valuable in Swazi homes. Therefore, their loss results to disappointment. So society voices out its anger towards this bird as there is nothing much they can do about it since it flies up in the sky and they cannot even hunt it. They may try to stone it in the moment of attack but it does not help much, so in a way they are helpless just like the chickens.

In terms of form the song is in Zulu and there is a relationship between siSwati and isiZulu as they are both Nguni languages. The repetition of the word *izinkukhu* in line four and five creates oblique linking and puts emphasis on the subject at hand; the chickens:

*Inyon'edl'izinkukhu*

*Izinkukhu zonkana*

The bird that devours chickens

Chickens of all shapes and sizes

The repetition of the ideophone *phithi* in line eight intensifies the action made by the chickens. In line six to eight the repetition of the subject concord */zi-/* produces initial rhyming as follows:

*Zisale...*

*Zibethana...*

*Zithi phithi...*

Left...

Knocking...

Running...

Another lullaby with the subject of birds follows.

### 3.2.6 *Mine ngangiyile*

*Mine ngangiyile ngalapha nku*  
*Ngakhandza lituba litisho nku*  
*Ngakhandza lituba litisho nku*  
*Yingcoli kalokhansela nku*  
 5 *Yingcoli kalokhansela nku*  
*Yeka yeka yeka mfanyana*  
*Phuma lapha kits'egumedeni*  
*Okwenkom'igob'uphondo*  
 (Miss L. Dlamini, Mbabane, 2016)

### **I went there**

I went there yeah  
 I found a dove singing yeah  
 I found a dove singing yeah  
 The criminal and the counselor yeah  
 The criminal and the counselor yeah  
 Oh oh oh boy  
 Get out of our windbreaker  
 Just like a cow with a bent horn

The diction of the above lullaby shows that it was adapted from isiXhosa. One reason for this could be that during the apartheid era many South Africans migrated to Swaziland and mingled with the people hence the mixture of cultures. Other Swazis worked in the mines and socialized with different people from all walks of life. Another reason is that both siSwati and isiXhosa are Nguni languages so they have some grammatical similarities.

The lullaby also educates the baby about animals. In the first two lines the persona mentions that she went somewhere and found a dove singing. *Litisho* is a proverbial expression which implies that an action has been done with confidence or expertise. Another expression related to this one but applicable to people is '*uyativa*' meaning one is proud, arrogant or enjoying the moment. The interjection *nku* does not fit well in this context since it is normally used to exaggerate smells or smoke, as in 'full of smoke.' In this case it evokes a playful atmosphere.

Line four suggests that the persona may have seen a criminal wherever she was so she is requesting the boy to shun (*yeka*) bad behavior as *ingcoli* is someone who is bad like a criminal. However, the presence of the counselor (*khansela*) suggests that the boy should take heed of the elders' advice or counsel in order to be a good citizen. The diminutive */-ana/* in the word *mfanyana* in line

six shows that the person addressed here is a baby as the word suggests a young fragile boy. Reducing the size of things is also associated with baby talk. It is common in Swazi lullabies to find the word *mfana* (boy) which shows just how Swazis value male children. The repetition of the word *yeka* also shows the playful mood of the song. Its denotative meaning is to leave or forsake but it connotes awe or wonder. So the persona is appreciating this adorable little boy.

Another example of manipulated words which is common in children's poetry is *egumedeni* which when used correctly it means *egumeni*. *Liguma* is a windbreaker or grass enclosure outside a traditional hut where women sit, cook, talk and teach each other chores such as handcraft. All the huts in a traditional Swazi home have these windbreakers which are designed carefully and cleverly to signify the importance of each hut. These windbreakers are made of bundles of reed or grass twigs lay out vertically and strengthened with some grass ropes which are also put in bundles across. However, the boys' hut (*lilawu*) has none of these, instead there is *sihonco* which are logs built around the entrance of the hut to resemble the kraal. This is also significant in that men are different and are so close to livestock. Even their separate enclosure (*lisango*) where they assemble and do their own things just like the women is made of logs.

The significance of *liguma* and *lisango* according to Matsebula (1988:199) is that it is where traditional education took place before the interference of colonialism. The traditional type of education was transmitted through words and deeds and included doctrines customs and legends. He states that from birth to six years a child was under his or her mother's protection and informal education. However, between the ages of seven and ten, the sexes were separated and girls were introduced into women's company and boys into men's company where they got definite courses.

Therefore, the baby in line seven is ordered to get out of the women's enclosure like a cow with a bent horn because he doesn't belong there but with the men. That is where he will receive advice that will guide him into his future. The image of the cow with a bent horn in the simile is associated with shame and depicts the cow as being odd. The cow could be looking like this because of its actions as it could be going around messing with things and thus got injured. It is also common to see cows messing with *emaguma*. So this boy is encouraged to grow up quickly so that he joins the rest of the men lest he becomes a misfit in the women's place because it is awkward to see a man or a boy in the company of women. He may also be ridiculed by other boys and considered a

weak man. Hence, there is the portrayal of group identity and the importance of belonging, according to societal values and norms.

In terms of form the lullaby has lots of repetitions which create initial and mid linking in line two to five thereby achieving the desired purpose of rhythm to captivate and soothe a crying baby. The long vowel in the interjection *nku* shows the length of the syllable as the persona performs it.

### 3.2.7 *Lolo malolo*

*Lolo malolo*  
*Musa kukhala*  
*Musa kuhlupha*  
*Lolo malolo*  
 5 *Lolo mntfwana*  
*Make utawubuya*  
*Make utawufika*  
*Thula mntfwana.*  
 (Mbabane, 2006)

### Quiet quiet malolo

Quiet quiet malolo  
 Do not cry  
 Do not be troublesome  
 Quiet quiet malolo  
 Quiet quiet child  
 Mother will be back  
 Mother will arrive  
 Hush child.

As observed earlier the sounds *lo lo* are popular in Swazi lullabies. The word *malolo* has also been coined from the above sounds. The word refers to the baby as one who likes sleeping to show the connection between babies and sleep. The baby is begged by the persona not to be troublesome and not cry because his mother will eventually come. This shows how much of a responsibility it is to look after a baby, not to mention the fact that the baby minder is also young. This again shows the importance and role of the mother in a baby's life. She is the source of life and the baby solely depends on her. The use of the words *utawubuya* and *utawufika* show that the diction has been chosen carefully as the words are related grammatically. They are both verbs in the future tense but they are different semantically. *Utawubuya* means she will come back and *utawufika* means she will arrive. Another example of good diction is seen in the use of the verbs *kukhala* and *kuhlupha* which are also related semantically. *Kukhala* is the act of crying which results to *kuhlupha* (being troublesome.)

The song has a beautiful form as it contains refrains, parallelism and anaphora which result to the linking of words. There is mostly initial linking in almost all the lines. Consonance is also observed in the first line as the sounds *l* and *m* are repeated.

### 3.2.8 *Koboyi, koboyi!*

	<i>Ye Koboyi!</i>	<b>Koboyi, koboyi!</b>
	<i>Unyok'uyephi?</i>	Hey Koboyi!
	<i>YeKoboyi!</i>	Where is your mother?
	<i>Uyokujuma</i>	Hey Koboyi!
	<i>YeKoboyi!</i>	She is sleeping out
5	<i>Emajaheni</i>	Hey Koboyi!
	<i>YeKoboyi!</i>	At bachelors' places
	<i>Abuye nesisu</i>	Hey Koboyi!
	<i>YeKoboyi!</i>	She will come back pregnant
10	<i>Atal'umntfwana</i>	Hey Koboyi
	<i>YeKoboyi</i>	Give birth to a child
	<i>Ambek'etjeni</i>	Hey Koboyi!
	<i>YeKoboyi!</i>	Put it on a stone
	<i>Adliwe timphetfu</i>	Hey Koboyi!
15	<i>YeKoboyi!</i>	To be devoured by larvae
	<i>Netingulube</i>	Hey Koboyi!
	<i>YeKopoyi</i>	And pigs
	(Dlamini, 2006:107)	Hey Koboyi!

This is one of the lullabies which have serious subject matters. It is a modern lullaby portraying the common actions of young people nowadays and the effects there of. *Koboyi* is a non-lexical item in siSwati but it has been coined cleverly to refer to a child. The sounds *k*, *b* and *y* are soft, voiceless consonants easy for children to mutter or pronounce. A lexical item related to *koboyi* is *koboya* which means to knock on the head with a finger. This child is asked a lot of questions he cannot answer as he is young and innocent. These questions are about his or her mother's whereabouts. It is one of the lullabies where the baby is informed about his or her mother's sins or

mistakes. So again the persona here could be the baby's grandmother who is looking after the baby. Her tone is critical of the mother's actions which frustrate her. That is shown in the interjection, which is accompanied by an exclamation mark "*YeKoboyi!*"(Hey, Koboyi!)

Firstly, the baby is asked where his mother is to indicate her absence and her uncaring nature. She left the baby with his grandmothers so as to go and do unacceptable deeds such as fornication, which will result to shame and loss of an innocent life. After the rhetoric question, which is a bit sarcastic, the persona starts to list the bad things Koboyi's mother is capable of doing. Koboyi's mother is judged by the persona and the society for her past mistakes and therefore, she is not trusted because she has not changed her behavior.

At this moment Koboyi's mother is not expected to be doing the act of *kujuma* (visiting one's boyfriend) because she is no longer a young pure girl but a mother who is expected to care for her child. Instead, she seems to be in denial of her current status thus, she ignores her responsibilities. Culturally, *kujuma* is a practice observed by young people who are dating. Its purpose is to see each other's homes and is not an opportunity for sexual encounters as youngsters are always advised to stay pure and exercise control. Therefore, the use of the plural noun *emajaheni* (boyfriends) which is a hyperbole, exaggerates Koboyi's mother's actions to depict her as a promiscuous person. The word is in the plural form to literally indicate that Koboyi's mother visits many boyfriends at a time which may not be possible. Thus, the word connotes that she is a loose woman who does not exercise self control nor does she have patience as she could be dating one man after another. Such behavior amongst women and girls is becoming popular nowadays yet it is seriously condemned in Swazi society.

There are a lot of negative images used in the song which are mostly visual as well as olfactory, tactile and kinesthetic. Visual images are shown from line six after the mentioning of the act of *kujuma*. Koboyi's mother is said to come back home pregnant (*abuye nesisu*) which is also a hyperbole exaggerating in her consistent actions. She then gives birth to a baby (*atale umntfwana*) and puts him on a stone (*etjeni*). Thereafter, the baby would be consumed by larvae (*timphetfu*.) The language used to portray these images is harsh to show the persona's judgement and disgust at Koboyi's irresponsible behavior.

The visual, tactile and kinesthetic image of the stone depicts a hard surface which has no warmth and it connotes negligence or abandonment. Imagining a baby's soft skin on a hard surface makes one cringe. The hardness of the stone also depicts the hard hearted mother in question. So society is saying no baby deserves such treatment and lack of love. The larvae and pigs which are visual, gustatory and olfactory images also denote negligence. Pigs are associated with dirt and larvae are known to exist in graveyards since they feed on dead bodies. So all the images used depict the inhumane actions of Koboyi's mother.

Through the voice of the baby sitter, the act of having unplanned pregnancies and dumping babies, is seriously condemned in Swazi society. This despicable act is becoming common amongst young people nowadays yet long ago one would get pregnant after getting married and the child would be appreciated and loved by both parents as well as the extended family. These are societal values encouraged amongst young people because most of them do not appreciate advice from elders as they shun traditions. Since children are the future, society is warning against the harsh treatment of them. Sackeyfio (2015:6) concurs, "Children universally represent the future and writers for this audience have a commitment to use their artistry in ways that foreground the preservation of African cultural integrity in a globalised world of fractured identity and misplaced values." Thus, the song serves to remind, instill and strengthen these African values which are side lined and taken less seriously nowadays.

When looking at the form of the song what is prevalent is the use of the exclamation marks. These put emphasis on the subject which is abandonment of a child by an irresponsible mother. They also show the emotions of the speaker as she interjects on the cruel actions done by *koboyi's* mother as she is disgusted by this. The speaker's anger is also seen through the shortness of the lines. The name *koboyi* is repeated alternatively to create anaphora. This is for emphasis as he is the main character in the song, even though he is silent. His silence also portrays (non-verbally) his innocence as he is too young to see or understand what is happening around him. The syllables are consistent in that they range from four to five alternatively. This consistency shows *koboyi's* mother's consistency in her bad actions. The last line is different as it has six syllables which show the climax of Koboyi's mother's inhumane actions. The run on lines indicate that the ideas are flowing to the next lines as the speaker keeps listing the things Koboyi's mother does.

Another lullaby with a deep subject matter follows. It reveals society's condemnation on certain acts such as witchcraft which is taboo.

### 3.2.9 *Lo lo lo lo mntfwana*

*Lo lo lo lo mntfwana*  
*Uyeph'unyoko*  
*Uyolima*  
*Ulima njani?*  
 5 *Ukhumula sidvwaba*  
*Asibekephi?*  
*Asibek'etjeni*  
*Litje linjani?*  
*Liyimbokojwana*  
 10 *Mbhokodvw'injani?*  
*Imacabhacabha*  
*Wo! Thula mntfwanamake.*  
 (Dlamini, 2006:106)

### Quiet quiet quiet quiet child

Quiet quiet quiet quiet child  
 Where has your mother gone to  
 To plough  
 How does she plough?  
 She takes off her traditional skirt  
 Where does she put it?  
 On a stone  
 How does the stone look like?  
 It is rounded  
 What colour is this rounded stone?  
 It is full of spots.  
 Oh! Be quiet my mother's child.

This is another lullaby which is loaded with a deep subject matter. It also criticizes the acts of the baby's mother who is a married woman. So the song is sung by the baby's grandmother. She mentions that the baby's mother has gone to plough or cultivate but the way she does this act raises eyebrows. This is where the crux of the story is. How can a woman take off her traditional skirt which is a symbol of her womanhood and dignity? Another question is; why is she cultivating alone? So this is an ironic way of depicting the woman's cunning ways with the pretext of ploughing. Thus, a conclusion can be drawn that the woman is probably a witch.

Since witchcraft is associated with nudity, that is why the woman in the song takes off her skirt so as to perform her rituals and cast spells. Someone may have seen her in this despicable act and thus composed a song as a way of warning her and the community. This shows that Swazis communicate in different ways and this is one of the indirect ways of doing it. The speaker could also be releasing her emotions such as shock and disgust towards the mother of the baby.

The speaker goes on to say that the cunning woman puts the skirt on a rounded stone which has spots. This is significant in that the stone is said to be small (*imbokojwana*). The use of the diminutive */-ana/* reduces the size of the rounded stone and is an indication of the typical nature of children's poetry which is always playful. However, in this context the small rounded stone symbolizes witchcraft. Usually when gossiping about someone who is a witch or who likes muti Swazis say '*uyayati imbokodvo*' or '*uyagaya*.' Witches use this kind of stone to grind their herbs on a flat surface called *ludzengelo*. So this is what the woman gets up to when she pretends to be ploughing. She could also be calling upon her *timphaka* (extra-terrestrial beings) to help her with the work. This was a common act amongst witches back in the day whereby their fields would be weeded at night by *timphaka* whilst the rest of the community struggled. The spots on the rounded stone depict the changing nature of the woman. It shows that she is two faced which is also typical of witches.

One should note though, that Swazi society does not condone witchcraft and it is worse if committed by a woman as it is one of the unforgivable acts a woman can ever commit. So in this case society, through the baby minder's voice, is warning against such immoral activities as they are portrayed negatively in the song. Another message communicated indirectly is that nothing remains a secret forever. The final line of the song shows that the song can also be sung by *sidzandzane*, perhaps after hearing her grandmother sing it. The words *mntfwanamake* (my mother's child) prove that indeed the persona is the baby's sister who may not even understand the implication of the words.

In a different context, the significance of the rounded stone in Swazi culture could be a source of nourishment as it is centered on women and their duties. The round stone goes together with *litje lekusila* (grinding stone) which women used long ago to crush maize and sorghum to make mealie meal or pulp (*inhlama*) to prepare food for the family. So there is a close relationship between a woman and *imbokodvo* in such a way that she is even called *imbokodvo* to symbolize her strength and rounded personality.

The form of the lullaby is interesting in that it resembles '*koboyi*' as it is also a conversation between the baby sitter and the baby who, unfortunately cannot speak. This is common in lullabies as it shows how the baby minder relates to the child. She communicates with him as if he can hear and even puts words into his mouth. The shortness of the lines shows the speaker's emotions

concerning the serious subject matter. The lines are also run on to indicate a flow of ideas as well as the speaker's surprise. There is also a parallelism of thought and ideas in lines three and four, six, seven and eight, nine and ten. Each word that is repeated changes and has something added to it to emphasize on the act done by the woman. This is observed as follows:

*Uyolima*  
*Ulima njani?*  
*She has gone to plough*  
*How does she plough?*

The verb repeated above changes tenses. In the first line it is in the future tense and in the second line it is in the present tense. The verbs link the lines strategically whilst showing the continuous actions of the woman. Another parallelism follows:

*Ukhumula sidvwaba*  
*Asibekhephi*  
*Asibek'etjeni*  
*Litjelinjani*  
*Liyimbokojwana*  
*Mbokodv'injani*  
 She takes off her traditional skirt  
 Where does she put it  
 She puts it on a stone  
 How does the stone look like  
 It is rounded  
 What colour is this rounded stone

Line six and seven above create initial linking through the verb phrase *asibeke* which asks a question, in line six and answers it in line seven. The enumerative stem '*phi*' which has been suffixed in the verb demands a location which comes in the following line as a locative adverb *etjeni* then the noun *litje* is referred for emphasis. In the final lines the type of stone is mentioned again for emphasis through the use of the copula *yimbokojwana* and the relative concord '*li-*' which has been borrowed in the line above, is prefixed. The diminutive as well serves to make the

description vivid and also demonstrate the persona as well as the society's attitude towards witchcraft. Thus, the repetition of the words and phrases above serves to link the lines and connect the ideas together.

Another lullaby which has a deep subject matter follows. This one shows the challenges faced by women in their marriages which are brought about by some customs such as polygamy. This issue, amongst others, tends to resurface in most women songs as observed by Mamba (1997:65), Mamba (2008:66) and Kamera (2001:5) as they highlight that the songs usually reveal the experiences of the group and how they perceive themselves, as well as society's attitude or perceptions of the group.

### 3.2.10 *Lo lo lo lo lo*

<i>Lo lo lo lolo</i>	<b>Quiet quiet quiet quiet</b>
<i>Bindza mntfwanami</i>	Quiet quiet quiet quiet
<i>Live lifile</i>	Be quiet my child
<i>Ngeva cim cim emnyango</i>	The nation is decaying
5 <i>Ngatsi yindvodza yam'iyefika</i>	I heard bang bang by the door
<i>Kantsi ngucham'uyazelula</i>	I thought it was my husband arriving
<i>Ngucham'uyazelula</i>	Yet it is an iguana stretching
<i>Uyazelula, emnyango.</i>	It is the iguana stretching
(Dlamini, 2006:106)	Stretching, by the door.

The persona in this song is the baby's mother and she sounds frustrated. She has been waiting patiently for her husband to come home and it seems her patience is wearing out. As she comforts her crying baby she is expressing her current situation and at the same time relieving herself from the pain she feels. Her husband could be a drunkard or polygamist who is giving his new wife all the attention and neglecting her.

In the first two lines the persona is focusing on comforting the baby. She is trying to be strong despite the situation and her role as a mother is to care and love as per society's expectations. The third line changes the mood completely as it introduces a different idea. '*Live lifile*' is a pregnant

statement. It can have various interpretations depending on the context. Literally, it means the nation is decaying and it connotes disruption, chaos, corruption and all sorts of negative things. So the line creates anticipation or suspense as a listener would wonder what the persona is trying to say.

The image portrayed in the proverb '*live lifile*' through the use of the hyperbole and personification, depicts the difficult circumstances the woman is facing. These words are usually uttered by someone who is disappointed and in this case it is a woman who has been waiting patiently for her husband to come home. She is pouring out her feelings to the child because there is no one else around. Culturally, this is not good especially if she is breastfeeding because it can upset the child. Men are commonly known for their wayward behavior such as drinking till late and having extra marital relations but culturally, the wife is not supposed to go around looking for him. She is expected to show respect, honour and submission despite all odds. As a result the woman gets frustrated, anxious and worried because she knows she cannot control him nor make him responsible for his actions. So she vents her frustrations out through song as a way of relieving her pain.

Even though culture allows men to be polygamists, society still expects them to be responsible heads of their families and partake in their duties such as building homes for their wives and children, supporting them, engaging in community service and also being decent members of society. So in this case the woman is lamenting the decay of the nation as a result of men who are ignoring their responsibilities as heads of families, thus affecting the whole nation. This is so because men are pillars of homes so if they fail to pay their dues the family structure crumbles which then affects the whole nation because its core existence lies on strong families.

The fourth line creates even more suspense due to the use of the ideophone *cim* which is repeated to intensify the action made by the iguana. It also portrays an auditory image which invokes fear or surprise. These emotions come as a result of the expectation or anticipation by the woman as indicated by the line '*ngatsi yindvodza yami iyefika*' (I thought it was my husband arriving) which leads to the climax in line six where there is disappointment. The sound made by the iguana fools the expectant woman and heightens her disappointment.

The use of the visual image of the iguana seals the disappointment and also creates anger because this is a wild water animal and one wonders why it is here at such wrong timing because usually it is small lizards which linger around homes. Therefore, the image of this wild animal which lives in water and is rarely seen by people portrays the societal beliefs and attitudes towards witchcraft. The iguana represents water spirits and its image shows the superstitions associated with such. So the assumption here, according to Mamba (2008:55) could be that, the woman has been bewitched, probably by the rival wife so that the husband could distaste her. In that case the rival wife is portrayed negatively, as a witch while the first wife is a victim. This shows that generally most women feel for the first wife and distaste her rivals. So the appearance of the iguana comes with the evil spell and since water spirits are active at night that is why it is here now. Hence, this shows that the woman has been waiting up all night. The actions of the iguana also show that it has been sleeping and has now woken up to stretch itself which proves that the woman has waited for a long time.

The final line is repeated for the purposes of enjoyment of the song, to lull the baby to sleep and to emphasize the action and sound made by the iguana. This also exaggerates the woman's disappointment and disbelief. On another note, the iguana can symbolise opportunists in that since the father who is the protector is away, the livelihood of the family is under threat. This is because no one knows what the wild animal is capable of. So through this song society is passing a message to men who neglect their wives and children to be careful of their actions lest they put their families in danger and end up regretting it. Through the voice of the woman in the song, the society is also informed about the psychological effects of polygamy on women in general, as a way of vouching for change.

When looking at the form of the song one may notice the repetitions which come in various forms. Firstly, the popular sound *lo* is repeated to induce sleep to the baby. Secondly, the ideophone '*cim*' has also been repeated to emphasize and also show the intensity of the action and sound made by the iguana as it falls on the ground. It also shows the element of surprise. Thirdly, the repetition in lines six to eight shows parallelism of thought or ideas to stress the continuous actions of the iguana as it stretches itself by the door after falling on the ground. It also reveals the disappointment of the speaker. The parallelism beautifies the lines and links them in different ways. Thus, the

repetition of the conjunction *nguchamu* and the verb phrase *uyazelula* which is in the present tense creates oblique linking as follows:

*Kantsi ngucham 'uyazelula*

*Ngucham 'uyazelula*

*Uyazelul'emnyango.*

Yet it is an iguana stretching

It is an iguana stretching

Stretching

Another lullaby which reveals marital issues follows. This one reveals the challenges women faced during the industrial period which was spear headed by colonialists.

### 3.2.11 *Meme mntfwan'am*

*Meme mntfwanam'*

*EBhunya baholile*

*Siyolalaphi namhla nje*

*Siyolalaphi namhla nje*

*Nalokushenda kuyahlupha*

(Vilakati, 1997:38)

### **Let me carry you on my back my child**

Let me carry you on my back my child

At Bhunya they have been paid

Where are we going to spend the night today

Where are we going to spend the night today

This cheating is a problem.

This is a modern lullaby which also has a serious subject matter and loaded with history. It reveals the effects of industrialization and migrant labour to the Swazi society, most of which were the breaking up of the family structure, illicit relationships, disappointment and economic dissatisfaction. The persona is a married woman who is voicing out her frustrations to the society. Her husband is working at Bhunya Usuthu Pulp Mill.

A brief history of the events leading to the existence of this industry in 1950, according to Matsebula (1988:219) is that many men left their homes with the hope and promise of the colonialists that their lives would be bettered economically, yet the colonialists were bettering themselves. Another reason for men leaving their homes was the introduction of hut tax (*umtselwenhloko*) which forced men to work to be able to pay for it. Men's main aspirations during that

era were to acquire cattle since they lost most of them due to the hut tax and to be able to pay *lobola* (brideprice). They also wanted to get agricultural tools. Cattle were also a sign of wealth and earned men status and esteem in society because of the numerous functions it had. Therefore, due to all these reasons most men left their homes to work in industries and mines locally and in South Africa. The most popular ones locally were Bhunya, Bulembu, Dvokolwako, Ngwenya, and many more. As a result these places were very busy as many people flocked to them to fulfill their dreams.

Since most of these men were uneducated at the time, they only worked as labourers who were paid forth nightly. They worked in shifts and lived in hostels where they squatted with their co-workers. The houses were clustered together and such living conditions were not normal for Swazis. Thus, people were forced to adapt which then resulted to weird behavior such as immorality and the love of money. This is concurred by Vilakati (2005:134) as he states that many of those who left the rural areas to look for jobs, if they failed get them they ended up living in slums and became a social problem. Money was still a foreign concept around that time but since the colonialists were making it look attractive, the Swazi society was slowly welcoming it. These were the effects of industrialization in Africa as a whole which are discussed by Seidman (1977:23)

So the woman in the first two lines of the song is seen carrying her baby on her back in preparation for her journey to Bhunya to see her husband whom she has not seen for quite some time. It is his payday and probably the man does not come home often so she needs some money for the welfare of the children. She is excited about meeting her husband but at the same time uncertain about the turn of events once she gets there. This is indicated by the line, *siyolalaphi namhla nje*. This uncertainty arouses her anxiety as it may mean that she may have once witnessed an undesirable circumstance where she found herself with no room to spend the night.

One of the reasons for the woman's anxiety is that her husband could be cheating as a result she was unwelcomed during her previous visit. Another reason could be the living conditions in the hostels as men were cramped in small spaces, thus no room for any women. Therefore, the woman laments on her personal experience and at the same time the husband's situation is depicted indirectly. This is the implication of the low wages which was not enough to cover his expenses, sustain his family as well as fulfill his dreams.

Thus, the song is an outcry of the whole society on the ugly yet ‘sugar coated’ acts of colonialists on the Swazi people’s culture, lifestyles, beliefs and perceptions. Some of these effects were huge on women and children as Seidman (1977:23) states that the women were mostly left in the rural areas without outmoded tools and equipment and could not maintain even pre existing levels of subsistence production and famines spread resulting to loss of life. Vilakati (2005:186) also concurs, as he states that some of the disadvantages of migrant labour include the breaking up of the family structure and the deprivation of rural communities of the workforce needed for farming, as it is left to women and children. Thus, the song reveals the huge task women had to bear during the migration era, which was managing the home and taking care of the children on their own.

The woman’s lament is heard loud and clear in the final line of the song. The word *kushenda* (cheating or adultery) is a non-gender word which means that both men and women are capable of doing the act. However, the way society judges such an act differs significantly according to the genders. Women are never forgiven for it but men are judged less harshly. In fact, it is not surprising for a married man to cheat and even the women know this such that when they get married they are told to expect it. The word commonly used to refer to this is *kuganwa* which is somehow allowed because in this case the man engages in a relationship with a girl yet *kushenda* is when a man engages on a relationship with another married woman.

So the woman is blaming the man indirectly as she says ‘*kushenda kuyahlupha*’ (cheating is a problem) instead of saying ‘*indvodza yami iyahlupha*’ (my husband is problematic.) This portrays the love and respect she has for her husband as it is common amongst lovers to shift the blame in such situations. This has a cultural connotation as well because women are expected to submit under their husbands and not trouble them in any way. So culturally, no woman would have guts to confront her husband on such matters except sarcastically through song.

In terms of form the song is very short but the lines can be repeated as much as desired. The number of syllables is inconsistent to show the uncertainty of the persona. However, the syllables grow with each line to demonstrate the longing and anticipation of the persona towards meeting her husband. The following lullabies have playful subject matters. Their purpose is to entertain and play with the baby so as to show that he is appreciated and loved.

**3.2.12 Oshi! Oshi!**

	<i>Oshi! Oshi!</i>	<b>Oh hush! Oh hush!</b>
	<i>Oshi! Oshi!</i>	Oh hush! Oh hush!
	<i>Nankh'emacebhezane</i>	Here is a snack
	<i>Oshi! oshi!</i>	Oh hush! Oh hush!
5	<i>Ubodla matsatfu</i>	You can eat three of them
	<i>Oshi! Oshi!</i>	Oh hush! Oh hush!
	<i>Ushiyel'umntfwana</i>	Reserve some for the baby
	<i>Oshi! oshi!</i>	Oh hush! Oh hush!
	(Vilakati, 1997:40)	

This is a playful lullaby which can be sung by the baby's mother or anyone guarding him. It draws the baby's attention so that they can play. The 'sh' sounds are also common in lullabies as they are uttered when trying to pacify a crying baby. They are borrowed from the English word 'hush' which is also associated with lullabies. Thus, 'oshi' has no grammatical meaning but it has been coined well to suit the context and purpose of this lullaby. As the baby minder or mother tries to catch the baby's attention she uses facial expressions, gestures and body movements that will excite the baby. Since these two have a strong bond the baby sitter knows which moves or expressions do the trick quickly and better.

The word *emacebhezane* has been manipulated by changing the prefixes as the original word is *sicebhezane* which refers to a mini skirt. Thus, *emacebhezane* has no lexical meaning but in this context it refers to any light dry food suitable for babies. So the relationship between the two words lies in their meanings, in that both refer to something small. There is another existing siSwati word which is related to these two words and it is *emacebelengwane* which also refers to light dry snacks made from dry maize. Usually when a baby is crying he is breastfed or given something to eat, if that fails he is then wrapped on the back and rocked to sleep.

Line seven emphasizes on the importance of reserving something for the baby no matter how small it is. It teaches young mothers to always put the baby first because he is the most important person in their lives. So this teaches them the responsibility of motherhood and the act of being maternal. This is how society expects mothers to behave and it is shown in the way young girls are groomed.

Since they are mostly given the task of taking care of babies when their parents are away, in a way they are being prepared for motherhood. In that way they are trained to behave like mothers so that when that stage comes they would know what to do. Thus, the above lines sound like an instruction to young girls as well as the young mothers.

What is visible in the form of the song is the repetition of the word *oshi* which then creates anaphora. This beautifies the song and gives it a playful rhythm, atmosphere and mood which are achieved when the baby plays with his mother or caregiver.

### 3.2.13 *Te te te!*

*Te te te shhi!*

*Wema yedvwa!*

*Catfu, catfu, catfu!*

(Vilakati, 1997:40)

### **Up up up!**

Up up up straight!

He is standing alone!

Step by step, step by step, step by step!

The lullaby above encourages a baby to take the first step. The sounds and the words in the lullaby are uttered in competition with the efforts made by the baby as he stands up and tries to walk. As the baby's mother or minder says these sounds she demonstrates to the baby as to how to take the first step. The baby will try to follow suit and perhaps fall several times but he will be encouraged and praised for the effort made until he gets tired. This shows that the baby is loved and appreciated so he will try harder to please his mother, grandmother or younger sister. By so doing he gets stronger and more courageous. The motivation by the mother or baby sitter serves to get rid of any fears the baby might have as taking the first step is challenging to most babies. Some are just lazy naturally so they need encouragement. This boldness will help him as he grows older and encounters challenges. Therefore, this shows how Swazi society grooms children. Traditionally, this was not a one person's job but it involved the whole family and the community.

The sounds '*te te*' are associated with baby talk and that is why they are used in this context. However, they have no grammatical meaning in Siswati. Usually when babies learn to speak they use mostly 'b' and 't' sounds as in '*baba*' and '*tata*' which have been interpreted to mean 'daddy' or 'father' in so many languages. So in most cases Swazi adults use such sounds when talking to babies as a way of playing with them or trying to get down to their level of understanding. So when

encouraging the baby to stand up and be firm the sounds ‘*te te te*’ are uttered. The ideophone *shhi* mimics the action made by the baby as he tries to maintain balance and stands firm on the ground. This ideophone exists in the grammatical structure of the Siswati language and it means to stand firm on the ground. The sentence *wema yedvwa* shows that the baby is already standing up and is being encouraged not to fall or even consider leaning on the babysitter. Again it shows Swazi society is concerned about raising strong children who will grow into courageous adults that will build the nation.

The ideophone *catfu* mimics the action the baby makes as he takes the first steps in an attempt to walk. So each step is accompanied by the uttering of the word *catfu* as a form of encouragement. These praises also help the baby to develop confidence and feel loved and accepted. These aspects are very important in a child’s development and they show how Swazi society values children as they are always regarded as the future of the nation. The ideophone *catfu* is derived from the verb *catfuta* or *kucatfuta* which means to take the first steps. The steps also show the practicality of life in general. That is, one should always take the first step then move slowly, patiently and confidently into the unknown. This is how Swazis raise children as they equip them with all the skills needed to face the future as courageous individuals who will be independent.

The lullaby’s form is brief so is the content. What is prevalent is that the number of syllables in the first and second lines is equal. Each line has four syllables yet the last one has six. This shows that in the first two lines there is no much action made by the baby, but in the final line he takes a bold step and many more as he feels courageous. There is no pause in the first two lines but in the third one each word is accompanied by a pause to indicate that each step the baby makes requires some effort and it is taken slowly. The repetition of the ideophones is for emphasis on the actions made and for the purposes of encouragement.

### 3.3 CONCLUSION

The above analysis of the lullabies is a clear indication of how baby sitters relate with babies. Since the two stay together throughout the day when everyone else is away, a strong bond develops between them. The baby sitter also develops strategies of dealing with the crying baby to induce him to sleep. The economic status of the home, the baby's welfare as well as that of the baby minder's, are portrayed in the songs. The importance of the mother in the baby's life, her responsibilities, mistakes, welfare, expectations and society's perceptions of her are also depicted. So are her fears, frustrations, hopes and attitude towards the baby. Baby language and child innocence are also portrayed in the lullabies.

Some of the songs reveal society's condemnation of laziness amongst women because they are considered to be a source of life, therefore expected to care and nurture. Some educate the baby on the environment, his identity and duties he will be expected to perform when he grows up. Society's perceptions of certain animals as well as unacceptable acts committed by people such as witchcraft are also conveyed in the lullabies. Women abuse and their frustrations due to cheating husbands and the effects of industrialization are also evident, whilst some just encourage the baby to face challenges such as standing up and walk.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TRADITIONAL AND MODERN RHYMES/GAMES

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shall be a critical analysis of selected traditional and modern Swazi children's rhymes, chants and games for children of pre- and primary school going age. Attention will be paid on the content and form which incorporate the linguistic and para-linguistic devices. As in the previous chapter, the pronoun 'he' shall be used neutrally to refer to a child.

#### 4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE RHYMES AND GAMES

Dlamini *et al* (2006:101) states that children's rhymes are about children, their preferences such as food, and dislikes like bad weather and darkness, as well as their everyday lives. Most of the songs reveal the mother as an important person, the playful nature of children, societal values and norms. They mention that some have deep subject matters which are way beyond the children's level of understanding, of which when looked at closely, they are directed to adults. Dlamini *et al.* (2006:101) further mention that ideas in these songs are presented in a disorderly manner which shows the way children think. They also constitute lots of repetitions for the purpose of rhythm so that the children can enjoy them as they sing and dance. All these will be observed in the following rhymes.

<b>4.2.1</b>	<b><i>Ngiyasebenza emaBhunwini</i></b>	<b>I am working for the Boers</b>
	<i>Ngiyasebenza</i>	I am working
	<i>Emabhunwini</i>	For the Boers
	<i>Ngidvons'incola</i>	I am dragging a wheel cart
	<i>Angiphumuli</i>	I am not resting
5	<i>Angitfoli na a e i o u</i>	I am not getting even a e i o u
	<i>Angitfoli na a e i o u</i>	I am not getting even a e i o u.

(Vilakati, 1997:38)

The above song is a protest or complaint and is loaded with history. It is clear that it was composed during colonial times when the Boers and the English people were occupants in Swaziland. Swazis were first colonized by the Boers who then lost their power to the English people who took over around 1903, after the Anglo Boer wars. According to Kuper (1948:77) and Matsebula (1988:180) many Swazis lost their land to the colonialists and had to work for them to make money to survive. They were also forced to work for the whites after the introduction of the hut tax which demanded the head of each household to pay tax in monetary terms. Most people were forced to sell their livestock and some went to the mines in South Africa to get money for the tax and other desires such as replenishing their lost stock, getting money to pay a bride price or buy guns and modern farm tools. Some Swazis still lived on white farms as squatters and were expected to provide labour for the white farmers. The white owned farms produced cash crops such as ground nuts, tobacco, cotton, rice and sugar cane. Many of the Swazi people around the time were uneducated and unskilled.

Therefore, the song shows the visual image of a black man toiling and dragging a heavy wagon to the fields perhaps to harvest maize since Boers were known for farming or cultivating vast amounts of land. Since there were no rights for workers during this era, nor any unions, this means that these black workers were exposed to so many hardships such as long hours under the scorching sun with no benefits or any safety clothing whatsoever. This is revealed in line four as the speaker states:

*Angiphumuli*

I don't rest

The last the line also reinforces the idea of toiling as evident in the above line:

*Angitfoli na a e i o u*

I don't even get a e i o u

The above line has many interpretations. A different version says '*angina a e i o u.*' Both versions denote 'nothing' which means that the black man benefitted nothing other than the unsatisfying low wage. It also connotes lack of education or skills. This means that the black man's life

remained the same even after working for a long period of time as there was no ‘on job training’ and losing one’s job was easy and no terminal benefits were paid out. A worker could also receive any form of punishment such as beating from the employer regardless of age or gender.

Another interpretation could be the fact that since most of the black people had lost their land to the whites and had sold their cattle so they had absolutely nothing because the measure of a man in Swazi culture is his land and livestock. Other things such as children and wives add to the list. Again the sounds *a e i o u* connote the influence of education which also came with the missionaries together with Christianity. These are the first sounds a child learns at first grade of schooling. According to historians, most traditionalists did not welcome these two ideologies warmly as they clashed with their traditional way of life. The missionaries were compelling them to wear modern clothes and drop certain practices like polygamy which did not go down well with the Swazis. Educators were also asking parents to let their children attend school instead of doing their chores such as looking after cattle. Thus, the last line sounds very critical of the colonialists rule or power but in a sarcastic or subtle way.

The children are acting as the society’s voice or mouthpiece as they are laying a message across so that anyone who may care to listen could possibly take further steps on the national crisis. According to Matsebula (1988:179) the Queen mother Dzeliwe and King Sobhuza tried numerous times to engage the British about the land issue but to no avail. As a result they encouraged Swazis to establish the *Lifa* fund to gather enough money to purchase some of the land which initially belonged to them. This plan was a success but not all the land was recovered until after independence in 1968. Therefore, the song is more political than it may seem.

In terms of form the song has five syllables in each line except the last one which has ten syllables. This is for the purpose of rhythm as children’s poetry is characterized by lots of rhythm and repetition. It is interesting to note that in the first three lines the fourth syllable is stressed and the vowels long. This makes the song sound like an announcement to the whole society so that action can be taken with regard to the subject:

*Ngi-ya-se-be:nza*

*E-ma-Bhu-nwi:ni*

*Ngi-dvo-nsi-nco:la*

*A-ngi-phu-mu:li*

I am working  
 For the Boers  
 I drag a wheel cart  
 I don't rest

When performed the song sounds like an announcement or protest as the voice is high pitched. The persona's voice and the short lines, reveal the disappointment and anger of the persona towards colonial rule. The parallelism in the last line is to emphasize the dire situation or plight of the black Swazi worker during this era.

There is also emphasis on the subject concord 'ngi' (I) which appears in all the lines to show that this is a personal matter affecting the persona greatly. Another thing worth noting in this song is the fact that in the first line it is sung in Zulu as indicated by the /z/ sound instead of the siSwati /t/ sound, as follows:

*Ngiyasebenza*

I am working

The reason for the above Zulu influence is that both languages fall under the Nguni category of languages so there are many linguistic similarities. Another reason could be that since many Swazi men worked in the mines in South Africa, they were exposed to different cultures and some ended up being fluent in languages such as Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa and Afrikaans. One more reason is that when South Africa was still fighting for her rights many of her people flocked to Swaziland for safety hence the mixture of cultures. The Zulu language was also taught in Swazi schools by the Zulu teachers since very few Swazis were educated at the time. Even up to this day the influence of Zulu is still evident as most Swazi singers still sing in Zulu. Some Swazi kings also married Zulu girls because Swazis believe that '*indvuku lenhle igawulwa etiveni*' (one gets a good wife from afar) and indeed Swazis copied some Zulu traditions such as the *Umhlanga* ceremony (the reed dance.)

Another version of the above song which has been adapted to suit the current context is as follows:

**4.2.1.2 Imbongolo***Ngiyasebenza**EmaShayineni**Angiphumuli**Angitfoli na a e i o u.*(Mgabhi *et al.* 2013:28)**Donkey**

I am working

For the Chinese

I am not resting

I am not getting even a e i o u.

The above song exposes the current economic status of illiterate people in Swaziland. The word *emaShayineni* refers to the Chinese people who own textile and clothing industries in Matsapa where most uneducated people, mostly women, work. Like the traditional song above, these people get low wages which they receive fortnightly yet they work long hours. There are no terminal benefits and media houses have reported that women who fall pregnant are fired in such in the firms. Ironically, the Chinese are treating the Swazi people exactly as the Boers did long time ago yet it is a post independence era. Could this be a new form of colonialism? That is one million dollar question. Thus, this is the plight of the black Swazi uneducated worker. It has been reported as well that some of these industries close overnight leaving most Swazis with no jobs. According to Vilakati (2005:182) these industries came into existence in 1998 as a way of promoting new investments in Swaziland so as to boost the economy. This led to Swaziland becoming an AGOA (African Growth and Opportunities Act) country. By 2005 there were about twenty six textile and clothing industries in the country which helped create job opportunities.

However, it seems no one is looking into the affairs of these workers as the country is happy about investment. Thus, the voice of the textile Swazi worker in the song is cause for concern and it is society's duty to start acting on some of these issues which are overlooked. The title of the song is sarcastic in that a negative animal symbol has been used. The textile worker views herself as a donkey because it is believed that it does not get tired. The image is negative in that Swazis do not like this animal and it is never taken seriously except when it is needed to carry heavy loads. It is not a valuable domestic animal like cows because it has few uses. For example, its meat and milk are not edible. They are also not good for ploughing like cows because they are not strong enough nor can a man use them to pay *lobola* (bride price). Even people who own donkeys are not taken seriously in their communities. So practically, this is a useless animal in Swazi society.

**4.2.2 Ngubani lo?**

	<i>Loholako: Ngubani lo?</i>	<b>Who is this?</b>
	<i>Labavumako: NguYeye!</i>	Who is this?
	<i>Loholako: Uhamba nabani?</i>	It is Yeye!
	<i>Labavumako: Neyise!</i>	Who is with him?
5	<i>Loholako: Umphatseleni?</i>	His father!
	<i>Labavumako: Emasi!</i>	What does he have for him?
	<i>Loholako: Ngendzebe lenjani?</i>	Sour milk!
	<i>Labavumako: Lebovu!</i>	What is the colour of the container?
	<i>Loholako: Wayibekaphi?</i>	A red one!
10	<i>Labavumako: Esibayeni!</i>	Where has he put it?
	<i>Loholako: Lesingakanani?</i>	In the kraal!
	<i>Labavumako: Lesikhulu!</i>	How big is the kraal?
	(Mamba, 2008:64)	A very big one.

This is a question and answer rhyme and when the children recite it they divide themselves into two groups or form a circle and then act out the roles. It demonstrates a father's love for his son. It also teaches on the roles and responsibilities of parenting. *Yeye's* father has been portrayed positively as away of encouraging fathers in Swazi society to be as loving, caring and protective as him. This is because it has always been a norm that taking care of children is a woman's job and men only provide necessities. As a result most fathers nowadays get to the point of being irresponsible and not pay attention to their children's needs just because they leave everything to the mothers. However, long ago if a child lost a mother, a grandmother would step in to fill in the void. It is possible that *Yeye* is a motherless child so his father has assumed all the responsibilities of nurturing him. So *Yeye* is the envy of all children in society as it is rare to see a man taking his time to care for a child.

The speaker in the first line is pointing at *Yeye* as he approaching. This is shown by the demonstrative pronoun '*lo*'. It seems the persona is surprised to see *Yeye* coming with his father as it is not common to see men being maternal. The name *Yeye* is onomatopoeic and it refers to

someone who is fragile. There could many reasons why the young boy is weak. One could be that he was born that way due to a chronic illness, or his mother died when he was young and thus could not get enough breastmilk, or the fact that his father spoils him a lot as a result he is not strong physically and emotionally. This is indicated in line three and four which state that he is coming with his father. So this suggests that his father is always everywhere with him, therefore, *Yeye* does not know how to stand up for himself.

To show that *Yeye* is indeed the envy of every child, his father has brought him *emasi* (*sour milk*) which is loved by many children and his calabash is colourful. *Emasi* in traditional Swaziland is a rich delicious kind of food enjoyed by young and old and has cultural connotations associated with it. It is taboo for married women to eat it and young girls are not encouraged to eat it frequently as it is believed to promote fast growth and boost sexual desire just like eggs, nuts, cheese and avocados. Therefore, *Yeye* has been portrayed as a child who lives luxuriously indeed. The colour red draws attention and is associated with boldness so *Yeye's* father is bold for assuming such a big responsibility which was initially meant for women.

The image of *sibaya* is significant in that the life of boys and fathers is centered on cattle. This is concurred by Simelane (2016:24) Mamba (2008:65) and Dlamini et al. (2006:191). Simelane (2016:24) states, “*Kwelusa bekumvula emehlo umfana*” which means that looking after cattle made a boy wiser. Mamba states that the size of the kraal connotes wealth so it shows that *Yeye's* father is rich that is why there is a lot of sour milk in his house. Having many cows earned a man respect in traditional Swazi society. In that case *Yeye* is indeed a spoilt child since he lives in plenty and he is obviously a boy. It is therefore, a father's duty to train his boys to be responsible citizens and be strong enough to head their own families in future. That usually happened *esangweni* where men would assemble in the evenings and do their own things. This place was closer to the kraal and the boy's hut.

Dlamini et al. (2006:191) highlight the importance of the kraal in the Swazi home. They state that it is a sacred place which is believed to harbour ancestors. As a result most rituals are performed there. *Sibaya* is also a source of life as it is a shelter for livestock and *ingungu* (traditional maize tank) is kept there. Milking also takes place in the kraal that is why in the rhyme the calabash is put in the kraal.

Therefore, through *Yeye's* father, society is voicing out its wishes and concerns about fathers in general. Society is preaching to those fathers who are irresponsible to take up their parental duties, at the same time encouraging those who are good to continue playing their roles. It is also unveiling the sensitivity of children through *Yeye's* condition as a way of cautioning against the harsh treatment of children. Since children are naturally fragile, especially when they are younger, they need proper care.

What is prevalent in the form of the poem is the use of punctuation marks. The question marks accompany the questions asked by the first speaker and the exclamation marks reveal the second speaker's awe upon seeing *Yeye* coming with his father. The syllables in the questions range from four to six and in the answers they are consistent until the last two lines. The consistency in the number of syllables shows *Yeye's* father's actions which is what society approves. Most of the lines in the answers are short to show the speaker's surprise.

#### 4.2.3 *Awung'shiyele yetate*

*Awung'shiyele yetate*  
*Angibhemi yetate*  
*Wabanani yetate?*  
*Imbongozane yetate*  
 5 *Wayitsatsaphi yetate?*  
*Eligwayini yetate.*

(Dlamini *et al.* 2006: 102)

#### **Can I have some my friend**

Can I have some my friend  
 I do not smoke my friend  
 What happened my friend?  
 Imbongozane my friend  
 Where did you get it my friend?  
 From tobacco my friend.

This rhyme, like the one above, sounds like a dialogue between two people. It cautions the society, especially men, on the dangers of having a smoking addiction due to the modern ways of smoking. According to Dlamini *et al.* (2006:192) men long ago would smoke tobacco occasionally (to relieve stress) in a private place called *umjono*. Dagga was smoked mainly for ritual purposes such as when communicating with ancestors, using *lushawulo* (medium horn attached to a very small clay pot that used the process of filtration). The dagga passed through a hot coal (in the clay pot) and some water (in the horn) before it reached the smoker, unlike nowadays where it is smoked raw. Ground tobacco (*sinefu*) was also sniffed for ritual purposes from a container known as *indlelo*

which was carved from a cow horn. This became popular with older women as it also helped them relieve stress. It is obvious that modern ways of smoking have no safety measures as most people nowadays especially the youth, smoke dagga and a lot of other strong drugs which they sniff and inject themselves with. These are very dangerous to one's health.

The first line depicts the two speakers who usually share their cigarettes, which is typical of drug addicts and drunkards. Their friendship is indicated by the word 'tate' which is a form of endearment. The word is also associated with children as it connotes affection. The sharing of cigarettes shows that nowadays people always want to engage in bad habits mostly in groups, so as to belong, yet long ago a decent man would smoke occasionally, alone in his home. Even if he invited a friend, it was on rare instances. When smoking, they would be secluded from the rest of the family and as far away from the children as possible. This is what is called responsible drinking and smoking, which is becoming less common nowadays.

It seems, however, that the second speaker is now reformed as he disappoints the first one and tells him he no longer smokes because he has now learnt his lesson, though a bit late because he is now sick. He mentions in the subsequent lines that he now suffers from a lung disease as a result of his bad habits. The disease is unknown because in the siSwati language the word *imbongozane* does not exist. This connotes that if someone smokes irresponsibly he or she may end up acquiring unknown sicknesses which are incurable.

However, the word *imbongozane* has familiar sounds which have been coined well. There is a well known word *imboza* that was borrowed from the English one 'boxer' which is a certain type of tobacco produced in South Africa. It was popular in the nineties and was easily available since it was cheap yet so addictive such that many people who smoked it developed lung problems. This was because the smokers used pieces of newspaper to make cigarettes in which the tobacco would be stuffed inside.

The form of the poem shows consistency in the number of syllables, which range between seven and eight. The consistency shows the habit of the smokers. They smoke consistently without realizing the effects of their actions in the long run. This is what happens with youngsters nowadays as they engage in compulsive behaviour without thinking about the consequences of their actions. Thus, society, through the voice of the children warns against such bad habits.

A newer version of the same song which is a complete opposite of the one above follows. It encourages children to engage in good habits such as reading, learning and attending school which are important aspects in our contemporary society.

#### 4.2.4 *Mine ngiyatsandza esikolweni*

*Mine ngiyatsandza eskolwen'*

*Utsandzani yemnganam'?*

*Ngitsandza kubhala yemnganam'*

*Wakufundzaphi yemnganam'?*

*Esikolweni yemnganam'*

(Mgabhi *et al.* 2013:44)

#### **I like school**

I like school

What do you like about it my friend?

I like writing my friend

Where did you learn it my friend?

At school my friend.

There three words; *kubhala*, (writing) *kufundza* (learning) and *esikolweni* (at school) are related. Writing and learning are actions which are done at school. Therefore, the new generation is encouraged to like these good actions as they have good results, unlike the smoking discussed in the previous song. Nowadays, education is believed to be the key to success so children are encouraged to like it so that they can have beautiful futures and be good citizens. Another motivational rhyme follows:

#### 4.2.5 *Amdokwe!*

*Amdokwe!*

*Emabele,*

*Avutsiwe,*

*Ehlandzeni,*

5 *Sondzelani,*

*Sitococa,*

*Sondzelani,*

*Sitohleka.*

(Gogo Hlophe, Manzini, 2016)

#### **Amdokwe**

Amdokwe!

Food/sorghum

Is ready/has ripened

In the Lowveld

Come close

So that we can chat

Come close

So that we can laugh.

This rhyme shows the social aspect of Swazi life. Long ago Swazis loved socializing and telling stories around big fires whilst roasting mealies. This was a way of showing togetherness, unity and appreciation for one another as friends, neighbours and families. The stories educated and cautioned the young ones on the challenges of life. So *amdokwe* is a non-lexical word in siSwati but in this context it has been used to indicate an invitation. A relevant word would be *idubukele* which means that there is plenty of food so people should come and feast. Another word related to *amdokwe* is *umdokwe* (thin porridge) which is food for breakfast. *Umdokwe* is pronounced with a low tone yet *amdokwe* is high.

The second line shows that the first one is indeed an invitation. The word *emabele* has many interpretations in siSwati. Firstly, it may refer to sorghum which was cultivated by Swazis long ago but has since become scarce. Secondly, the word *emabele* could refer to maize fields and thirdly, it could refer to food itself. Thus, in this case the persona is calling out to everyone that the mealies or food is ready so everyone should come and enjoy. This implies that it is the feasting season (*ekwindla*) which normally comes after the ploughing season (*entfwasahlobo*) where maize and other delicious crops such as maize, nuts, pumpkins, ash gourds and many more ripen. Wild fruits such as guavas and berries also ripen in this season. These seasons are usually announced by two different birds. “*Phezukomkhono*” is a famous slogan chirped by the bird known as the red chested cuckoo, which announces the ploughing season around October and “*amdokwe*” is sung by another bird known as the cap tulle dove which announces the feasting season around February.

The suggestion of *ehlandzeni* (Lowveld) could also have various implications. This is the Lubombo region of Swaziland which is usually dry and not suitable for ploughing. Even if one tries to cultivate the production quantities are very little compared to the Highveld. So the indication of *ehlandzeni* (Lowveld) connotes plenty in that, if food is ready even in the drier places how much more in the Highveld? This indicates that there were plenty of rains in this particular season. Therefore, it is time to eat, drink and be merry as way of celebration. Another interpretation of the usage of the word *ehlandzeni* could be that the song might have originally been composed by people from the Lowveld region. The word *sondzelani* (come forth) suggests big numbers and connotes the spirit of brotherhood. The persona is calling upon the people to come close as in the first line of the song.

The words *sitococa* (to chat) and *sitohleka* (to laugh) also emphasizes on the unity and entertainment. Long ago story-telling and performances were the only forms of entertainment and they shaped society as a whole. This is concurred by Emenyonu (2015:2) as he states that traditionally Africans are a storytelling people as this was done for the purposes of acculturation and entertainment. So this is a happy rhyme as it has a happy subject and a light hearted tone.

In terms of form the rhyme has short punctuated lines which obviously reveal the excitement of speaker. The first line has an exclamation mark which heightens the invitation as the speaker interjects to the people. The commas indicate a flow of ideas and a mini pause for the speaker. The syllables are consistent after the first line to show the consistency and unity of the people in what they are doing. This was the Swazi way of life and it shaped the whole society. The repetition of the line *sondzalani* is for emphasis on the invitation and shows the speaker's happy tone and overall mood of the poem.

#### 4.2.6 *Ngitsi kutsi yele!*

*Ngitsi kutsi yele!*  
*Kantsi ligomba lami.*  
*Ngitsi kutsi yele!*  
*Kantsi ligomba lami.*  
 (Dlamini, 1989:35)

#### **I thought I saw something moving**

I thought I saw something moving  
 Yet it's the feather on my head.  
 I thought I saw something moving  
 Yet it's the feather on my head.

This rhyme is adapted from a folk tale known as '*Indlala lenkhulu*'. There was a famine in a certain land and the man's wife asked him to go and ask for some maize at her parental home. It is not stated why the woman sent her husband as this is a woman's duty. Probably she had a baby and was in seclusion. Had she known that the man would end up being very selfish, she would have tried other ways. However, since it is an oral narrative, there is no room for explanation. So in the story, the man came back with the maize and hid it in a forest near his home so as to sneak out to grind the maize, cook and enjoy his meal alone whilst his family was starving. Since he knew that what he was doing was wrong he was nervous all the time and started imagining things.

The ideophone *yele* in the first line denotes movement and connotes spying. Since the man has a guilty conscience he thinks someone is spying on him. So he is in constant fear of being exposed. This is because he knows that if he were to be caught he would be in serious trouble for neglecting his duties which includes providing for his family. According Simelane (2016:25) a married man's duties include, amongst others, looking after his family and making important decisions. This means he has to plough and build houses for his wife or wives and children. Therefore, society, through the actions of the man in the song is condemning selfishness amongst men.

The second line is an explanation of the man's assumption. He is relieved that the shadow he thinks he sees is actually the feather (*ligomba*) in his head. Since he is guilty he sees and hears unrealistic things. This is typical of people who are losing their minds. Thus, his act has been portrayed as one which could be done by people who are mentally unstable. As he is so consumed by his selfish and barbaric deeds he is slowly losing his mind. These are the psychological effects of instant gratification. The man does not even enjoy his food as he does everything in haste. In his eyes his actions bring satisfaction yet in reality it is madness. He has even lowered his position and status by doing women's duties (grinding and cooking) all in the name of selfishness. Eventually, he loses everything when he is caught; respect and dignity. In this way society is saying no one in his right mind should do such an act unless he or she is a lunatic or perhaps a witch.

The song is brief in terms of form but loaded. What is significant is the use of punctuation marks as well as the repetition of the lines. The exclamation mark after the ideophone *yele* exaggerates the act of sneaking and shows the persona's fear and guilt as he assumes someone is spying on him. The voice of the persona is high pitched as well to show that he is indeed afraid yet in the next line it descends to show he is relieved. The end stopped line shows the end of the man's fear and poetically it completes the thought or idea expressed in the line. The number of syllables also depicts the build-up of the man's emotions as in the first line there are six syllables and seven in the second one, to show the relief he feels, as follows:

Ngi-tsi-ku-tsi-ye-le	6
Ka-ntsi-li-go-mba-la-mi	7

**4.2.7 Ngikhale yini make?***Loholako: Ngikhale yini make?**Labavumako: Khala mntfwan'am,**Bonkhe bayakhala,**Emitini yabonina.**Loholako: Ngihleke yini make?**Labavumako: Hleka mntfwan'ami,**Bonkhe bayahleka,**Emagumeni abonina.**Loholako: Ngilale yini make?**Labavumako: Lala mntfwan'ami,**Bonkhe bayalala,**Etindlini tabonina.**Loholako: Ngidle yini make?**Labavumako: Dlani mntfwan'ami,**Bonkhe bayadla,**Emadladleni abonina.**(Dlamini, 1989:24)****Should I cry mother?***

Leader: Should I cry mother

Group: Cry my child,

They all cry,

In their mother's homes.

Leader: Should I laugh mother?

Group: Laugh my child,

They all laugh,

In their mother's enclosures.

Leader: Should I sleep mother?

Group: Sleep my child,

They all sleep

In their mother's houses.

Leader: Should I eat mother?

Group: Eat my child,

They all eat,

In their mother's kitchens.

The rhyme portrays the relationship between a mother and her child. The voice of the child in this song is feminine; therefore it shows the strong bond that exists between a mother and her daughter. Culturally, it is the woman's duty to mind the welfare of the girl child such that if she makes a mistake her mother is blamed. Likewise, the boy child is expected to be under the care and guidance of the father. If he also makes a mistake Swazis usually say, '*ushayeleye uyise tinyoni*' which means he has caused trouble for his father. This is because his father will be expected to pay for any damage he may have done. On the other hand, the girl child is expected to preserve her virginity '*ahlale ngentfombi*' because if she loses it another saying goes, '*uvule sibaya seyise*' which literally means 'she has tempered with her father's kraal'. This is so because a girl is valuable in Swazi culture as she brings home wealth in the form of *emalobolo* (bride price) when she gets married. These cows belong to her father.

The rhyme portrays a picture of a conversation between a mother and her child seated *egumeni* (the women's private place.) When the children perform it one takes the role of a mother and the rest act as the innocent child asking questions. Children are known for being inquisitive and this is evident in the song as the child keeps asking simple yet innocent questions. It is the parent's duty to always answer these questions even though culturally, asking too many questions is not encouraged. Children are always expected to listen, take orders and abide by the rules without any murmuring. However, traditionally, there were forums where children were allowed to voice out their concerns such as *egumeni*, which was the women's place and *esangweni*, the men's place. In these places both men and women would relax, mostly in the evenings, eat and share stories. Children would be cautioned and taught life skills as discussed by Matsebula (1988:199). The environment was conducive and the atmosphere relaxed for everyone. *Gogo* (grandmother) would also gather all the younger children for some story telling frequently in the evenings.

In each stanza of the song the persona mentions places which are important in the life of a child as in the Swazi home. In the first stanza the mother tells her daughter to feel free to cry as most children do so in their homes. The word home denotes place or location and connotes family, belonging, comfort, acceptance and love. Thus, the mother insinuates that the child should be free in her own home because no one will judge her; this is where she belongs. One should note that Swazis esteem belonging highly as they value the extended family. Most even worship ancestors because they believe these people are still part of their genealogy regardless of their death status. Long ago when strangers met, they would first exchange greetings then ask each other where they come from and who their relatives were, which proves that Swazis indeed value genealogy. No man is an island in Swazi culture and no one can be thought of as having no relatives at all because every person has *likubo* (one's father's family) and *likhabonina* (one's mother's family.)

The second stanza mentions another important place in the Swazi home which is *liguma* or *egumeni*. As already mentioned, this is the women's place where they would cook and do other women's duties such as making grass mats, wooden utensils and many more. As they did all these chores women would chat and teach each other (especially young girls) skills in preparation for womanhood. These, amongst others included cooking, cleaning and taking care of babies. So the mother in the song tells her child, again, to be free to laugh in the compound as it is their place. In the third stanza she tells her to be free to sleep in her mother's house and in the fourth stanza she

says the child should be free to eat in her mother's kitchen. *Eldladleni* (kitchen) was also one of the important places where women would spend a lot of time cooking and doing other chores. It is closer to *egumeni* so if it rained the women would do things in the kitchen but on hot days everything would be done *egumeni*. So in each place in the Swazi home there were different chores being done. In that way the children were educated on the importance of order and doing things at the right places.

In terms of form the song has four stanzas, which is not common in children's poetry. In each stanza the idea highlighted is being reinforced by repetition. For example, the verb *khala* is repeated three times in the first stanza and so are the rest of the stanzas where the key verb is repeated. This is for the purpose of emphasis and rhythm. The verbs also change moods as they are repeated respectively. For example, in the first stanza the verb *ngikhale* is in the indicative mood whilst *khala* is in the imperative mood. Each stanza is also punctuated in different punctuation marks such as the question mark in the first line of each stanza followed by commas and finally a full stop. The end stopped lines mark the end of each stanza so as to introduce a different idea or give the other speaker a chance to ask a new question. The caesura in the second and third lines of the stanzas is for the purpose of pause so that the speaker can breathe to give her time to introduce another idea which is related to the one already mentioned. The words *make* (mother) and *abonina* (of their mothers) are also repeated to create refrains and to show the significance of the mother.

#### 4.2.8 *Yemfati longesheya!*

<i>Yemfati longesheya</i>	<b>You woman beyond the river</b>
<i>We! We! We!</i>	You woman beyond the river
<i>Utsi bhu bhu ni na?</i>	Yes! Yes! Yes!
<i>Ngitsi bhu bhu sidvwaba</i>	What are you dusting?
5 <i>Sidvwaba yini na?</i>	I am dusting a traditional skirt
<i>Ngumgamkafeceli</i>	What is a traditional skirt?
<i>Babuleleni na?</i>	It is a scorpion breaker
<i>Babulele licaca</i>	What have they killed?
	They have killed a skunk

	<i>Walishiya kaLabani</i>	Where did they take it?
10	<i>KaLaGojagojane</i>	To LaGojagojane
	<i>Gojagojane bani?</i>	Who is Gojagojane?
	<i>Malamb'adle bulongo</i>	She who eats cow dung when hungry
	<i>Abushiyele bani?</i>	For whom would he leave some of it?
	<i>Abushiyele Shishane</i>	She would leave some for Shishane
15	<i>Shishan'akanendzaba</i>	Shishane is not to blame
	<i>Indzab'inaFolozi</i>	The blame is on Folozi
	<i>Yena atsi muhle yedvwa</i>	He who thinks he alone is handsome.
	<i>Tikhumba taMbandzeni</i>	The skins of Mbandzeni
	<i>Tigidza kaNjokeni</i>	Are knocking against each other at Njokeni's
20	<i>Titsi ngci! Ngci! Ngci!</i>	They go knock! Knack! Knack!
	(Dlamini, 1989:10)	

The song gives a visual image of two women working in the fields and calling out to each other. This is evident in the use of many exclamation marks in the first three lines. It is typical of rural women to call out to each other and chat as a way of easing boredom or fatigue. Since socializing is part of the Swazi way of life, making friends with neighbours was and is still very important. Swazis believe that connection and being part of a group is mandatory so as to know one's *libutfo* (regiment) during times of *kuhlehla* (paying allegiance to the king or chief).

This is a question and answer rhyme. The first wife asks a question and the other responds. The children also mimic the women as they recite the rhyme. They divide themselves into two groups in which there is a leader and the rest of the group. The dusting of the traditional skirt in line three and four proves that the women have been working in the fields, probably weeding and thus accumulated a lot of dust. Line five and six further explain the significance of the woman's skirt through the use of the metaphor *feceli* which depicts a visual image. *Feceli* (scorpion) is a dangerous scorpion armed with poison, so the act of breaking it portrays bravery on the part of the person concerned. This shows society's perception of a woman since her skirt is a symbol of her womanhood. A woman, especially a married one, in Swazi culture has to be strong enough to survive all forms of hardship and not break. Even a scorpion's sting which could be a polygamous

husband, a drunkard or unreasonable in laws should not shake her. This is because she is warned about this before she leaves her parental home to her matrimonial one.

The story continues in line seven as the two personas reveal the common problems women face such as polygamy. The visual and gustatory image of *licaca* (skunk) which is a metaphor depicts jealousy and rivalry amongst wives in a polygamous marriages. The killing and dumping of the skunk to a rival wife connotes witchcraft as the other wife wants her rival to smell badly so that the husband can leave her. The woman who is shamed by her co-wife is *Lagojagojane* who is a representation of women of her caliber. She is portrayed as one who eats cow dung. This act connotes laziness in Swazi culture and is thus condemned by society. Women are expected to work hard for the livelihood of their families but *Lagojagojane* fails to do that. What makes her actions worse, is that she goes further to feed her husband *Shishane* the same cowdung. This is a sign of disrespect. Women are always trained to treat their husbands as kings so *Lagojagojane* deserves to pack and go back to her parental home to be straightened out by her parents.

However, *Shishane* is also criticized for turning a blind eye in this situation as line fifteen states that *akanenzaba* (he does not care.) He has failed to take his position as a leader and provide for his family so according to Swazi culture he is a weak man. That is why he has lost respect and is even fed cow dung by his wife. Some would go as far as assuming 'udlisiwe' (he has been fed a love portion.) There is another man in the picture who claims to be the most handsome in the world, and this is *Folozu*. Such men are arrogant and feel they have all the rights to be polygamous and care less about other people's feelings. Women distaste such men.

There is also *Njokeni* who neglects his national duties. This has been portrayed through King *Mbandzeni*'s cow skins which are 'dancing' at his home. The act of the skins is personified to resemble *Njokeni*'s act of negligence, lack of ambition and laziness. The cow skins could be his traditional regalia that he wears when performing national duties. *Njokeni* is so full of himself that he does not even take time to pay allegiance to his king. *Mbandzeni* was the King of Swaziland back in the day and the ownership of the skins are given to him to show that *Njokeni* is a disrespectful man who fails to pay allegiance to his king. This is a serious offense as one of the duties of men in Swaziland is to pay tribute to the king by doing certain duties such as attending national ceremonies and weeding the king's fields, amongst others. The use of the ideophone *ngci*

exaggerates the act of the skins which is also personified. The children also demonstrate this by thumping their feet on the ground. This is as a way of emphasizing on *Njokeni's* bad actions.

Therefore, the two women personas in the rhyme are sharing these stories as friends confiding in each other. As they keep talking they reveal society's misfits as a way of exposing them, ridiculing and even judging them. The characters mentioned represent certain members of society. One should note that the ideas presented in the rhyme are not organized which is typical of the nature of children's poetry. The various punctuation marks in the rhyme constitute the form of the song and depict the emotions of the personas. The exclamation marks accompany interjections and ideophones so are the question marks that come after each question. Repetition of ideophones, interjections and words is common in the song to show that this is indeed a conversation between two people. Each question that is asked, one word in the question is repeated to reinforce that idea. This is done for the purpose of the sing song rhythm which is common in rhymes. It also shows the surprise of the speakers. One example is shown in line three and four, seven and eight below:

*Utsi **bhu bhu** na?*

*Ngitsi **bhu bhu** sidvwaba.*

What are you dusting?

I am dusting my traditional skirt

***Babulelenina?***

***Babulele** licaca.*

They have killed what?

They have killed a skunk

After each question there is also a full stop to indicate a complete thought so that another question can follow. One should also notice that the lines are run on to show the flow of the conversation.

#### 4.2.9 *Bantfwana buyan'ekhaya*

#### **Children children come home**

*Loholako: Bantfwana, bantfwana, buyan'ekhaya!* Children, children, come home!

*Labavumako: Siyesaba!*

We are afraid!

*Loholako: Nesabani?*

You are afraid of what?

*Labavumako: Ingwenya!*

A crocodile!

5 *Loholako: Izonzani?*

What will it do to you?

*Labavumako: Izosiluma!*

It will bite us!

*Loholako: In'lumelen?*

Why will it bite you?

	<i>Labavumako: Abantwabayo!</i>	For its children!
	<i>Loholako: Abanjani?</i>	What colour are they?
10	<i>Labavumako: Abamhloshana!</i>	They are whitish!
	<i>Loholako: Abanjani?</i>	What colour are they?
	<i>Labavumako: Ababovana!</i>	They are reddish!
	<i>Loholako: Asesibon'inganithathi !</i>	Let's see if it does not catch you!
	<i>Labavumako: Thatha phela!</i>	Catch us!
15	<i>Loholako: Asesibon'inganithathi</i>	Let us see if does not catch you!
	<i>Labavumako: Thatha phela!</i>	Catch us!

(Kamera, 2001:71)

This is a catch rhyme and it is recited as part of a game that is played. Usually there is a dramatization of the mother, the children and the crocodile. The children draw a line to represent a river in which the crocodile resides and the mother is calling her children on the other side of the river. Whoever is caught by the crocodile becomes one of its children and the game continues until the children become tired. So the first line sounds like a concerned mother's call upon her children who are playing on the other side of the river. She commands them to come back home. This shows the mother's role and society's expectations of her to provide safety and shield her children from harm.

Thus, mothers are expected to nature and nurture so as to raise responsible citizens. If children are scared of something as indicated by the line *siyesaba* (we are afraid) it is the mother's duty to find out what they are afraid of and why. That is why the following lines are a question and answer. The mother keeps asking what the children are afraid of and they respond by saying they are afraid of the crocodile which is about to bite them because it seems they have been playing with its babies. So the crocodile has been presented as a scary animal to children. Another version says *ingwe* (leopard) which is also a dangerous animal. The crocodile seems to be protecting its children too.

Literally, the children are being warned of such dangerous animals so that when they see them they run away hence the act of pursuing and catching. They are also cautioned to steer clear of these animal's children no matter how attractive they may look. The attractiveness is shown by the following lines:

*Abamhloshana*

*Ababovana*

Whitish ones

Reddish ones

The above lines reveal bright colors which appeal to children. These are primary colours and they show how difficult it can be for the children to avoid temptation because the crocodile's babies appeared even more beautiful through the red and white colors. Naturally, children are drawn to small objects. The song also shows the innocent and vulnerable nature of children and how they can easily be lured or wooed by just simple things as bright colors. This is also echoed by the use of the diminutive /-ana/ as in the qualitative *ababovana* and *abamhloshana* which shows children's tendency to reduce the actual size of things or words. The final lines are repeated many times as a way of provoking the 'crocodile' to chase them. This shows that the children are enjoying the game and the fact that they like repetitions.

In terms of form the rhyme has exclamation marks which depict the emotion of fear expressed by the children during the course of the game. In the first line the exclamation mark's role is to indicate the interjection as expressed by the mother's call. There is also a lot of repetition which has been made for the purpose of rhythm. In the first line the word *bantfwana* (children) has been repeated to show the immediacy of context as the children are challenged to act fast. The game itself calls for alertness and attentiveness so as to be able to run as fast as possible and away from the 'predator.'

In line two and three, five and six, nine and ten, there is a repetition of syllables in the beginning and middle. The repetition of these syllables create initial and mid rhyme as follows:

**Line 2 &3**

*Siyesaba izonenzani*

*Nesabani*

We are afraid

What are you afraid of

**line 5&6**

*abanjani*

*izosiluma*

what will it do to you

it will bite us

**line 9&10**

*abamhloshana*

what colour are they

they are whitish

The rhymes above beautify the poem, unify ideas and make the game enjoyable to the children as they keep repeating the lines.

#### 4.2.10 *Khushu khushu!*

*Khushu khushu I'm very hungry!*

*Khushu khushu I'm very hungry!*

*Sitawudlani ngelisonfo?*

*Is'tambu nenyama*

5 *Ngemsombulukoko ke?*

*Amathamb'ay'zolo.*

(Miss C. Mkhathjwa, Mbabane, 2016)

#### **Oh oh I'm very hungry!**

Oh oh I'm very hungry!

Oh oh I'm very hungry!

What shall we eat on Sunday?

Samp and meat

What about on Monday?

Leftovers.

This is a modern rhyme which was composed post colonially. This is indicated by the mixture of both English and Siswati which shows that the children playing the game have had an opportunity to attend school. The word *khushu* is an ideophone and it has been repeated to mimic the action made by the children as they dance to the song. They move their bums and shoulders in a rhythmic fashion to show that they are enjoying the dance. They also rub their stomachs to demonstrate their hunger which is somehow exaggerated by the adverb 'very'. At the start of the game two of the children hold their hands up to make some form of a bridge and all the children go under it as they sing. One will be caught unawares and pulled aside to be asked to choose between two types of food and when he or she does, he or she stands behind one of the two children who represent that type of food until each one has a team. Then the game continues.

The following question: '*sitawudlani ngeLisonfo?*' (What shall we eat on Sunday?), draws attention to the special day, which is Sunday. Sunday is popular amongst religious, educated and civilized folks because it is a day of rest. Thus, many people make it a day of celebration and prepare scrumptious meals. That is explained by the line '*istambu nenyama*' which means samp and meat. Samp and meat are food for special occasions. Long ago Swazis would grind maize using *litje lekusila* (grinding stone) or *umkhobolo* (big wooden container for crushing maize and nuts) to make samp, mealie rice and mealie meal. The final line shows that this is indeed a happy

song as most children enjoy leftovers, especially if the food was really nice. That is why the children dance at the final line as follows:

*Amathamb'ayizolo*

Leftovers

The above line invokes a visual and auditory image through the act of biting bones as indicated by the word *amathambo* (bones.) This clearly shows that meat is enjoyed by young and old, civilized and non-civilized. This is actually true in Swazi culture as meat forms a central part of every occasion whether major or minor. Bulls, goats and chickens are always slaughtered depending on the importance of the occasion and number of people expected. The more meat available, the merrier and the more praise the host gets which makes him happy.

The form of the rhyme constitutes a regular pattern of syllables which makes beautiful rhyming. The first three lines have nine syllables and the last three have six syllables as shown below:

Khu-shu khu-shu, I'm-ve-ry-hu-ngry 9

A-ma-tha-mbay-zo-lo 6

The exclamation marks also stress the idea of hunger and emotions associated with it. Hunger is an uncomfortable feeling which makes one restless, that is why the children demonstrate it in their performance as they do not like it too.

After the formation of the two teams a new game starts. The children draw a line and the two teams face each other singing the following song:

*Simthumil'umuntu wethu*

We have sent our person

*Muntu wethu muntu wethu*

Our person our person

*Simthumil'umuntu wethu namhla nje*

We have sent our person today

*Nizofun'ubani lo bani lo bani lo*

Who do want who do you want

*Nizofun'ubani lo namhla nje*

Who do you want today

*Sizofun'u.....(libito lemuntfu)*

We want....(name of person)

*Nimthumel'ubani lo bani lo bani lo*

Who do you send who do you send

*Nimthume'lubani lo namhla nje*

Who do you send today

*Simthumel'u.....(libito lemuntfu)*

We are sending....(name of person)

<i>Hamba kahle</i> pretty girl pretty girl	Go well pretty girl pretty girl
<i>Hamba kahle</i> pretty girl <i>namhla nje</i>	Go well pretty girl today
<i>Ubuye nayo inyama yethu enomsoco</i>	Come back with our delicious meat
<i>Mbo mbo mbo.</i>	Topple!Topple! Topple!

Thereafter, the two people chosen in each group face each other. They start by exchanging greetings saying ‘*sawubona fish!*’ and the other responds saying, ‘*yebo fish!*’ Then they start pulling each other until one of them is overcome and joins either group.

There is a latest modified version of the above song and it is as follows:

#### 4.2.11 Mncwa! Mncwa!

*Loholako: Mncwa! mncwa!*  
*Labavumako: Kumnandzi bo!*  
*Loholako: Sitawudlani ngeliSontfo?*  
*Labavumako: Kumnandzi kumnandzi!*  
 5 *Loholako: NgeMsombuluko ke?*  
*Labavumako: Liphalishi nembhidvo*  
*Loholako: NgaLesibili ke?*  
*Labavumako: Emasi neluphutfu*  
*Loholako: NgaLesitsatfu ke?*  
 10 *Labavumako: Lifutfo nencheke*  
*Loholako: NgaLesine ke?*  
*Labavumako: Sinats’emahewu*  
*Loholako: NgaLesihlanu ke?*  
*Labavumako: Umbhonyo nemaselwa*  
 15 *Loholako: NgeMgcibelo ke?*  
*Labavumako: Sitambu nenyama*  
 (Mgabhi, 2013:45)

#### Kiss! Kiss!

Leader: Kiss! Kiss!  
 Group: It is nice indeed!  
 Leader: What shall we eat on Sunday?  
 Group: It is nice it is nice!  
 Leader: On Monday then?  
 Group: Porridge and vegetables  
 Leader: On Tuesday then?  
 Group: Sour milk and dry porridge  
 Leader: On Wednesday then?  
 Group: Mealies and pumpkin  
 Leader: On Thursday then?  
 Group: We drink sour thin porridge  
 Leader: On Friday then?  
 Group: Beans/peanuts and ash gourds  
 Leader: On Saturday then?  
 Group: Samp and meat.

The above new rhyme educates children on the days of the week in their mother language, as well as traditional dishes which most parents and children shun nowadays. The rhyme is playful which

is indicated by the opening line. *Mncwa* is an ideophone mimicking the action of kissing since most children like to be kissed. The traditional dishes mentioned in the poem are delicious as suggested by the word *kumnandzi* but they have since become scarce in the urban areas as most people do not cultivate due to land shortages and modern lifestyles. Since most children like junk food nowadays they are thus encouraged to eat these nutritious and scrumptious traditional meals which are beneficial to their health. The foods are also balanced and spread out throughout the week so there is no repetition. The child can also get various nutrients that can help in common sicknesses such as stomach cramps, spastic colon and the various allergies which include eczema, asthma and sinusitis. It is interesting to note that the common food (samp and meat) which is liked by many people is mentioned last. This is because this type of food is popular and therefore not encouraged to be eaten daily as most town people do. Nowadays urban people like to eat meat everyday because they can afford to buy it yet it has been proven to cause illnesses such as gout, kidney stones, cancer, and it promotes weight gain.

#### 4.2.12 *Emang'a lo!*

*Emang'a lo!*

*Atekela lo, lo!*

*Sigubhu nasi!*

*Sigubhu nasi nasi!*

5 *Imfene nayi nayi!*

(Kamera, 2001:70)

#### **This one's lies!**

This one's lies!

Have moved on to this one, this one!

Here is the source!

Here is the source!

Here is the monkey!

This is one of the rhymes that were composed to reprimand children from telling lies. It shows just how quickly lies can move from one person to the next. The demonstrative pronoun 'lo' which has been repeated emphasizes the quick spread of lies. The first one points at the first liar followed by another and another. *Kutekela* is to tell someone a story which is exactly how lies or gossip spreads. As the children tell each other stories they keep lying until a chain is developed. The image of *sigubhu* which is a metaphor depicts a source of something. *Sigubhu* is a large enclosed container used to carry water and other liquids. Since this container makes it difficult for liquids

to spill, it has been used in this context to show the first liar as a very influential person and very dangerous because he or she is the source.

The image of *imfene* (monkey) in the poem depicts cunning behavior. It is typical of liars to be full of woe so is the monkey. The monkey is a cultural symbol as it has superstitious connotations. Firstly, Swazis believe that it is a clever animal that is why even witches domesticate it. There is a common proverb that says “*imfene ayilulahli lukhobo lwayo*” which means that it is not easy for a person to just change his or her weird behavior. So it shows that Swazis observed the behavior of a monkey and thus concluded that it is a clever yet stupid animal. This is indicated by another saying which is associated with people who fail to cover their lies, so they are assumed to be covering their eyes with a leaf yet the body is visible just like a monkey; *ubhaca ngelicembe njengemfene*. Therefore, children typically think they are smarter when they lie yet adults quickly spot them.

What is prevalent in the form of the song is the abundance of initial linking and end rhyme. This has been achieved through the repetition of words. The words are repeated vertically to achieve the above poetic devices and horizontally for emphasis. The lines are as follows:

**Line 1 and 2**

*Emang'a lo*

*Atekela lo, lo*

This one's lies

Has told this one, here

**line 3 and 4**

*sigubhu nasi*

*sigubhu nasi, nasi*

the source is here

the source is here, here

**line 3 and 4**

*sigubhu nasi*

*sigubhu nasi, nasi*

evidence is here

the source is here, here

The repetition of the synonyms in line one and two above creates end rhyming and consistent rhythm, yet in line three and four it creates initial and end linking.

**4.2.13 Nabaya bomake**

*Nabaya bomake*

*Batfwel'imitfwalo.*

*Nabaya bomake*

**There come our mothers**

There come our mothers

Carrying loads on their heads.

There are our mothers

<i>Batfwel'imitfwalo.</i>	Carrying loads on their heads
<i>Nci nci bo! Nci nci bo!</i>	Oh yeah! Oh yeah!
(Kamera, 2001:72)	

The above song depicts the image of the mother and her role in society. The child in the song is happy to see her mother from afar. The demonstrative pronoun, '*nabaya*' suggests distance and reveals that there are many children in the song. They could be playing and thus recognizing their mothers as they are coming home. A mother coming home raises excitement and expectancy amongst children. This depicts a mother as a provider and giver of life. Mothers also know that wherever they are they have to bring home goodies for their children because from birth they have been providing nourishment for their babies through breast milk.

The visual image of *imitfwalo* (load) raises the expectancy and excitement of the children and indeed shows the mothers have been fending for them. The load acts a symbol of sustenance and it could be firewood, maize or any other food stuffs. The exclamation '*nci nci bo!*' in the last line shows the children's expectancy for good things and appreciation of the mother as a provider of such things. This exclamation accompanies an act of dancing to show the happy mood of the children. A happy child also connotes a happy family as a happy child shows he is well taken care of by her parents. Thus, a happy child growing up will mean a nation will stand as he will also take care of his own family one day.

The form of the song consists of a regular pattern of syllables in each line, which forms the rhythm that matches the performance made by the children. The syllables are broken down below:

Na-ba-ya bo-ma-ke	6
Ba-tfwe-l'i-mi-tfwa-lo	6
Nci-nci-bo nci-nci-bo	6

The vowel deletion in line two and four has been done for the success of the rhythm.

The above song is similar to the short one below:

<i>Nang'make</i>	Here is my mother
<i>Nce nce nce!</i>	Yes yes yes!
<i>Nang'make</i>	Here is my mother

*Nce nce nce!*

Yes yes yes!

The above song consists of two lines which are repeated several times by children as they run to meet their mothers when they have been away for some time. It shows the excitement and relief of the child that the mother has finally arrived after missing her for some time. It is also a demonstration of pride and display of happiness on the part of the child, which eventually worms on to the mother who feels good to be esteemed and appreciated publicly. The ideophone *nce* is from the word *incence* which refers to breast milk which is a favourite to most babies. However, even grown up children can sing the song, so in that context *incence* can be anything delicious the mother has brought for her children such as sweets.

**4.2.14 *Woza wemvula!***

*Woza wemvula, uzosichela we!*  
*Amathonsi abandayo mpo!*  
*Siyakuthanda thina bantwanyana.*  
*Uma sidlala ucabhayiyana*  
 5 *Co! Co! Ucabhayiyana*  
*Iph'ingane yakho?*  
*Imuke nomfula*  
*Ugol'amadiya*  
*Khon'emhoshini*  
 10 *Wo! Imvula yaze yasilaya!*  
 (Kamera, 2001:72)

**Come rain!**

Come rain, to wash us yeah!  
 Very cold raindrops!  
 We small children love you.  
 When we play out in the rain  
 Splash! Splash! In the rain  
 Where is your child?  
 It was swept by the river  
 That overflowed its banks  
 Down the valley  
 Oh! The rain has betrayed us!

The above rhyme portrays children's preferences. Most children like to play in the rain even though their mothers get worried that they would catch a cold. So in the song the children express their longing for rain probably because it has been a while since it last came. The longing is indicated by the personified line, "*woza wemvula we*" (come rain yes!) as if the rain can hear and respond. The exclamation '*we!*' is commonly used by children as they dialogue amongst themselves. When

they call each other they usually respond by saying ‘*we!*’ However, if one is called by an adult he or she responds respectfully and says, ‘*Ma!*’(Mother) or ‘*Ba!*’ (Father).

The word *kuchela* in the first line reveals the belief systems in Swazi traditional society. *Kuchela* is an act of sprinkling holy water around the homestead as a way of casting away evil spirits. This is done by elders at night or when it is thundering. They can use sea or pure water which can be mixed with herbs, *shibhoshi* (jeyes fluid) or anything the family believes in. The children also highlight that they are longing for the raindrops to be sprinkled on their bodies. This implies that it has indeed been hot for a long time and their bodies are now dirty so they need purification from the rain. The ideophone *mpo* intensifies the adjective *abandayo* (cold) next to it. Thus, the children miss the cold raindrops.

The children stress again in line three and four that they like the rain as they enjoy playing outside in it. One should note the use of the diminutive /-ana/ in line three to five below:

*Siyakuthanda thina bantwanyana*

*Uma sidlala ucabhayiyana*

*Co! Co! Co! Ucabhayiyana*

We love you us young children

When playing in the rain

Splash! Splash! Splash! In the rain

The diminutive above shows the way children speak as they tend to reduce the size of things. This goes back to the way they are groomed as their parents tend to do that to them when they are younger. It is a way of showing love and affection by going down to their level. The diminutives also serve as end rhyme which beautifies the poem. The ideophones *co co* imitate the sounds of a frog (sicoco) as it was named. That is how the children play in the rain like frogs. The unfamiliar word *ucabhayiyane* refers to the game they play which is popularly known as *cabhocabhozi*. This game is played naked and the children run around noisily, their feet making splash sounds in the water.

The happy tone, mood and rhythm of the poem changes immediately, in line six to nine. The tone becomes sad and the rhythm gets fast as the subject also gets serious. The children start to talk about the disadvantages of rain one of which is flooding. This causes people to drown and in this

case the innocent life of a child was lost. In line six it is like the children are asking a woman where her child is and then elaborate that it drowned, due to the river that overflowed its banks.

If a river is over flooded Swazis usually say “*umfula ugola tintsetse*” which literally means the river is catching grasshoppers because the water has occupied space which it never did before. The children have twisted this expression as indicated in line eight. They have substituted the word *tintsetse* with *emadziya* which are synonyms. *Emadziya* are still grasshoppers but of a certain type. These are faster than most grasshoppers so in a way the flooding of the river has been exaggerated to create a visual picture of how bad the floods are. The final line is a sad exclamation of the bad effects of rain. The children lament the loss of the child. They feel sad about the situation that is why they say “...*yaze yasilaya imvula.*” (The rain has betrayed or defeated us.) The personification of the rain serves to heighten its effects and reveal the emotions of the children. The song is society’s way of cautioning parents and children about the dangers of floods due to heavy rainfall.

As with everything in life, there are advantages and disadvantages so the children should play with caution in the rain lest they end up drowning because water is unpredictable. Their parents should be vigilant too.

What features in the form the song is the use of exclamation marks which show the emotions of the children. In the first two lines it shows the longing for the rain. In line five the exclamation marks intensify the ideophones that imitate the sound made by frogs and the children as they dance naked and barefooted in the rain. In the last line the exclamation marks show the disappointment and sadness of the children due to the effects of the rain which produced floods that swept a child away. The fast rhythm indicates a fast pace, tension and surprise. These depict the immediacy of context as a result of the sudden occurrence. One could also sense the nervousness of the children. The syllables get shorter from line six to the end and the rhythm quickens to show the unpredictable nature of floods and how quickly the child was whisked away by them.

#### 4.2.15 *Sibadze siyakhula*

*Sibadze*

*Siyakhula*

*Sibadze*

**We are tall**

We are tall

We are growing

We are tall

	<i>Siyakhula</i>	We are growing
5	<i>Sibafishane</i>	We are short
	<i>Sibotikoloshi</i>	We are tokoloshis
	<i>Sibafishane</i>	We are short
	<i>Sibotikoloshi.</i>	We are tokoloshis.
	(Vilakati, 1997:41)	

This is one of the happy rhymes for children with no serious subject matter. It demonstrates the desired wish for most children, which is to grow up and be tall like their parents. Children always view their parents as giants and they aspire to be like them because they believe if one is tall he or she can do anything and even reach places they as children cannot. Even their parents and grandparents always encourage them to eat so that they could grow. The repetition of the first two lines depicts the longing well. However, the dislike of being short is portrayed through the use of the strong visual image which features as a metaphor in line six, as follows:

*Sibafishane*  
*Sibotikoloshi*  
 We are short  
 We are tokoloshis

A *tokoloshi* is a superstitious, short creature commonly known in African societies. It is associated with witchcraft as it is usually seen at night. Most Swazis believe that if one sees such terrestrial beings, bad luck shall befall him or her. Therefore, the image depicts the strong emotion of hatred the children have towards being short. This is because, despite the fact that young children cannot do certain things for themselves, growing up with elder siblings is no fun. Older children tend to tease, despise and mock the young ones because they are weaker. Older children can even order the young ones around and give them duties that are supposed to be done by them. That is why every young child in the home dreams of becoming older so that one day they can stand up for themselves.

As children perform the rhyme they demonstrate their growth by elongating themselves in a bid to look taller. They may even jump or climb anything close by. However, when they get to line five they then crouch to look short. This is the part they do not really like which is explained by the use

of the negative visual image. According to Dlamini *et al.* (2006:102) the form of the song is characterized by light rhythm due to repetition. The rhythm matches the actions of the children which makes the song enjoyable. The run on lines indicate the continuation of growth and the short lines show the emotions of the children with regard to the subject of growing up.

#### 4.2.16 *YenaboThoko!*

*YenaboThoko!*  
*Azike!*  
*Aw'geze l'bhodo*  
*Azike!*  
 5 *Stophek'inyama*  
*Azike!*  
*Neliphalishi*  
*Azike!*  
*Ujuje njani?*  
 10 *Azike!*  
*Linetigadla*  
*Azike! Azike! Azike!*  
 (Vilakati, *et al.* 1997:41)

#### Hey Thoko's mother!

Hey Thoko's mother!  
 Azike!  
 Wash the pot  
 Azike!  
 So that we can cook meat  
 Azike!  
 And porridge  
 Azike!  
 How did you mix it?  
 Azike!  
 It is lumpy  
 Azike! Azike! Azike!

The rhyme sounds like a conversation between a mother in law and her daughter in law. However, it is interesting to note that the daughter in law's voice is silent. The mother is giving her daughter in law some instructions as per custom. Culturally, when a woman gets married she is given a lot of advice on how to conduct herself in her marital home. Some of the advice she receives includes respecting her mother in law and doing everything she says without complaining. It is common practice to address a daughter in law using her first born child's name as indicated in the poem. The prefix /Nabo-/ which means 'mother of' is joined with the child's name. If the married woman has no child she is called by her father's surname and the prefix /La-/ is used as in, for example, *LaShongwe*.

Thus, in this poem the mother in law is heard calling out to her daughter in law as she exclaims, 'ye' but instead of responding and saying 'ma' (mother) the daughter in law says 'azike' which has no meaning at all. This shows the playful nature of children's poetry and the abundance of non-lexical words. It may also be interpreted as showing disrespect on the part of the daughter in law as the word may suggest that she is silent. Silence in this case can be associated with a bad attitude. As a result the mother in law is losing patience with her because it seems she needs to be constantly reminded of her duties. This is not acceptable at all according to Swazi custom. Thus, it is obvious that the *makoti* (bride) in question is lazy or she was not trained well in her mother's house. In that case she is not fit for marriage. This is evident in that she has failed to cook porridge properly as a result *linetigadla* (it has lumps).

It must be noted that porridge is a simple kind of food to prepare yet very important in the life of Swazis as it is the staple food and if a woman fails to cook it, how much more complicated dishes such as the meat that the mother in law also talks about in the poem. Meat is also valuable in Swazi culture as it forms part of every occasion so it is indeed shameful that the *makoti* (bride) has failed to cook such delicious food for her mother in law. This will disappoint her mother in law and even spoil their relationship. Once the relationship is spoiled then there is no future for the young bride as her welfare largely depends on the respect she will earn from her in laws which is closely linked to her conduct.

Dlamini *et al.* (2006:208) explains that traditionally, as a girl child grew up her character was shaped through education on how to conduct herself. She was also taught a lot of things that involved women and girls '*esibuyeni nasemagumeni*' (separate women enclosures or windbreakers in traditional Swazi homes). Some of the duties she was trained on included washing dishes and pots, cooking, cleaning, handiwork and looking after children. As she grew up she was given even more duties until she got married. Thus, it is surprising that the one portrayed in the rhyme cannot even cook. This is a shameful thing to her and her parents and society is sending a message to all parents that they should review the way they raise their daughters as it looks like those ideals that were instilled back in the day are slowly losing their significance. This is what actually happens nowadays. Some girls are not well trained on women's duties because their parents hire maids to do all these things for them, as a result they grow up to be irresponsible. Some fail to even cook

for their children and husbands and probably this is one of the many reasons why the divorce rate has increased in Swaziland.

In terms of form, the poem has a consistent number of syllables. The lines alternate in five and three syllables systematically for the purpose of rhythm. Some vowels have been deleted to regulate the pattern. The short lines show the characters' emotions. The mother in law seems to be losing patience with her daughter in law who needs to be constantly reminded of her duties yet on the other hand, the daughter in law continues to be adamant. The repetition of the final line is for the enjoyment of the song as the children dance continuously until they get tired.

#### 4.2.17 *Utsandza bani?*

	<i>Utsandza bani-utsandza bani?</i>	Who do you love-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza gogo-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love grandmother-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza mkhulu-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love grandfather-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza make-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love mother-who do you love?
5	<i>Utsandza babe-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love father-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza sisi-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love sister-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza bhuti-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love brother-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza anti-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love aunt-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza malume-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love uncle-who do you love?
10	<i>Utsandza mzala-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love cousin-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandzainja-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love the dog-who do you love?
	<i>Utsandza kati-utsandza bani?</i>	Do you love the cat-who do you love?

(Kamera, 2001:72)

This game beautifies the value of the extended family in Swazi traditional society. It highlights the different family members and their importance in the life of a child. It is different from the common question and answer rhymes in that it has rhetoric questions. It is like the children are asking each other who they love most and thereafter state each family member. The reason for the absence of the response could be that each family member is significant and has a role to play in the life of the Swazi child so it is difficult for him or her to choose just one.

This is true in that Swazis believe that a child cannot be raised by one person but a community. This shows that before the interruption of modernity a child was everyone's responsibility not just her parents'. That is why back in the day it was instilled amongst all children that they ought to respect all adults regardless of whether they are related or not. Every adult also had a right to discipline any child who misbehaved in front of him or her and there were no questions asked.

It is interesting to note that the language used in the rhyme is the common language used mostly by youngsters nowadays. This is indicated by the borrowed words such as *anti*, *sisi bhuti*. The original Siswati words are *babekati* (aunt), *dzadzewetfu* (sister) and *umnaketfu* (brother). The words show that the rhyme is modern and could have been composed during the post colonial era. The portrayal of animals in the poem shows that Swazis like to domesticate such animals as cats and dogs. It also shows the light hearted tone of children's poetry as the persona starts to mock her peers by mentioning animals instead of people. This act can also be interpreted in that the person speaking must have run out of names to mention so he decides to be funny.

Looking at the way the names of the people have been stated in the poem, it shows order and children's preferences. In the Swazi home the most important and influential person is *gogo* (grandmother) and she has been mentioned first followed by the rest of the family members. *Gogo* is usually preferred over *mkhulu* (grandfather) because of her role. Swazis believe that "*likhaya lelite gogo lifile*" which means that a home without a grandmother cannot stand. According to Dlamini et al. (2006: 197) the duties of *gogo* are many. They include amongst others, educating and training young brides on how to conduct themselves and the duties they have to do. She also takes care of her grandchildren in any possible way from birth to adulthood. She sleeps with the young ones and that is why they grow fond of her. She also knows all the customs, family practices and beliefs and instills them on every family member. She assumes all the powers on the death of *mkhulu* (grandfather) but if he is still alive she liaises with him on many issues.

*Mkhulu* (grandfather) on the other hand, is the leader and protector of the home. He is the authoritarian, decision maker, role player and his word is final. He also trains all the males in the home just like *gogo* (grandmother) trains the women. *Make* (mother) is also stated before *babe* (father) to show that children are closer to the females than the males as it is known that females are maternal. *Make* is also very important in the life of a child as throughout the poems especially the lullabies, she features. A child's life is nothing without the mother that is why Swazis believe

that “*intsandzane lenhle ngumakhotfwa ngunina*” which means that an orphaned child who has a mother is better than the one who has no mother. The father’s role is similar to the grandfather’s as they are leaders, protectors, guiders and disciplinarians. However, the father is always beneath the grandfather until he (grandfather) dies.

Sisters are also caring like the mothers since they assume the mother’s role when she is away. That is why they are also mentioned before brothers. Sisters take care of their siblings as they are also trained by their mothers and grandmothers to be maternal too. Aunts, according to Dlamini *et al.* (2006:200) have various roles in the home too. They have to *teka* (do the processes of the first stage of a traditional wedding) and welcome their sisters in law into the home. If their brothers die they perform rituals such as cutting the hair of the widow(s). They are a link between the family members and if there is a misunderstanding they come to bring peace.

However, aunts are not supposed to stay unmarried for long as they are known to cause chaos and family feuds. Uncles are also important in the life of a child. In Swazi culture uncles are one’s mother’s brothers not one’s father’s brothers, as the latter are always regarded as one’s fathers. Uncles assume the role of the father in one’s life if one’s father dies, just like the father’s brothers. This is because Swazis believe that a child has two homes; his mother’s family and his father’s family. Cousins are from the uncle’s side only since all children from the father’s side of the family are regarded as brothers and sisters.

Therefore, the above rhyme shows just how closely knit Swazi families were before the interruption of civilization. A child had so much love, appreciation and support from all his relatives unlike nowadays where a child is the burden of the biological parents only. A lot of children are suffering nowadays because of the breaking up of the original family structure. People now fend for themselves and their children because times have changed. Raising a child is now costly as it involves money for food, clothes, shelter and school. Thus, relatives no longer want the burden of raising other people’s children.

The tone of the poem is happy and consistent throughout. The voice of an innocent child is also heard and through this voice society laments the death of the traditional way of life which benefited children immensely. The question marks in the poem are a sign that these are rhetoric questions

which need no answers, as all the family members mentioned are important and need not be compared since each has one has a role to play.

#### 4.2.18 *Ungubani wena?*

*Ungubani wena?*

*Ungubani wena?*

*Angisiye wena*

*Ngingu...*

5 *Waka...*

*Esigodzini sase...*

*Ungubani wena?*

(Dlamini *et al.* 2006:104)

#### Who are you?

Who are you?

Who are you?

I am not you

I am...

Surname...

From the village of...

Who are you?

The children play this game by forming a big circle and one of them gets to the centre and states his or her name proudly then goes back to the circle. Another one does the same until each and every one of them has had a chance of introducing him or herself. In schools, this can be an interesting way of introduction, especially in a new class as this game eases tension and makes all the children feel special. It also builds their confidence which is also crucial in learning.

The diction of the rhyme is unique as the first speaker asks “who are you?” and the other responds “I am not ‘you’ but I have a name and surname and I come from a particular place”. The emphasis on the second ‘you’ shows the speaker’s pride in that he or she is not just ‘anybody’ but someone valuable. This also shows the value Swazis place in identity. It is important that one knows who he or she is and where he or she originates from for the sake of self worth and esteem. Genealogy is also significant in the way of life of the Swazi people that is why most worship ancestors because according to them those people are not dead but still part of their lives. Knowing one’s lineage is an indication that one cares for his or her family values and this gives the person one is talking to the impression that he or she is a person that can be trusted and easily traced. To men lineage brings a sense of pride and earns them respect which can even score them some points amongst the women they court.

The word *esigodzini* (the village of) also shows belonging and connotes submission. If one comes from a rural community it shows he or she submits under a chief who gives commands. The individual pays allegiance to the chief and humbles him or herself. This means the individual performs duties known as *kuhlehla* which involves weeding the chief's fields, mending his kraals, thatching houses and many other duties. People in rural communities are also expected to live in harmony with their neighbours and failure to do so can result in expulsion.

The formal structure of the poem constitutes repetition of lines and words as in the first two lines. This is for the purpose of emphasis and enjoyment of the song. The repetition creates initial and end linking and unifies the lines. The question marks raise anticipation and expectancy on the audience as they wait eagerly for the grand introduction of each of their peers. The contrast of the words *ungubani* (who are you?) and *angisiye* (I am not so and so) in the first and second lines also raises excitement and is pleasing to the ear. The dots indicate continuation of the introduction from different speakers.

#### 4.2.19 *Bhelebane bhelebane!*

*Bhelebane bhelebane*  
*Inkunz'endala*  
*Ayiboshwa ngentambo*  
*Iboshwa ngendilimo*  
 5 *Esibayeni sakaBhova*  
*Mangetse uyagula*  
*Unelikhubalo*  
*Bambuta phansi, bambut'etulu.*  
 (Dlamini *et al.* 2006:103)

#### **Bhelebane bhelebane!**

Bhelebane bhelebane  
 An old bull  
 Cannot be tied with a rope  
 It is tied with a twisted leather rope  
 At the kraal of Bhova  
 Mangetse is sick  
 He has a sexually transmitted disease  
 He is very very sick.

This is another playful rhyme recited by children as they play and while away time. The children form a circle and use their hands as they play. They lock their fingers together and beat their palms three times after reciting each line to produce an interesting click sound. However, the rhyme has a deep subject matter which is way beyond the children's level of understanding. The name *bhelebane* is usually given to bulls. Line two to five talk about an old bull that cannot be tied down

with just any rope but a very strong one. *Inkunzi* is a bull that is troublesome because it has not been castrated like *inkhabi* (bull used when ploughing.) So since *inkunzi* is an aggressive bull it needs *indilimo* to be tied down with. *Indilimo* is a thick rope made of cow skin so it is very strong. It is common practice in Swazi rural life that if a cow is troublesome it is disciplined just like a person. It can be beaten using *siswebhu* (sjambok with thin leather rope) or just tied for a few hours to cool off.

The kraal of *Bhova* is depicted sarcastically because *bhova* is a bulldog which is ruthless yet here it is a person's name. This means that the person was named after his actions, which is common in Swazi culture. Therefore, at *Bhova's* kraal there is a troublesome bull and one wonders what will become of the situation as both *Bhova* and his bull are temperamental. This brings in another saying that if a child or domestic animal misbehaves Swazis usually say 'ufute' or 'ifute uyise' (he or she resembles his or her father) or (the animal is behaving like its owner.)

The mood of the poem changes in line six as another character, known as Mangetse, is introduced. He is said to be sick with *likhubalo*. Mangetse is a male figure and the name also refers to clan praises for the Zwane people. *Likhubalo* is a sexually transmitted disease which was very common back in the day. It was contracted by cheating people. It was perceived to be a man made disease in that any married person (usually men) who suspected his partner to be cheating, would go to a witch doctor and get *muti* (special medicine) to cast a spell on his wife that if she slept with any man other than her husband that man would die at daybreak. This was a harsh punishment and each member of society would fear crossing such boundaries. The final line *bambuta phansi bambut'etulu* confirms how deadly the disease was as the line refers to someone who is very sick and can die any time. Literally, the expression means someone can be buried and go to heaven soon. The line can be repeated several times for enjoyment and the children change their performances by dancing up and down rhythmically. The rhythm is fast in the last line to show the urgency of the matter.

In summation, the subject of the poem is cheating and the consequences thereof. It reveals societal values and norms in that, evil intentions have bad results. In a way society is saying people should exercise self control and never overstep other people's boundaries because they will pay dearly. The names of the men mentioned in the rhyme have been used figuratively to refer to any man who cheats. The troublesome bull (*inkunz'endala*) mentioned in the beginning is a metaphor for

or any man like Mangetse, whose name has been used symbolically to represent men of his calibre. These are men who cannot exercise control but lust after other men's wives. So according to society, such men deserve to be 'tied down' with strong ropes like bulls.

The ropes symbolize any form of tight leash or punishment such as witchcraft (as indicated by *likhubalo*) which can be performed by men like *Bhova* who are jealous or over protective of their wives. *Bhova* symbolizes cruel men who could do anything just to protect their own. *Sibaya* (kraal) symbolizes a woman's private parts as it is commonly known that if a girl loses her virginity then it means "*uvule sibaya seyise*" (she has tempered with her father's kraal.) This is because a woman's chastity is worth more in terms of *lobola* when she gets married. So her conduct depicts the respect she has for her father and if married, her husband.

The poem's form is characterized by the repetition of syllables, words and sounds. The word *bhelebane* is repeated in the first line for emphasis and enjoyment. In line three and four the verb *bopha* which has a voiceless bilabial /-ph-/ that has changed to a palatal /-shw-/ due to the influence of the passive extension, is also repeated to create initial linking as follows:

*Ayiboshwa ngentambo*

*Iboshwa ngendilimo*

It is not tied with a rope

It is tied with a leather rope

The verb in the first line is negative and the second one positive to stress the action of *kubopha* (to tie). There is also a contrast of the nouns *intsambo* and *indilimo* to show the strength, type and size of the ropes. It also shows how troublesome the bull is. There is a relationship between the sounds /nt/ and /nd/ which are both palatals so is the bilabial /m/ and the vowel /o/ which feature in both lines. This presents pleasing echoes of what has been previously said as a result of the mid and end rhyming. One can conclude that most of the consonants in the poem are hard and pronounced with stress to indicate the seriousness of the subject matter and the urgency of the whole situation. This is indicated by the sounds *bh, n, nk, nz, nd, nt, nd, mb, ng, g*. The last line is an exception though, as it has a different rhythm altogether.

**4.2.20 Mbombela**

*Mbombela,*  
*Mbombela westimela,*  
*Mbombela,*  
*Mbombela westimela,*  
5 *Wo, jaz' lam' lesiliva,*  
*Ngal'tsenga ngemali,*  
*Jaz' lam' lesiliva*  
*Ngal'tsenga ngemali.*  
(Dlamini *et al.*2006:99)

**Mbombela**

Mbombela  
Go on train,  
Mbombela,  
Go on train,  
Oh, my court of silver,  
Which I bought with money  
My court of silver  
Which I bought with money.

This is a game played by using pebbles or medium sized stones. The children form a big circle and kneel down, holding stones on their hands. As they sing the first two lines of the song they hit the stones on the ground simultaneously, but when they start singing the third line they rotate the stones until they get tired. This is to imitate the moving train they are singing about. The word *Mbombela* refers to a stadium in Nelspruit, South Africa. It has no grammatical meaning in siSwati but in this case it connotes a moving commuter train which travels long distances, from station to station without fail. It sounds like the persona in the train is tired and is longing to get home and show his family the silver coat he has just bought. He sounds impatient because the train is slow yet he has been on the road for quite some time.

Long ago trains used coal as fuel that is why they were slow but they were a popular mode of transport, especially in South Africa, since many black people could not afford cars. There were commuter and cargo trains. According to Bhebe *et al.* (1981:11) during the mining revolution in the eighteenth century, in South Africa, railway lines were built from Capetown, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban and Kimberly to transport goods to and from the mines. They also state that during this time there was an increase in the demand for labour and labourers were recruited from countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In Swaziland these labourers were called *emagayiza* and were perceived as rich because they would come home occasionally, with a lot of money and luxurious things.

Therefore the lines, '*jazi lam' lesiliva, ngalitsenga ngemali*' (my silver coat, I bought with money) connotes wealth. Silver and money symbolize riches and luxury living. If something is expensive Swazis usually say "*ngiyitsenge ngemali leshisiwe*" which literally means "I bought it with ironed money" and thus suggests that something was expensive. This was the black man's dream during this era; to afford to buy beautiful things for himself and his family out of his wage. That is why it is stressed in the final line that the persona exchanged cash when he bought his coat. The hyperbole in the line '*jaz'lam'lesiliva*' (my silver coat) serves to create a visual picture of the value of the coat and how much the owner appreciates it. This implies that he has indeed worked very hard to acquire this precious item because, the working conditions were not always favourable in the mines. The labourers would dig all day long and sometimes the floor would collapse, resulting in the loss of lives. The above lines also depict the way people were attaching so much value in money and buying things during the mining revolution.

The rhythm of the poem, as well as the actions of the children as they keep moving each stone forward to the next person in the circle, indicates the winding length of a cargo or the commuter train itself. The vowel deletion in line five to the end is for the purpose of consistency in the rhythm. The commas are for a quick pause. It is interesting to note that the rhythm of the song starts off as slow but in line five it picks up to mimic the movement of the commuter train as it sets off for the long journey. Even the performance in line one and two shows that the train is not moving, as the children beat the stones in one position.

#### 4.2.21 *Mine ngiyincwadzi*

*Mine ngiyincwadzi*

*Futsi ngiyatitsandza*

*Nabu buso bami*

*Lobushelako*

*Nawungiphetse mngani*

*Nginakekele kahle*

*Nawungivula mngani*

*Vula ngebunono*

#### **I am a book**

I am a book

And I love myself

Here is my face

That is smooth

When holding me friend

Take care of me

When you open me friend

Open with care

*Tandla letingcolile*

Dirty hands

*Tingiphatsisa ngenhloko*

Cause me a headache

*Tandla letimanti*

Wet hands

*Ting'hlephula inhlitiyo*

Break my heart.

(Mgabhi, *et al.* 2013: 6)

This is a modern lullaby which encourages children to take care of their books so that they can last. If they take care of their books they will also love reading them. The personification of the book arouses interest in the subject. The book is a symbol of education, information and knowledge so these aspects are needed in learning. Thus, if neatness is encouraged amongst children as they grow they will hold on to this virtue through to adulthood and they will be able to care for other personal belongings. Swazis believe that “*lugotjwa lusemanti*” which means that children have to be taught values and good habits at a tender age so that they stick with them. This is for the purpose of raising good citizens at the end of the day.

The first two lines of the rhyme show the book introducing itself as a person who likes himself. This motivates children to have a high self esteem and confidence in themselves. The book continues to mention his handsome and smooth face and then asks the child who he addresses as a friend to take care of him. The description of the face depicts a visual and tactile image. Again, the use of the word ‘friend’ shows the relationship that is expected between the pupil and his books. They should be like friends. So the pupil should love and value his books just like he does his friends.

The second stanza continues to state the book’s wishes and dislikes. Its wishes are to be opened gently and with care so that its pages last longer. Its dislikes are dirty and wet hands which are visual images that invoke the damage that can be caused by such. The illnesses reveal the strong feelings the book has when touched by the dirty and wet hands. A headache is associated with stressful situations which are usually accompanied by strong emotions such as anger, disappointment, loss and many more. A broken heart is also caused by betrayal, disappointment, loss and a lot of other negative circumstances. Since nobody likes to go through such emotions, thus the book has communicated its message well because the images used can appeal to anyone’s emotions.

The form of the rhyme is no different than most of the other traditional rhymes discussed. What make it distinct are the two stanzas, in which the first one acts as an introduction of the book and the second one states the book's dislikes. In the first stanza the language used is cheerful and the images positive yet in the second one the language is strong and the images negative. In the first stanza there is an abundance of repetition of syllables. The syllable /ngi-/ features in most of the lines which beautifies the poem as mid rhyme in line one and two and oblique rhyme in line five and six. Examples are as follows:

<i>Mine <b>ngiyincwadzi</b></i>	<i>Nawung<b>iph</b>etse mngani</i>
<i>Futsi <b>ngiyatitsandza</b></i>	<i><b>Ng</b>inakekele kahle</i>
I am a book	When you hold me friend
And I love myself	Take care of me well

Assonance and consonance are abundant in the rhyme. Examples are observed in line one, two and three as follows:

*Mine **ngiyincwadzi***  
*Futsi **ngiyatitsandza***  
***Nabu buso bami***  
 I am a book  
 And I love myself  
 Here is my face

The vowel 'i' is repeated above as well as the consonant 'b' to create a musical effect for the enjoyment and easy memorization of the song. Consonants are also repeated vertically from line nine to twelve for the purpose of rhyme so as to link the lines. Oblique linking is evident in line seven and eight as follows:

*Nawung**ivula** mngani*  
***Vula** ngebunono*  
 When you open me friend  
 Open carefully

The repetition of the word *vula* above emphasizes the act of opening the book which has to be done with care.

### 4.3 CONCLUSION

The above analysis of rhymes and games has demonstrated how society, through the mouths of children, ridicules, criticizes, reprimands and commends certain human behaviours. The rhymes have also shown the consequences of some bad actions and decisions whilst some just reveal society's aspirations. Some have shown the effects of industrialization on black people while others warn on the dangers and the effects of smoking, cheating, laziness, lying, selfishness and floods. Other songs have depicted children's preferences and dislikes. Some of the preferences include playing games, laughter, growing up and the dislikes which include stunted growth, hunger and a lot more. The mother has also been portrayed as a crucial person in the life of a child and is very much appreciated. She has been shown as a provider, care taker, confidante and protector. Fathers also have a role to play in raising children and that has been depicted in one song in which society encourages fathers to be responsible and loving just like the mothers. The importance of family relations, identity and socializing has also been depicted as core issues in shaping up a child and the society at large.

Poetic elements such as linguistic and paralinguistic devices have also been observed in the rhymes and games. The common ones are repetition of words, syllables, lines and sounds which have been used for the purposes of rhythm and enjoyment. Punctuated and unpunctuated lines have been used for the purposes of revealing emotions of the speakers. Figures of speech and images have been used to convey various messages which invoke certain mind pictures. The non-verbal elements of communication also manifested through some of the words used and the performances.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter seeks to relate the objectives of the study and the findings in connection with the methods used to achieve the set objectives. Therefore, conclusions shall be drawn from the analyses and recommendations made for future studies.

#### **5.2 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The secondary data which was obtained from the internet, textbooks and publications led to the sharing of information in chapter two which was the literature review. This was where different scholars defined and expressed their views on oral literature in Africa. They concluded that oral art takes into account the life of a people in society, their traditions, beliefs, customs, values and norms. They stated that it is passed on from one generation to the next through word of mouth. The characteristics of oral art which include performance, audience and occasion or context were discussed. These characteristics were crucial in this study which was on oral poetry.

The authors also showed how far oral art has come and revealed the problems it still faces which prohibit its growth in African societies today. They also made suggestions on how it could flourish and how researchers could continue to discover and unveil certain interesting topics and subjects which are rich, relevant and still part of the African heritage. The significance and the beauty of children's poetry in Africa and in Swaziland were discussed by various authors who came to a general consensus that the genre was and is still unique and relevant in African societies today. This is because of the wide variety of subject matters and lessons it contains, as well as the beauty of the language of oral poetry.

### 5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE ANALYSES OF CHILDREN'S POEMS

In chapter one the study purposed to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify and discuss the role of the persona in children's poetry
- Identify and discuss the significance of the different characters portrayed
- Critically analyse the subject matters, themes and messages contained in the songs
- Discuss the linguistic devices and the prosodic elements used
- Examine the performances, context for use and the role of the audience
- Recognize the societal voice, societal attitudes, perceptions, values, norms and beliefs

To accomplish the above objectives, primary data was obtained through observation of performances from two schools, in the Hhohho region of Swaziland, where the songs were taught in a classroom situation. The activity was done for the purpose of witnessing the beauty of oral performance, so as to identify the connection between the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of oral poetry. Thereafter, knowledgeable others, in the field of oral literature were engaged in the analysis of the diction, through informal, unstructured and conversational interviews.

In the analysis of lullabies in chapter three, it was observed that a majority was used in the context of a crying baby as their main purpose was to pacify the baby. The voice of the persona, which was a vehicle through which society expressed its concerns, judgements and criticisms, featured in all the songs. Her tone, emotions and welfare were also noted and discussed. It was also observed that the songs were loaded with deep messages and themes directed to adults and the society at large. Some of the themes discussed were the effects of laziness in which women were criticized harshly for not playing a part in the sustenance of their families because culturally, they were expected to be always active in ensuring that each family member was well provided for. Women were expected to be of right standing in society in terms of their actions. Thus, weird behavior like witchcraft was not tolerated at all.

Other songs, however, depicted the problems women faced in their marriages which caused them a lot of distress. This distress spilled on to their babies and caused them to be restless. Most of the problems seemed to be caused by polygamous husbands who neglected their senior wives.

Apart from the marital issues, most lullabies expressed playfulness as they encouraged babies and toddlers in their different stages of growth such as speaking or taking the first step. These showed that society wished to raise happy, healthy and strong children both emotionally and physically. That was also indicated in some of the lullabies which informed babies about harmful and harmless birds and the environment so that as the babies grew they would be exposed to natural phenomena so that they could get equipped on how to react around it. Babies were also educated about the responsibilities they would have whilst growing up, according to the different sexes as per society's expectations and assumptions. Since traditionally, boys and girls were schooled differently and separated at the age of seven, each child growing up quickly learned how to conduct him or herself as a young member of society. Therefore, promiscuity and having children out of wedlock was seriously condemned in Swazi society as indicated in some lullabies.

In the analysis of rhymes and games in chapter four, it was noted that, though most were centered on playing games and whiling away time, they also sent various messages to members of society through the voices of different personas. They exposed societal misfits, renegades and rebels, as well as portrayed certain behaviours such as indifference, carelessness, lust, lies, strong holds, and their effects thereof. Some of these effects included acquiring disease, shame, loss of dignity, loss of freedom and free will, loss of life, lack, hunger and starvation. These negative actions were discouraged and positive ones encouraged amongst members of society. Positive actions such as responsible parenting, a mother's love and care, community life, individual and group identity were also portrayed.

Since most of these actions and consequences were displayed in a poetic manner it called for the literary scholar to be vigilant and scrutinize each word as to how it was used figuratively and for what purpose since the language of poetry is subtle and dramatic, neither obvious nor straightforward as in the case of prose or narrative. This makes poetry a distinct and exciting genre which stands apart. Thus, it was observed that children's poetry has an abundance of poetic devices such as repetitions, which constitute parallelism, refrains, anaphora, consonance, assonance, alliteration, all which serve to create rhythm and rhyme to beautify and link the lines.

The content of the poems was beautified by figures of speech such as personification, symbolism, metaphors, similes, hyperboles, irony and sarcasm, onomatopoeia, animalization, as well as various images. The content also exposed the nature of children in general, in that they are

forgetful, playful and never think in a logical manner because their brains are still developing. These were evident in the diction as most of the songs contained some unfamiliar words and twisted expressions whilst on the other hand, some ideas also came in a disjointed way. It was noted that indeed the non-verbal elements of oral poetry were imbedded in the verbal content of the songs, in that, the diction was also in line with the performances made. For example, the use of the ideophones and punctuation marks portrayed the speaker's emotions concerning the subject matter. If, for instance, the speaker was angry, the language would be strong and most of the words pronounced with a heavy stress. The voice pitch would be high too. All these were obvious in the performances through gestures, facial expressions and other body movements.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

On the basis of the findings above one should thus conclude that indeed the research questions and objectives were achieved. In summary, the study concluded that apart from the figurative language used and the exciting performances, lullabies and rhymes indeed exposed the beautiful life of the Swazi people, their values, norms, beliefs systems, customs, rituals and many more. The songs have indeed been a vehicle through which society exposes the mishaps, wrong doing, and good deeds of its individuals as a form of social control mechanism. These forces each and every individual to do a self-introspection and thereafter strive to do what is acceptable because the causes and effects of various actions have been depicted. However, during the process of collecting data it was discovered that some of the traditional songs were not familiar to the pupils as they were not exposed to them. Some of the teachers too, admitted they had never been exposed to the songs. Others still remembered them but complained of time constraints which caused their failure to teach the pupils most of the traditional songs. This is a cause for concern as it is obvious that this genre is really despised, overlooked and will soon be forgotten, which poses a threat to the future generations.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since children's poetry is becoming an area of less or no interest amongst literature students and researchers nowadays, it is therefore recommended that they change their minds and attitudes about this genre and engage in more research on it as it is rich on many aspects. More children's songs, whether old or new still need to be collected, documented and their diction critically analysed to expose the distinct language of oral poetry, the beauty of the siSwati language, the culture of the Swazi people, their customs and traditions, values, norms, beliefs and a lot more. This endeavor could also benefit future generations. Mothers and primary school teachers, especially at the lower levels, should start teaching their children these songs as a way of cherishing their own and holding on to it, lest it slips out of their fingers forever. Those who are still doing it should not be weary and feel they are wasting time because oral traditions are still valuable even in modern societies.

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**APPENDIX A: Parent Consent Letter**



**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES  
UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

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**15<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Rachel T. Antones – Dlamini, a teacher at . I am conducting a study on children's poetry for my MA thesis at the University of Stellenbosch. I request your consent to record your child/ren as they sing and perform Siswati lullabies and rhymes. I promise the recording shall purely be for educational purpose and under no circumstances will it be posted on the internet or reproduced for monetary gain.

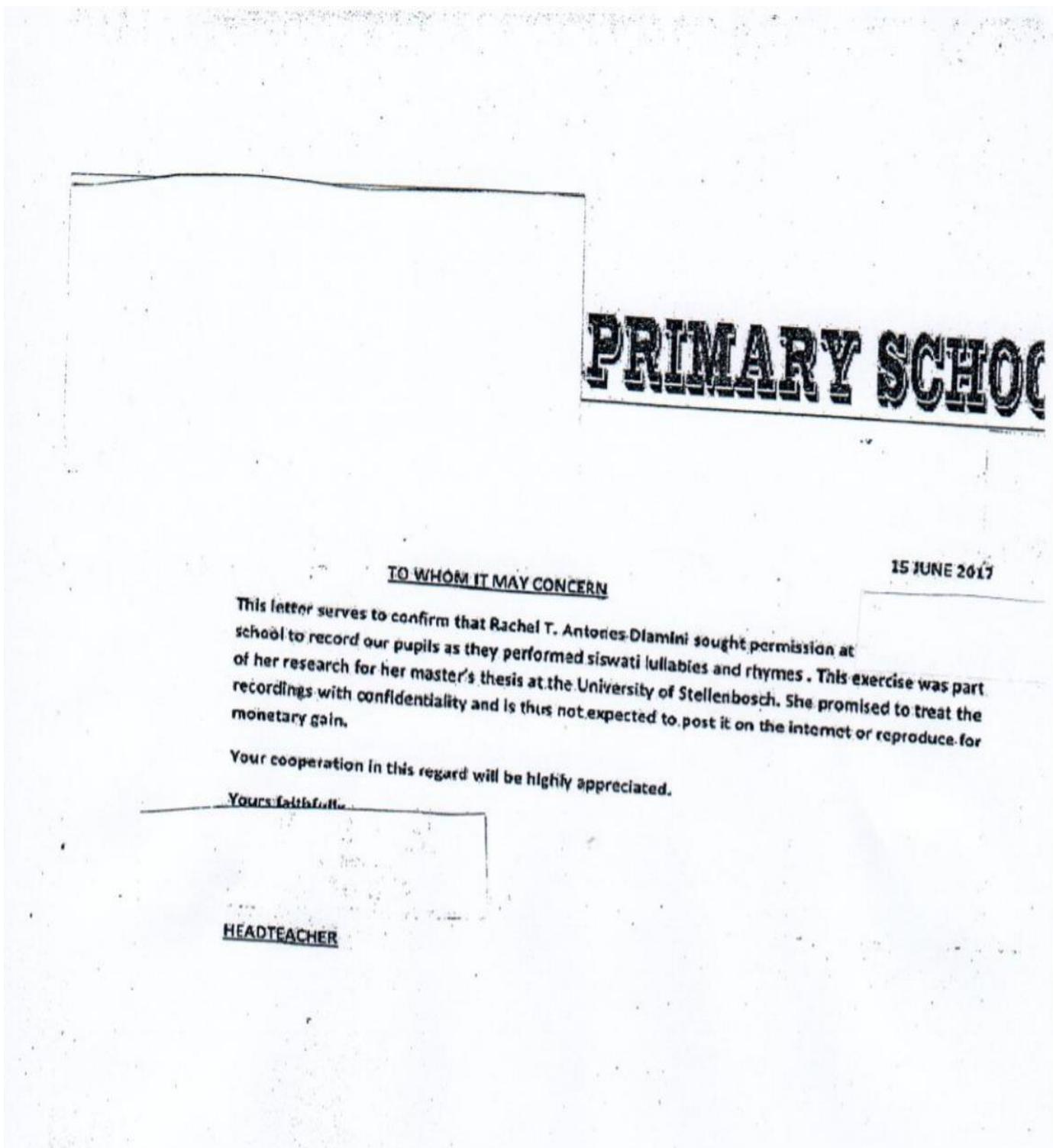
Please kindly fill in the following:

Child's name (s).....

Parent's signature .....

Date:.....

## APPENDIX B: Permission Letter from School



**APPENDIX C: DVD (SWAZI CHILDREN'S RECORDED SONGS)**